

SECTION 24 D

SELPA - INITIATIVE FUND

INTENT

The SELPA Initiative Fund is a proposal being brought forward to the COS by SEC. It is proposed that funding for the SELPA initiative fund become ongoing. The source of these funds is a portion of SELPA level 97/98 Maximization revenue. The intent of this proposal is to set aside \$100,000 per year for the purpose of investing in promising practices that may better serve students with disabilities within the Solano SELPA. The intent of the fund also extends to promoting cost efficient methods of service delivery. In terms of improved service or cost savings, it is the intent of this fund that initiatives yield some form of return on investment. In order to maximize results, districts must partner and leverage SELPA initiatives at the local level, as this is where implementation and accountability for doing so occurs. It is for this reason that we all share responsibility for the results of these initiatives.

CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES

Early Literacy Initiatives

The SEC, in collaboration with SELPA staff, have identified two specific opportunities for systemic improvement that have potential for both improved service and cost savings over current practice. The first opportunity involves promoting early literacy through staff development aimed primarily at resource specialists. First, the initiative seeks to better align special education safety nets with the core curriculum. Second, the initiative seeks to promote a wider repertoire of methodology among resource specialists, so that they may provide better consultation to general education staff, and for identified students, more diverse opportunities to learn. This initiative is aligned with current early literacy initiatives underway at the district level. The intended results will be measured qualitatively through better-aligned goals and objectives, and quantitatively, through potential decreases and/or delay in the number of students being identified with learning disabilities. Hopefully, more students with reading difficulties will remain in general education placements longer, since instructional repertoire is being expanded in the regular classroom environment. For students with serious learning disabilities, who are unable to experience success in the general education program, special education must offer still more instructionally sound, legally defensible strategies for teaching phonemic awareness, decoding, and comprehension skills. By building enhanced instructional repertoire for resource specialists, the initiative intends to increase SAT9 reading scores for students with disabilities, as well as decrease the number of students who receive SELPA funded literacy support from nonpublic schools or agencies. (These expenses typically appear in mediation and/or due process settlements.)

Behavior Intervention Initiatives

The second opportunity identified by the SEC and SELPA staff falls in the area of positive behavior intervention. Approximately 67% of SELPA students in nonpublic school placements are identified under emotionally disturbed criteria. Further, the number of students in district run ED special day classes are increasing SELPA-wide. Clearly then, behavior issues impede the student's opportunity to learn and often result in the exclusion of the student's from the general education environment.

The current proposal seeks to build/enhance positive behavior support planning techniques for special education teachers, with a particular focus on special day classes. Further, the proposal includes intent to build capacity for district psychologists to implement Functional Analysis Assessments (Hughes Bill Assessments), rather than continuing to rely on nonpublic agencies for this purpose. Providing support for general education staff in the area of positive behavior intervention and support is also included.

In short, the behavior initiative seeks to keep students in general education and less restrictive environments longer before resorting to more restrictive special day class placements. Further, this initiative seeks to positively impact the NPS/A budget by reducing the reliance on NPAs for assessment and by ensuring opportunity for student success in SELPA special day classes, thereby decreasing the need for NPS placements.