**Achievement First Dean of Special Services Roles and Responsibilities**

“We believe all students can achieve… if they have access to a great education.” The role of the Dean of Special Services is to ensure that “all” truly means ALL. The Dean of Special Services works deliberately with teachers and fellow deans to implement systems of support which ensure each Achievement First student is able to shine academically and behaviorally. All of this critical work is done in a way that reduces risk and promotes authentic legal compliance.

**Special Services Roles and Responsibilities Readiness Task (Owner: Principal)** < Due 5/23>

By 5/23, review the four areas of special service work and name the school-based leader who will be responsible for each of these areas. (In most cases, a Dean of Special Services owns all four responsibilities.) The four areas of core responsibility of special services work **at the school** are:

* + Talent Development: Manage, Lead and Develop the Special Educator/Learning Specialist Team
  + Authentic Compliance: Manage IEPs, 504s, and ELLs, including District Relationships
  + Academic Intervention: Oversee the Program through Triggering Child Find
  + Behavior Intervention: Oversee the Program through Triggering Child Find

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| **Area of Core Responsibility** | **School Based Owner (This is the person who Team Special Services will begin communicating with directly.)** |
| Talent Developer: Manage, Lead and Develop the Special Educator/Learning Specialist Team |  |
| Authentic Compliance: Manage IEPs, 504s, and ELLs, including District Relationships |  |
| Academic Intervention: Oversee the Program through Triggering Child Find |  |
| Behavior Intervention: Oversee the Program through Triggering Child Find |  |

**Guiding Principles for Decision Making**: In most cases, a Dean of Special Services is responsible for all four large responsibilities. However, depending on the configuration of the school leadership team, specific special services core responsibilities may be owned by other members of the SLT.

* Consider the following questions:
  + What are the skill sets that are needed to manage each core responsibility?
  + What other holistic decisions/context are necessary to figure out who owns this?
  + What else is on this person’s plate?
* If you have a strong Dean of Special Services, that person will likely be responsible for all of the following responsibilities. However, in cases where there is not yet a single school-based owner, determine which LT member will take on the special services responsibilities.
* School-based owners will be required to attend training concerning their core responsibilities.

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| **Talent Developer: Manage, Lead and Develop the Special Educator/Learning Specialist Team** | | |
| *Ensure that special education and intervention staff are rapidly developing their skills.* | | School Owner:  Performers: |
| **Bucket** | **DSS’s Core Actions** | **Principal Actions to Support and Manage DSS** |
| **Teacher Coaching & Development (25%)** | Define, communicate, and manage the roles and responsibilities of special educators/learning specialists (using network recommendations). | Rehearse conversation between DSS and direct reports explaining their responsibilities so expectations are clear. |
| Coach a team of learning specialists and interventionists by observing each teacher for at least 20 minutes every week and providing weekly/bi-weekly feedback using the Observation, Feedback, and Practice power skill structure.  Coaching Portfolios include:   * Special educators (4-8 teachers) * Interventionists (1-3 teachers) * Paraprofessionals and Related Service Providers (varies)   (For growing schools, estimate 1-2 special educators per grade.) | Review observation notes and ensure teacher actions steps are specific, high-impact, and transferrable for all teachers in the coaching portfolio. If necessary, co-observe. |
| Partner with other Deans to ensure co-teaching and interventions are strong. This includes developing systems and structures to monitor co-teaching implementation meetings, conducting regular co-teaching walk-throughs, and collecting/analyzing/responding to co-teacher survey feedback 3 times a year. | Practice coaching moves and coaching conversations. Review co-teaching and intervention data and action plans. |
| Observe teachers regularly and use real time coaching strategies to establish strong instruction in interventions and co-taught classrooms. | Observe and provide feedback on the use of RTC. |
| Design and deliver high impact professional development for teachers during Early Release Days (often Fridays), Roll-Off Days, and at Content Meetings. After PD, follow up with teachers to measure implementation and identify remaining gaps. | Review and revise PD plans. Practice tricky portions of plans. Ensure the DSS has a follow-up plan once the PD is complete. |
| **Manage Vision for Special Services (5%)** | Engage in intentional dialogue with Deans and Principal to ensure the needs of all scholars are being considered and supported. | Debrief conversations and provide feedback about the impact of the intentional dialogue. |
| Collaborate with the principal to ensure staffing and scheduling of special service team members meet the needs of all scholars, including, but not limited to ensuring that co-teaching blocks and meetings, as well as math and reading interventions are built into the schedule. | Review staffing and scheduling proposals, using school data and network guidance, to ensure appropriate staffing is in place to meet special services requirements. |
| Using AF’s consistent and core special education practices, communicate a vision for special services to the school staff which underscores the ability of all students to achieve at high levels, and confront incidents of low-expectations. | Provide feedback on the clarity of the vision for special services. Champion the message that all scholars can and should be achieving at high levels. |

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| **Authentic Compliance: Manage IEPs, 504s, and ELLs, including District Relationships** | | |
| *Ensure we are legally compliant in a way that is authentic to student outcomes and achievement so we are doing right by kids.* | | School Owner:  Performers: |
| **Bucket** | **DSS’s Core Actions** | **Principal Actions to Support and Manage DSS** |
| **Authentic Compliance Systems (20%)** | Ensure all teachers know and are implementing students’ IEPs and 504 plans by sharing IEPs/504s-at-a-Glance and conducting walkthroughs monthly to ensure teachers are implementing accommodations and modifications. | Review walk-through observation data and feedback emails to teachers to ensure the feedback is clear, easily-implemented, and rooted in data. |
| Ensure all scholars, including scholars with IEPs, make ambitious and achievable academic progress each year by reviewing student data at least monthly and problem solving with grade level and special educator teams.  In cases where the student continues to stagnate, reconvene the IEP team. | Appraise findings from monthly data review, as well as provide feedback on action steps for scholars not making sufficient progress. |
| Through the execution of strong authentic compliance systems, (i.e: the 6-week checklist) maintain 100% IEP and 504 plan compliance. This includes managing triennial testing, sending home progress reports and exiting students, when appropriate. Within 5 days of an IEP or 504 meeting, update IC and all IEP systems. | Review SPATA report and responses monthly. If necessary, review compliance systems and set deadlines for 100% compliance. |
| Using strong delegation practices, ensure grade level special education teachers draft, collect data on and implement IEPs and 504 plans. (This is called case management.) | Rehearse conversations with special education teachers on case management responsibilities to ensure clarity. |
| Manage a strong, professional relationship with the local district and act as the school administrator when meeting with the district (NY and CT only.) Loop in TSS when issues arise with the district. | Practice high stakes conversations and provide feedback. |
| Communicate information about student IEPs and funding levels to the DSO to claim funding. | Review monthly/quarterly SPED bill to ensure accuracy (district specific timeline.) |
| Facilitate the MDR process with the district (for students with IEPs in NY and CT), and independently for students with 504s. In RI, facilitate the MDR process for all scholars with IEPs and 504s. | Attend MDR meetings, identify gaps in district partnership, and provide feedback on facilitation. |
| **Child Find (5%)** | Manage the “Child Find” (intake) process for incoming students with IEPs. | Review list of newly enrolled students with IEPs. In situations where students are not identified immediately upon enrollment, review and refine child find systems. |
| Manage the initial referral process, simultaneously identifying students with potential disabilities while actively working against the mis- and over-referral of students which is frequent in low income areas. | Look at the initial referral tracker in the SPATA report and review SSL checks to avoid the over-identification of scholars. |
| Advocate with families of students with severe and significant disabilities to ensure that students are receiving high-quality instruction, including managing outplacement in rare cases where appropriate. | Co-facilitate difficult conversations with families. |
| **Service delivery, including Co-teaching (10%)** | Coordinate IEP program services (SETSS/resource room, ICT/CTT, etc.). Ensure all teachers know their special education responsibilities and conduct regular walk-throughs to ensure accommodations and modifications are provided with fidelity. (Modifications are rare.) | Review walk-through observation data and ensure teacher actions steps are specific, high-impact, and transferrable. If necessary, co-observe. |
| Ensure mandated related services happen in accordance with the student’s IEP or 504 plan. This includes contracting, coordinating, and overseeing all related services. | Review the performance of related service providers. If necessary, co-plan supports for related service providers not meeting expectations. |
| Execute AF’s vision and execute a strong co-teaching program, including using the co-teaching rubric to assess program and prioritize key actions. | Review co-teaching observation data and ensure teacher actions steps are specific, high-impact, and transferrable. If necessary, co-observe. |
| **Other (5%)** | Partner with other school leaders to coordinate testing accommodations and modifications. (Modifications are rare.) | Review student accommodations and modification plan and provide feedback on any gaps. |
| Manage alternative assessments. (This is a RARE situation and determined through the IEP process.) |  |
| Manage ELLs identification, service, and testing. |  |
| Ensure modified promotion/grading criteria are clear for all students with disabilities and communicated to Academic Deans and teachers (modified only in RARE cases). | Ensure modified promotion/ grading is ambitious, achievable, and used rarely. |
| Have courageous conversations with families of scholars who are struggling academically, including scholars who are at risk of not being promoted to the next grade. Proactively partner with families of struggling students to learn about their children, share updates and strategize on supports. Manage communication to ensure teachers are prepared to clearly articulate student progress and next steps for growth with families. Document conversations with families. | Rehearse difficult conversations or sit in on conversations to provide feedback. |

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| **Academic Intervention: Oversee the Program through Triggering Child Find** | | |
| *All scholars who meet network triggers are in an intervention, and the interventions are leading to growth.* | | School Owner (Reading):  School Owner (Math):  Performers: |
| **Bucket** | **DSS’s Core Actions** | **Principal Actions to Support and Manage DSS** |
| **Academic Interventions (15%)** | Coordinate and oversee the Universal Screener during network screening windows. Oversee additional assessments for students falling below triggers (i.e. STEP testing). Ensure all students below network intervention triggers are in interventions that match their areas of support. | After BOY, MOY, and EOY testing, creatively problem-solve with the DSS when collective student needs exceed the available time and staffing. |
| Implement and monitor academic triggers, based on network guidance, to identify and place students in tiered academic interventions. | After BOY, MOY, and EOY testing, confirm that 100% students hitting academic triggers are in an appropriate academic intervention. |
| Ensure students in interventions are growing by managing systems to collect intervention data. Hold data review meetings every 6 weeks to evaluate the progress of students currently in interventions. (See Academic Intervention Data Review Meeting.) | Review findings of data meetings and next steps for students making insufficient progress. |
| Clearly communicate planning and data collection expectations for intervention teachers and train/develop teachers (using network resources). | Rehearse conversations and trainings for intervention teachers to ensure clarity and accuracy. |
| Observe and coach intervention groups at least bi-weekly and provide feedback using the Fundamentals of Instruction for interventions (e.g. walkthroughs and sending batch feedback, RTC-ing, etc.). Review lesson plans regularly to provide feedback on planning. | Review weekly observation walk-through notes and ensure teacher actions steps are specific, high-impact, and transferrable. If necessary, co-observe. |
| Identify students making insufficient growth despite receiving slowly intensifying interventions and facilitate a team meeting to determine whether the student should be referred for a special education evaluation. | Ensure robust and intensifying interventions have been implemented prior to referring for a special education evaluation. |

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| **Behavior Intervention: Oversee the Program through Triggering Child Find** | | |
| *Scholars who struggle with behavior get increasingly intensive interventions which build skill and target the function of their behavior.* | | School Owner:  Performers: |
| **Bucket** | **DSS’s Core Actions** | **Principal Actions to Support and Manage DSS** |
| **Behavior Interventions (15%)** | Implement and monitor school wide behavior and discipline triggers, based on network guidance, to identify which students require tiered behavior interventions. Document these decisions. | Confirm that 100% students hitting behavior triggers are in an appropriate behavior intervention. |
| Prepare for and facilitate monthly data meetings to monitor the effectiveness of behavior interventions. Collect, analyze, and communicate data trends (special education, struggling scholars, etc.) and proactively problem-solve ways to better serve all scholars. | Review findings of data meetings and next steps for students making insufficient progress. |
| Facilitate the Tier 3 Child Study Team and ensure Tier 2 Grade Level Child Study Teams meetings are occurring at least bi-weekly. | Provide feedback to the DSS on the clarity and transferability of feedback sent to GLCST on Tier 2 plans. |
| Ensure Tier 2 behavior interventions are created, rolled out, implemented with fidelity and monitored at the grade level. | Review BSP findings from BSP fidelity checklists and ensure teacher actions steps are specific, high-impact and transferrable. If necessary, co-observe or rehearse conversation with teachers. |
| Ensure Tier 3 BIPs are developed using a FBA, rolled out clearly to teacher and families, implemented with fidelity, monitored with data and clearly documented | Review BIP findings from BIP fidelity checklists and ensure teacher actions steps are specific, high-impact and transferrable. If necessary, co-observe or rehearse conversation with teachers. |
| Identify students making insufficient growth despite receiving slowly intensifying interventions and facilitate a team meeting to determine whether the student should be referred for a special education evaluation. | Ensure robust and intensifying interventions have been implemented prior to referring a child for special education evaluation. |
| Maintain a “suspension watch-list” for students who have demonstrated a pattern of concerning behaviors to trigger a conversation between the DOS, SSL and principal prior to issuing a suspension. | Ensure that any scholar who is approaching 10 days of suspension is receiving interventions (This includes partnering with the district to proactively communicate the possibility of upcoming potential MDRs.) |
| Trigger the Manifestation Determination Review process, if necessary (including managing preparation of materials.) | Probe to uncover underlying gaps in the school’s actions and assumptions which led to the student requiring an MDR. |

**Achievement First Dean of Special Services: Key Data to Drive Work**

*The following table is intended for use as a guide.*

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| **Key Data to Look At:** | **Most Helpful Reports to Review:** | **Frequency** | **Purpose** |
| **Behavior Data** | 1. School based Google tracker of all students and all triggers 2. [Suspension Dashboard](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/Suspensions/Goals?:embed=yes&:toolbar=top#1) 3. [Removal Management  Report](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/RemovalReport_vFinal/RemovalManagement?:embed=yes&:toolbar=top&:refresh=yes" \l "1) 4. [Student Trends Report](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/StudentTrends/Support?:embed=yes#11) 5. Monthly SPATA Report | Weekly | * Gather information for tiered interventions and Behavior Support Plans * Schedule Manifestation Determination Review meetings (if needed) * Identify the school’s most struggling scholars and teachers * Develop individual support plans to accelerate growth * Track the implementation of the plans and progress monitor * Identify students for Tier 2 and Tier 3 Intervention using network triggers * Create school-wide action plans to best serve subsets of scholars * Identify positive outliers and ensure students receive recognition * Identify scholars whose promotion is in doubt and diagnose why in order to build a support plan and communicate to parents |
| **Walkthrough Data** | 1. Walkthrough data 2. Observation Tracker Data | Bi-weekly | * Identify struggling teachers, whole-school pain points and whole-school trends for PD * Action plan around the data to determine coaching and PD priorities * Observe CTT and Intervention classes at least as often as core content classes * Ensure that coaches of co-teachers are providing CTT specific feedback |
| **Special Services Data** | 1. Monthly SPATA Report | Monthly | * Surface Special Services data trends * Review key data including: Demographics, Suspensions, Withdrawals, Annual Review, Initial Referrals |
| **Weekly Quiz or Exit Ticket Data** | 1. [Weekly Quiz Report](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/WeeklyQuizReport/Summary?:embed=yes&:toolbar=top#8) | Weekly | Alongside teachers, or in reflections with teachers :   * Evaluate what scholars are understanding or able to do independently * Review student work to provide targeted feedback for students, including opportunities to re-do work * Determine how upcoming lessons may need to be adjusted based on foundational skills scholars are in the process of building |
| **Student Grades** | 1. Student Grades in IC  2. [Grade Book KPI Report](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/GradeBookKPI/StudentLevelGrades?:embed=yes&:toolbar=top#3)  3. [GPA Report](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/GPAKPI/Goals?:embed=yes&:toolbar=top#17) | Monthly | * Evaluate if specific classes have a high % of students failing, or unusually high/low grade distributions. If so, dig deeper into gradebook practices and student performance. * Identify any courses or grades with a strong disparity in % of students with IEPs vs. without IEPs failing and intervene as necessary. * Identify scholars who are at risk of failing courses |
| **Observation Tracker Data** | 1. Observation Summary  2. AF Essentials Summary | Every 2 weeks- monthly | * Assess if you are consistently observing the teachers in your portfolio * Identify trends in teacher needs to inform upcoming PD |
| **IA Data** | 1. [IA vs. State Test Scatter Plot](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/IAScatterReport/ScholarScatter?:embed=yes&:toolbar=top#4)  2. [Results by Proficiency Level](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/IASummary/ResultsbyProficiencyLevel?:embed=yes&:toolbar=top#5)  3. [Performance by Question](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/IAQuestion-StandardReport/IAPerformancebyTestQuestionorStandard?:embed=yes&:toolbar=top#6)  4. Test Item and Error Analysis w/ Student Work (Helpful for all content areas- especially ELA)  5. [Illuminate DNA Reports](https://achievementfirst.illuminateed.com/live/?prev_page=DashboardPage&page=SisLogin) | After each IA cycle (3 times/year) | * Step back to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and progress that scholars are making relative to similar scholars and other AF schools * Dive deep into student performance by passage, standard, or question and analyze student work to understand scholar misconceptions * Work with teachers to prioritize key next steps for instruction based on common needs across scholars * Identify scholars in need of intervention and make decisions on what to prioritize based on their misconceptions/ gaps |
| **Reading Achievement Tracker Data/ RAT**  **(K-8)**  **and**  **Math Intervention Data (5-8)** | 1. [Universal Screener Completion Report](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/STARCompletionReport/STARFluency?:embed=yes&:toolbar=top#2)  2. [Current Proficiency Report](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/RATProficiencyReport/CurrentProficiency?:embed=yes&:toolbar=top#12)  3. [RAT Proficiency Over Time](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/RATProficiencyReport/ProficiencyOverTime?:embed=yes&:toolbar=top#14)  4. [Reading Universal Screener Proficiency](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/ReadingFluencyUniversalScreeners/Proficiency?:embed=yes&:toolbar=top#2)  5. [STAR Math Report](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/#/views/STARMathReport/STARMathReportSummary?:iid=3) | Every 6 weeks | * Monitor if students are being tested at each point in the year * Given the benchmarks for this point in the year, analyze if grades are on track to hit proficiency goals for the end of the year. If they are not, dive deeper into trends to determine what changes may need to take place. * If interventions are entered into RAT, evaluate the impact of interventions on student growth. Students in interventions should be growing faster than students who are not. * Identify students who may be in need of interventions and use the “factor holding back” to determine which intervention is the best fit for students. * Step back to ensure all students that need intervention are in the right intervention * Use the data to inform intervention grouping |
| **Promotion in Doubt Data** | 1. PID Report ([ES](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/ElementarySchoolPID2015/GradesK-2?:embed=yes&:toolbar=top), [MS](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/MiddleSchoolPID2015/MiddleSchoolPID?:embed=yes&:toolbar=top), [HS](https://tableau.achievementfirst.org/views/HighSchoolPID2015/HighSchoolPID?:embed=yes&:toolbar=top#4)) | At the end of each trimester/quarter (3-4 times/year) | * With the AD, identify grades that are outliers in the number of scholars who are PID * With the AD, identify scholars whose promotion is in doubt and diagnose why in order to build a support plan and communicate to parents |