



News release
November 9, 2017

Special Services Department earns highest rating

Annual review of district programs and compliance results in highest rating possible

Each fall, special education departments in districts around the state await an official notice with an equally official name – the *Annual Determination* letter.

The notice is a report of how well the district has met the requirements of federal law for special education students, [IDEA 2004 Part B](#). Specified in the law are the ways public schools are to serve special education students from age three to 21.

To earn a rating of ‘1,’ a district must meet the high standards outlined in 18 different performance indicators. Graduation rate is just one example of a required performance indicator. Out of those 18 performance indicators, five address legal compliance. What students do after graduation is also tracked and counts as a measurement of district compliance.

Although highly anticipated by the district and its special education staff, the *Annual Determination* letter might seem mundane to others. Like other official, governmental audit-type documents, it announces the highest rating with a simple “meets requirements” statement and a list of the possible ratings, “4” (lowest) to “1” (highest).

“Others who read the letter might not pick up from its official language what this means to our students and community,” noted Special Services Executive Director Becky Clifford. “This letter reflects the quality of our special education programs and services available to all students with special education needs. It’s a team effort, and I am very proud of our staff, students and families.” The new rating reflects a long-time continuation of quality because the district has earned this ‘1’ rating seven out of the last eight years.

A mother of a recent graduate said, “The school and district offered everything he needed to be successful.” She rated the pre-vocational and occupational learning opportunities by the district as “excellent, five stars.”

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