Policy, Practices, and Procedures Pertaining to Indicator 1- Graduation

Policy and Procedures-

Zenith Academy's policies are in general aligned with the Ohio State's Special Education Model, Policies, and Practices document as our district has officially adopted it. It can be accessed here- Special Education Model Policies and Procedures as well as on the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce website.

Our **policy** is to also follow the guidelines established under the Ohio's Special Education Profile that is issued annually. Every year, districts receive a Special Education Profile that shows their progress over time in meeting their goals for students with disabilities. The design of the Special Education Profile helps us use data about the academic growth of a group of students to keep improving the special education programs. These data give schools answers about kindergarten readiness, achievements levels, access to the general education environment, preparedness for life beyond high school, services for children with disabilities, and equitable services and supports.The Department provides separate, public access to the Special Education Profile. The data provided in the public version are masked and intended for public use. Please note that the public version of the profile does not include required actions or compliance status.

With regards to the Indicator 1 graduation, the most essential question we ask in order to meet the criteria of successful graduation rates is- *ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES PREPARED FOR LIFE, WORK, AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION?*

At Zenith Academy, we follow some **procedures** to meet this indicator. All aspects of student monitoring, intervention, and academic support, are directly managed by the Principal and Special Education (SPED) team to ensure that special education students receive the necessary resources and guidance to stay on-track for graduation.

The procedures are implemented consistently in the form of 'best practices' which are outlined in the section below. The Zenith administrators hold the team accountable by supervising the implementation of the practices per the district SPED guidelines.

Practices-

At Zenith Academy High School, the **Principal** and the **SPED Team** directly monitors special education students to ensure they remain on-track for graduation by obtaining the credits necessary to graduate by meeting the same requirements as students without disabilities.

While most students on Individualized Education Program (IEP) have graduated via traditional pathways in the past, we as an IEP team, cautiously determine if the student needs to be exempted from the consequences of NOT passing required graduation tests. If a student is categorized as having the 'most significant cognitive disability', then the team might consider exemptions which would still focus on data from a wide variety of sources and not solely on the basis of their SPED eligibility determination.

Our process basically includes an early warning system of academic and behavior tracking -

Regular Academic and Behavior Tracking: The principal and SPED team regularly reviews students' performance across all subjects, tracking grades, homework completion, and assessment results. Any student whose grades fall into the D or F range is flagged for further intervention. The detailed process is listed below-

- **Inclusion**: At Zenith Academy, we have the commitment to include students with disabilities in the general education classroom with their same-aged peers as much as possible. Most of our students are outside of the classroom only 10% of the time to receive special education services.
- **Staff Training**: We ensure that our special education team stays current with the latest graduation information to provide exemptions as necessary for students with disabilities.
- **Credit Audits:** Semesterly graduation progress checks are conducted to ensure students are earning the necessary credits for graduation. If a student is still falling behind, an amendment is made to the IEP to revise any goals or accommodations that are not working effectively.
- **IEP Progress Monitoring and Reporting:** Biweekly checks are conducted to monitor progress on the IEP goals, and report cards are sent home quarterly to reflect progress for the entire quarter.
- **State Testing and Benchmark Assessments:** Students performance is evaluated on Ohio's end-of-course exams and district tests such as i-Ready (3 times a year) to ensure they are meeting state graduation requirements.
- **Response to Intervention (RTI):** Furthermore, teachers report students who are struggling academically or showing signs of disengagement. Students identified as 'at-risk' based on their academic/nonacademic needs, are referred to the RTI process that is a tiered approach of providing research-based interventions and determining the effectiveness of it. Based on these reports, the team initiates further intensive intervention measures that are as follows to support students at-risk of not graduating:

- **College Credit Plus (CCP) Partnership with Hocking College:** This program enables students to take college-level courses both online and in person, providing an opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school.
- **Credit Recovery Program:** Students who have failed required courses are placed in a structured credit recovery program, allowing them to complete coursework at an accelerated or self-paced rate.
- **After-School Tutoring and Academic Support:** The principal facilitates tutoring sessions where struggling students receive additional help from teachers or peer mentors.
- **Individualized Growth Plans:** Students at-risk of not graduating meet one-on-one with the principal/SPED team to create a personalized academic improvement plan, setting specific goals and tracking progress.
- **Parental Engagement:** The principal schedules meetings with parents of at-risk students to discuss academic concerns and develop collaborative strategies for improvement.
- **Mentorship and Career Readiness Programs:** The principal helps connect students with career exploration opportunities, industry-recognized certification pathways, and leadership programs to keep them motivated toward their post-graduation goals.