

SECTION 6 – Special Needs Students and Programs

(Reviewed by TEA)

Special Education Assurances and Development of Policies and Procedures

If a charter is granted, UMEP, Inc. (“sponsoring entity”) will comply with all state and federal requirements concerning programs, policies, and procedures for special needs students. The school’s policies and procedures will be submitted later through the online Legal Framework described below.

Electronic Submission of Charter Policies and Procedures Assurances

Pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) Section 613(a)(1), UME Preparatory Academy will have on file with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) a plan that provides assurances that it has in effect policies, procedures, and programs consistent with State policies and procedures governing special education. UMEP, Inc. will electronically submit the board-approved policies and procedures through the online Legal Framework website. Region 18 Education Service (ESC) in coordination with other ESCs (like Region 10), provides leadership to the state in the electronic development of charter policies and procedures through the online **Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Process Phase IV: “Charting the Course”** [http://www.esc18.net/.](http://www.esc18.net/))

Special Education Certified **Instructional Staff** (appropriately certified in the State of Texas) will be recruited and employed or contracted to provide services as required by the Admission-Review-Dismissal (ARD) committee meeting for each special education eligible student. The certified and highly qualified special education teacher will fully implement the Individual Education Plan (IEP) developed by the ARD committee. The special education teacher will be available to make suggestions for writing and implementing the IEP, along with the classroom teacher, the special education coordinator, and the parents. The ARD committee will review those suggestions, make necessary revisions, and decide upon the final IEP for each student.

All **school staff** will be trained at least annually in the following areas:

- Charter school policies and procedures based on federal and state rules and regulations pertaining to special education
- Awareness of early signs of a special needs student that might not come to us previously diagnosed and how to appropriately document such observations
- Technology
- Discipline strategies
- Development and implementation of the Individual Education Plan

Assessment Personnel will be appropriately certified and/or licensed to provide assessment and evaluation services to special education students through assessment, scoring, report writing, and attendance in ARD meetings. Assessment personnel will be recruited and contracted to provide services on an “as needed” basis as determined by the ARD committee.

The charter school will provide a full continuum of services for students receiving special education services according to the needs described in each student's ARD document. Services may include the following instructional arrangements:

- **Mainstream class and/or full inclusion:** Our primary strategy for helping special needs students will be mainstreaming. The general curriculum is addressed for students in this setting with accommodations as determined by the ARD committee. The certified special education coordinator monitors student progress and consults with the regular classroom teacher to ensure that academic progress is being made. In the event that progress is deterred, the special education teacher schedules an ARD committee meeting to review the student's program.
- **Tutorials and Guided Studies (TaGS) program:** Students whose educational plan requires modifications in the general curriculum or with assessments will typically be assigned to this class by the ARD committee for specific subject areas requiring specialty services or materials to address the student's handicapping condition. Whereas, students typically receive instruction by the certified special education coordinator in this setting for the amount of time established in the ARD meeting, the special education coordinator, in conjunction with this "resource" class, will capitalize on UME's unique scheduling and Parent Equipping Program to more fully achieve the desired results of the ARD committee. Responsive to the needs of the child and the task at hand, UME Prep will foster opportunities for collaboration between the special education teacher, the special education coordinator, the classroom teacher, and the parents. The needs of the special education student will be met during the school day, through direct instruction of the student by special education personnel, in adherence with decisions made by the ARD committee. Any school-family collaboration that occurs for the benefit of the student is above and beyond that which is required by the ARD committee.
- **Self-contained classroom:** Students whose ARD committee has determined at least 50% of their instructional day be served by special education staff or services typically receive instruction in the TaGS "resource" classroom for the appointed time of the school day. Additionally, some students may require more structured or one-to-one management that is provided in a self-contained classroom throughout the school day. UME Prep's unique class scheduling does allow for parents to be more involved should they desire to be. For those parents who desire to work more closely with their child, UME Prep's special education coordinator will be available to provide support and guidance to those parents who wish to take advantage of the additional time with their student provided to them. With that said, UME Prep does not rely on the parent for student success and understands that the needs of special education students be met during the school day and in adherence to decisions made by the ARD committee. **UME Prep understands that it is not the responsibility of the parent to provide special education services to their children, but rather the special education teachers.** Any school-family collaboration that occurs for the benefit of the student is above and beyond that which is required by the ARD committee.

Any collaboration between parent and teacher is to allow parents to better understand and make use of this model. In talking about parents who wish to work more closely with the child, the Special Education Coordinator will provide training for all parents who want to

participate in the needs of children with specific learning disabilities, provide intervention strategies used in the classroom, and provide suggestions for using them at home. Parents will learn ways that they can supplement what is being taught in the general education classroom and the special education classroom. This will be voluntary, but those who wish to learn and employ the strategies when helping their child with homework assignments will benefit further from the University-Model of Education.

- **Allowable accommodations:** Accommodations will be made according to the needs of each individual student. The following are some, but not necessarily all, allowable accommodations that will be provided as needed to help the student succeed:
 - Large print
 - Braille
 - Magnifying of low-vision devices
 - Colored overlays/colored photocopies
 - Place markers
 - Reading test aloud to self
 - Oral administration for tests
 - Dyslexia bundled
 - Amplification devices
 - Manipulating test materials
 - Other methods of response
 - Scribe
 - Spelling assistance
 - Calculation devices
 - Supplemental aids
 - Manipulative
 - Extended time for class work
 - Shortened Assignments
 - Blank graphic organizer
 - Minimizing distractions (individual testing, small group)
 - Extended time – testing over two days
 - Multiple or frequent breaks
 - Visual, verbal, or tactile reminders to stay on task
 - Other accommodations as determined by student need and the ARD committee

Upon enrollment, students will be screened for previous special education eligibility. If it is determined that the student is eligible for services, the special education coordinator at the school will contact the previous school, if applicable, and confirm eligibility and instructional arrangements. A Temporary ARD will be scheduled and the previous school services will be replicated as deemed appropriate by the Temporary ARD Committee.

Temporary Goals and objectives will be determined based on all available data pending receipt of records from the previous school, if applicable. A Review ARD will be held within 30 school days where the most recent Full Individual Evaluation (FIE) will be reviewed by the committee and a determination of instructional setting, goals, objectives, and modifications/accommodations will be made. If the coordinator receives an FIE that is out of date, or if it is impossible to obtain a copy of the FIE from the previous school within the 30-school-day time period, the parent will be notified, consent will be obtained, notice will be provided, and the student will be re-evaluated by the school's employed or contracted evaluation staff.

Dyslexia and Other Related Disorders

The charter school's Board of Directors will ensure that procedures for identifying a student with dyslexia or a related disorder, and for providing appropriate instructional services to the student, are implemented at the charter school.

Bilingual/English as a Second Language Programs

The charter school's Board of Directors will ensure that procedures for identifying a student with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and for providing appropriate instructional services to the student by a state certified B/ESL teacher are implemented at the charter school. UME Preparatory Academy looks forward to establishing bilingual parent equipping trainers as the need arises.

Unique Strength of UME Preparatory Academy

UME Preparatory Academy's innovative class scheduling and Parent Equipping Program will aid student achievement among special needs students due to the additional time with an equipped parent. UME Prep understands that it is not the responsibility of the parent to provide special education services to their children, but rather the special education teachers. Any school-family collaboration that occurs for the benefit of the student is above and beyond that which is required by the ARD committee. Experience, data, and stakeholder feedback have shown, where this model has been employed for nearly 20 years in the private school realm, that parents welcome this approach because they are more empowered to work with their own children at home with the support (and collaboration) of the school.

The certified special education teacher and special education coordinator will not only provide direct instruction as mandated in the IEP by the ARD committee, but will develop a working relationship with parents who express the desire to be more involved. These parents will receive instruction about the characteristics of various learning disabilities, coping strategies to be employed at school and at home, and tutoring techniques that will enhance the parents' ability to understand and communicate with the child when assisting with homework assignments. This increased parent knowledge will facilitate student learning and foster a quality learning environment both at home and in the classroom.

UME Preparatory Academy recognizes that some parents may not be able to assist, and if so, the school has procedures, such as the TaGS "resource" classroom, in place to meet all special education requirements without parental support.

Technical Assistance

For questions concerning or information about the electronic submission of charter policies and procedures, UME Prep will contact its regional ESC special education contact at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/escinfo/contact.html>.