

# Preparing and Conducting the IEP Meetings

1. After the determination is made to convene an IEP meeting, coordinate the date, time and location with parent(s)/guardians and all personnel that are required to be in attendance. This should include the parent(s)/guardian(s), special education teacher, regular education teacher (when applicable), related service personnel, school/district representative, member of the assessment team, interpreter if necessary, and other agencies as needed.
2. Complete and send out ISBE form 34-57E, Parent/Guardian Notification of Conference a minimum of 10 calendar days prior to the scheduled meeting date. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may waive the 10-day notice for conference notification, in which case it must be documented on the Notification of Conference form.
3. At the IEP meeting:
  - Greet those in attendance and state the purpose of the meeting;
  - Begin with introductions of those in attendance and their titles;
  - Review student's positive attributes and growth. Be sure each person has an opportunity to provide input;
  - Review and update current goals and discuss progress the student has made;
  - Discuss student's area(s) of need that may need additional goals and/or services;
  - Write new goals and objectives, if needed. Goals and objectives may be written before the IEP meeting, understanding that they are drafts and are subject to change if necessary. The IEP must include at least one annual goal with a short-term objective that is measurable and leads from the student's present level of performance;
  - When considering minutes, start with the total number of instructional minutes in the school day. Instructional minutes are calculated by totaling the minutes in the school day, and then subtracting out lunch, recess, hall passing times, or anytime where direct instruction is not happening. Minutes related to the special education services are totaled on page 1 of the IEP. The total number of special education minutes divided by the total instructional minutes will produce a percentage. This percentage will help you arrive at the appropriate Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) code.

- As a team, determine the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) located on page 6 of the IEP;
- Be sure the transition plan is updated at least annually for students who will be 14 or older during the school year for which the IEP is written;
- Address the topic of Extended School Year (ESY) services for the students;
- At least one year prior to a student's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, ISBE form 34-57I, Notification of Transfer of Rights Due to Age of Majority, must be sent to inform both the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student that transfer of rights will automatically occur unless a court order states otherwise;
- Take a minute to look over the whole IEP document to check if all information has been completed and addressed;
- Prior to adjoining the IEP meeting, review the contents of the IEP and ask the parent(s)/guardian(s) if they have any questions. Give a copy of the completed IEP to the parent along with the ISBE form 34-57F, Notification of Conference Recommendations. Ask the parent(s)/guardian(s) if they have any questions regarding the *Explanation of Procedural Safeguards*;
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- Copies of the IEP should be distributed as follows:
  1. Copy with the original signatures sent to a Tri-County Office;
  2. Copy to the special education teacher;
  3. Copy to the regular education teacher (if applicable);
  4. Copy to the school office.

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Sometimes IEP meetings can become stressful and quite possibly adversarial. If this is the case, here are some suggestions to help manage these tough IEP meetings:

- Invite a Tri-County administrator or team member as an outside resources, or to help conduct the meeting;
- Develop an agenda for running the meeting;

- Send home a draft IEP before the meeting for parent input;
- Avoid “educationese”;
- Prepare for the meeting by knowing what the issue(s) are, and try to formulate a plan to resolve the issue;
- Take the time to go over the IEP with the parent thoroughly. This way they leave without any unanswered questions;
- Set a time limit on the meeting. Meetings that run too long become unproductive;
- Don’t be afraid to adjourn the meeting. There may be times that other individuals should be present, additional information may need to be gathered, or the meeting has run too long.

Remember that you may not be able to resolve all differences. If this is the case there is a process in place to help resolve disputes. Utilizing common sense along with treating the parent(s)/guardian(s) as equals in the IEP process will help develop a positive, working relationship.