USBE Special Education Section (SES): Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS)

Monitoring and Mentoring Staffing Proposal

Background

Program and budget information, including a Cost-Benefit Analysis, regarding the use of contractors versus adding full-time equivalent (FTE) staff for required special education compliance monitoring was presented to the USBE Finance Committee on September 7, 2017.

The USBE Finance Committee requested the USBE SES staff prepare a proposal that would increase the support provided to LEAs with moderate to high risk for noncompliance with IDEA and USBE Special Education Rule. In response to that presentation, this proposal was prepared by the USBE SES staff.

USBE SES staff analyzed UPIPS monitoring/mentoring and fiscal records from the last three school years (2016-2017, 2015-2016, and 2014-2015) to determine baseline costs.

USBE SES staff analyzed UPIPS monitoring/mentoring records from the last three school years (2016-2017, 2015-2016, and 2014-2015) and solicited feedback from Local Education Agency (LEA) Special Education Directors for the past 12 months to determine programmatic needs and preferences.

Assumptions

IDEA monitoring/mentoring is a dynamic process, which is dependent upon federal guidance, LEA and state data reviews, dispute resolution findings, and USBE priorities. The amount of monitoring will change based on the number of LEAs determined to have moderate to high risk for noncompliance with IDEA and USBE Special Education Rules.

Rather than implement a system designed to only identify risk for and occurrences of noncompliance and then correct findings, the UPIPS system was designed to support ongoing improvement. Based on evidence that early intervention and mentoring are highly effective compliance support strategies, UPIPS provides mentoring to new LEA Special Education Directors as well as Directors who’s LEA has been determined to have moderate to high risk for noncompliance with IDEA and USBE Special Education Rule.

Conditions

- IDEA requires monitoring for compliance and student outcomes.
- Monitoring addresses the requirements within the IDEA regulations, as well as student outcome data for the Annual Performance Report (APR).
- A representative sample of the 150+ LEAs must be monitored through desk audits and on-site visits annually.
  - Since the 2014-2015 school year, the USBE SES has implemented a risk-based monitoring system that includes fiscal monitoring.
  - LEAs at higher levels of risk receive additional coaching or mentoring support to ensure improvement.
- The number of charter schools increases annually.
• The percentage of LEA Special Education Directors who are new (and thus require more intensive support) has fluctuated between 18% and 35% in the past five years.
• When monitoring large LEAs, multiple individuals (USBE staff and/or contractors) are required to spend multiple days on-site in the LEA.
• Mentoring and coaching takes more time than simply monitoring for compliance.
  o Mentoring has been an effective support to lower risk for LEAs who participate.

Proposal

Add two Full-time Equivalent (FTE) staff to the USBE SES for UPIPS compliance monitoring/mentoring.

Decrease the amount of UPIPS work by provided by contractors.

Budget Reallocations

The current 2017-2018 budget for UPIPS monitoring and mentoring is $665,000.

This proposal will cost $701,250.

To reconcile the two amounts, the current budget will be supplemented with $36,250 from the special education Dispute Resolution budget line.

Budget Allocation Table

All amounts listed in the table below already exist in the current special education budget, but funds previously budgeted for UPIPS contractors and funds previously budgeted for Dispute Resolution will be reallocated to create full-time staff positions. No new money is required to implement this proposal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$269,000</td>
<td>Two new FTE to implement UPIPS monitoring/mentoring activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$315,000</td>
<td>Current USBE staff to implement or participate in monitoring/mentoring activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$117,250</td>
<td>Contractors to supplement monitoring activities in large LEAs and provide mentoring to new charter special education directors and/or special education directors in LEAs with moderate to high risk scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$701,250</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>