

# Director of Special Education



## Job Description

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### Qualifications

- Illinois Professional Educator License (PEL) with Director of Special Education endorsement
- Minimum of five (5) years of successful experience in special education leadership
- Deep knowledge of IDEA, Section 504, ADA, and ISBE regulations
- Demonstrated experience leading corrective action plans and audit response implementation
- Proven track record of improving outcomes for students with disabilities through systems change
- Strong data analysis, systems design, and continuous improvement expertise
- Demonstrated ability to operationalize compliance systems with measurable results
- Strong communication and relationship-building skills across diverse communities
- Commitment to equity, inclusion, and educational justice

### Reports To:

Chief Student Support Officer

### Supervises:

Special Education Coordinators, Related Service Providers, and assigned staff  
*(This position does not supervise principals)*

### Position Summary

The Director of Special Education provides strategic and operational leadership to ensure full implementation of the Unit 4 Special Education Audit recommendations with fidelity, urgency, and measurable impact.

This role is responsible for moving the district from fragmented systems and compliance-based practices to a coherent, accountable, and outcomes-driven special education system. The Director ensures that audit findings are not only addressed but embedded into sustainable district practices.

The Director builds and monitors systems that ensure:

- Full execution of audit recommendations with clear accountability structures
- Strong instructional practices aligned to Tier I and inclusive environments

- Equitable access to services and programs
- Legal compliance with significantly reduced risk exposure
- Measurable improvements in student achievement, growth, and postsecondary outcomes

## **1. Audit Implementation and Systems Coherence**

- Lead the districtwide implementation plan for all Unit 4 Special Education Audit recommendations
- Establish clear timelines, ownership, and progress monitoring structures for each recommendation
- Develop and maintain a centralized tracking system to monitor implementation status, barriers, and outcomes
- Regularly report progress to the Chief Student Support Officer and Superintendent Cabinet
- Ensure consistency of implementation across all schools, eliminating variability in practice
- Identify systemic breakdowns and take immediate corrective action

## **2. Systems Leadership and Coherent Program Design**

- Redesign and align special education systems to ensure coherence across:
  - Special Education
  - MTSS
  - Teaching and Learning
  - Multilingual Services
- Standardize service delivery models across the district (co-teaching, push-in, inclusive practices)
- Ensure clear district-wide expectations for IEP development, service minutes, and instructional alignment
- Oversee ESY, specialized programs, and out-of-district placements with a focus on:
  - Internal capacity building
  - Returning students to the least restrictive environment (LRE)
- Eliminate inconsistent practices across schools through defined systems and protocols

## **3. Student Outcomes and Accountability (Priority Focus)**

- Establish and monitor districtwide performance targets aligned to audit recommendations:
  - Early literacy proficiency
  - Math achievement
  - Graduation rates
  - Postsecondary readiness
- Implement real-time data monitoring systems to track:
  - IEP goal progress
  - Student growth and achievement
  - Subgroup performance

- Ensure data is actively used to adjust instruction, services, and interventions
- Hold coordinators, programs, and service providers accountable for measurable student outcomes

#### 4. Compliance, Risk Management, and Corrective Action Systems

- Serve as District Section 504 Coordinator
- Lead the development of **internal compliance monitoring systems aligned to audit findings**
- Ensure all audit-related compliance gaps are corrected and sustained
- Oversee due process, mediation, and legal proceedings with a focus on prevention
- Ensure accurate, timely ISBE reporting and documentation
- Provide ongoing staff training to eliminate repeat compliance issues

#### 5. Instructional Leadership and Inclusion Practices

- Ensure special education services are anchored in **strong Tier I instruction first**
- Lead the expansion of inclusive practices aligned to audit recommendations:
  - Co-teaching models
  - Push-in supports
  - Access to grade-level curriculum
- Monitor instructional quality and curriculum access for students with disabilities
- Partner with the Chief Academic Officer to ensure alignment between general and special education

#### 6. Talent Development and Workforce Systems

- Design and implement a **comprehensive professional learning system aligned to audit priorities**
- Ensure all staff are trained in:
  - Compliance expectations
  - Instructional best practices
  - Inclusive service delivery models
- Build leadership capacity within coordinators and specialists to execute audit recommendations
- Partner with HR to address audit-identified staffing gaps through:
  - Strategic recruitment
  - Retention planning
  - Role clarity and accountability structures
- Establish clear performance expectations and accountability for all staff

#### 7. Family and Community Trust Rebuilding

- Lead district efforts to **rebuild trust with families**, as identified in audit findings
- Ensure transparent, consistent communication regarding services, rights, and supports
- Standardize family engagement protocols across all schools
- Serve as district representative in hearings, mediations, and community forums

- Partner with community agencies to expand support systems

## **8. Equity, Access, and Disproportionality Reduction**

- Monitor and actively address disproportionality in:
  - Identification
  - Discipline
  - Placement
- Ensure equitable access to rigorous, grade-level instruction and programs
- Expand inclusive practices to reduce unnecessary restrictive placements
- Implement culturally responsive practices aligned to audit recommendations

## **9. Financial Stewardship and Resource Alignment**

- Align budget decisions directly to audit priorities and student outcome goals
- Oversee federal funding, grants, and Medicaid reimbursement with compliance and impact focus
- Reallocate resources to strengthen internal programming and reduce out-of-district placements
- Ensure financial decisions are transparent, strategic, and outcomes-driven

## **Performance Expectations**

- Full implementation of Unit 4 Special Education Audit recommendations within established timelines
- Measurable increase in student achievement and growth for students with disabilities
- Improved graduation and postsecondary outcomes
- Reduction in disproportionality across identification, discipline, and placement
- Increased access to general education settings (LRE)
- Significant reduction in due process cases and compliance findings
- Improved staff effectiveness, retention, and accountability
- Increased family trust, engagement, and satisfaction

## **Leadership Competencies**

- Acts with integrity, urgency, and accountability
- Drives execution—not just planning
- Focuses on outcomes over compliance alone
- Builds trust through transparency and consistency
- Communicates clearly across all stakeholder groups
- Leads systemic change with discipline and follow-through

## **Terms of Employment:**

Salary, benefits, and work year as established by the Board of Education

**Evaluation:**

Performance evaluated annually by the Chief Student Support Officer

**FLSA Status:**

Exempt