

Quality Indicator Review and Resource Guides for Special Education Instructional Practices

The Committee on Special Education (CSE)/Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) Process and Individualized Education Program (IEP) Development

Introduction

The IEP is the cornerstone of the special education process for each individual student. It is the tool to document how one student's special needs will be met within the context of an educational curriculum and environment. The IEP development process and implementation need to be premised on the research and experience that have shown that to improve results for students with disabilities, schools must:

- Have high expectations for students with disabilities;
- Ensure their access in the general education curriculum to the maximum extent possible;
- Strengthen the role of parents and take steps to ensure that families have meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children at school and at home;
- Ensure that special education is a service, rather than a place where students are sent;
- Provide appropriate special education services, aids and supports in the general education classroom, whenever appropriate;
- Ensure that all those who work with students with disabilities have the skills and knowledge necessary to:
 - Help these students meet developmental goals and, to the maximum extent possible, the challenging expectations established for all children, and
 - Prepare them to lead productive, independent adult lives, to the maximum extent possible;
- Provide high quality research-based instruction and supports to all students who are experiencing learning difficulties to reduce the need to label children as having disabilities in order to address their learning needs; and
- Focus resources on teaching and learning.

The Foundation of an Effective Special Education Process

Appropriately developed IEPs and high quality research-based specially-designed instructional practices (i.e., special education) are essential to ensure a free appropriate public education to a student with a disability; but the context and environment in which the student's IEP is implemented are equally as important. Because special education is a service and not a place, a high quality and effective special education program relies in great part on the quality of the school district as a whole, including, but not limited to the following:

- Administrative support for the CSE process, including access to training necessary for CSE members to understand and follow

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through on their responsibilities.

- Administrative support to ensure implementation of CSE recommendations.
- A philosophy and practices that support inclusion of students with disabilities in all buildings and classrooms.
- Effective communication systems among school principals, CSE chairpersons, special and general education teachers and service providers.
- High quality early intervening services, including research-based instruction; systems to continually screen, monitor and intervene to address a student's response to instruction (e.g., "response to intervention"); school-wide, classroom-based and small group positive behavioral supports and services; and culturally responsive instruction and environments.
- Knowledgeable and qualified personnel to conduct individual evaluations, provide special education, and instruct students in core curriculum.

The IEP and IEP Development Process

The IEP is a strategic planning document that identifies a student's unique needs and how the school will strategically address those needs in IEPs:

- Guide how the resources of a school will be configured.
- Identify how students will be incrementally prepared for adult living.
- Provide an important accountability tool for school personnel, students, and parents to measure students' progress toward goals and objectives, and to determine whether the school has appropriately configured how it uses its resources to reach the desired outcomes for students with disabilities.
- Ensure that each student with a disability has access to the general education curriculum and is provided the appropriate learning opportunities, accommodations, adaptations, specialized services and supports needed for the student to progress toward achieving the learning standards and to meet his or her unique needs related to the disability.

The IEP development process is a student-centered process. No other issues, agenda or purposes should interfere with this process.

- Information provided by parents regarding their child's strengths and needs is a vital part of the evaluation and is considered in developing an IEP.
- All members of the Committee share the responsibility to contribute meaningfully in the development of a student's IEP and to make recommendations that are based on the student's present levels of performance and in consideration of the student's strengths, needs, interests and preferences, and the concerns of the parents for the education of their child.
- CSEs include individuals who know the student and his or her unique needs and who have the authority to commit the school's resources to address the student's needs.
- Individuals serving on CSEs can articulate their role and execute their responsibilities on the Committee.

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- CSEs include individuals who contribute meaningfully to the discussion of the student's strengths and needs and how those needs can be met in the least restrictive environment.
- The IEP must be developed in such a way that it is a useful document that guides instruction and provides a tool to measure progress.
- The IEP should appropriately address all the student's unique needs without regard to the current availability of needed services.
- The IEP development process must include steps to ensure IEP implementation.
- All staff with responsibility to implement a student's IEP must be specifically informed of their responsibilities and be provided a copy (or, as appropriate, access to a copy) of the student's IEP.
- Resources necessary for the student's IEP to be implemented must be accessed in a timely manner.
- Systems of progress monitoring of the student's progress toward the annual goals must be established and consistently implemented.
- The student's parents must be regularly informed of their child's progress.

This Quality Indicator Review and Resource Guide focuses on three areas essential to a quality CSE and IEP development process

I. Individualized Education Program (IEP) Development

IEPs for students with disabilities developed by the CSE/CPSE result in student access, participation and progress in the general education curriculum and address other disability needs of the student.

- Results of individual evaluations provide the information the CSE needs to make its recommendations.
- The student's strengths and needs guide IEP development.
- The CSE considers the interrelationship of the impact of the student's disability and the components of the IEP.
- IEP development occurs in a structured, sequential manner.
- IEPs include documentation of recommendations in a clear and specific manner so that the IEP can be implemented consistent with the CSE recommendations.
- Annual goals are identified to enable the student to progress in the general education curriculum and meet other disability related needs.
- The CSE determines how student needs will be met in the least restrictive environment.
- The CSE demonstrates knowledge of grade level general education curricular and behavioral expectations and benchmarks.

II. Resource Allocation

The district uses data on the needs of current and future students that are analyzed to determine the procurement, allocation and/or reallocation of resources required to support the CSE process and implement IEP services and supports

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for students.

- Professional development is provided to CSE members to ensure their understanding of their roles and responsibilities on the CSE.
- The district understands its child find responsibilities to identify students whose needs may need to be addressed by the CSE.
- Students' needs determine the allocation of personnel and material resources.

III. IEP Implementation

IEPS are implemented with fidelity and adjusted based on student response to instruction.

- Ongoing progress monitoring and formative assessment of student progress, goals and objectives are consistently implemented.
- Revisions to the IEP are made based on data indicating changes in student needs or abilities.
- Alignment between the written document and actual practice is evident.

Indicator: IEP Development		
<p>Outcome: IEPs for students with disabilities developed by the CSE result in student access, participation and progress in the general education curriculum and address a student's other disability needs.</p> <p>Driving Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the CSE obtain a comprehensive individual evaluation of the student in all areas of the suspected disability? • Does the CSE have sufficient information about the student's response to instruction in the general education environment? • Is all evaluation information and prereferral information considered and discussed at the meeting? • Does the CSE have information about the general education curriculum, context, services and assessments to support decision making to make meaningful recommendations for each student? • Does the CSE understand the unique nature of the student's disability and consider that information in making its recommendations? • Do the members of the CSE/CPSE understand the Committee process and expectations and their roles, including the information about the student, evaluations, curricula and State and district-wide assessment that they are expected to bring to the Committee discussions? • Are the parent's concerns and the student's strengths, preferences and interests evident in the IEP? 		
Quality Indicators	Look for	Comments/Evidence
<p>Results of individual evaluations provide the information the CSE needs to make its recommendations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation results are reported in a manner that provides sufficient basis for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ present levels of performance (PLP); ○ comparison to typically developing peers and grade-level expectations; ○ unique learning characteristics and educational 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> needs of the student; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ development of IEP annual goals and, as appropriate, short-term instructional objectives and benchmarks; and ○ transition activities. ● Evaluation results provide sufficient baseline information for future determination of progress in all areas of the suspected disability. ● Evaluation reports are written in clear, precise, and easily understood language that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jargon free ○ Succinct ○ Provided in the language/mode of communication understood by the parent ● Evaluation reports identify the nature and extent to which the student may need environmental modifications or accommodations; human and material resources to support learning in the general education curriculum and environment. ● Evaluation reports provide instructionally relevant information that provides insight into the student's learning characteristics and needs and supports development and provision of instruction likely to result in achievement of the student's IEP goals. ● A student's performance on State and district-wide assessments is discussed, considered and documented during the CSE meeting. 	
<p>Student's strengths and needs guide IEP development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CSE discussions and IEP recommendations are based on the strengths and needs of the student. ● Clear, concise PLP statements are written in user friendly language, and are a thorough description of student strengths and needs. 	
<p>The CSE considers the interrelationship of the impact of the student's disability and the components of the IEP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parent input is solicited, discussed and given meaningful consideration in the development of the IEP. ● The CSE reviews, discusses, analyzes and evaluates the student's progress toward annual goals in order to address his/her unique needs related to the disability. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CSE considers the student's progress in his/her current educational program and/or IEP as a baseline for creation of the new IEP. • The CSE evaluates the current IEP to determine if it was sufficient to achieve educational benefit for the child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Annual goals and special education programs and services were identified to address all identified needs. ○ The student acquired new knowledge and skills, and student's rate of progress was sufficient to meet IEP goals and objectives. • The CSE considers the level of growth in the student's social interaction, behavioral, academic and emotional skills in evaluating progress. 	
<p>IEP development occurs in a structured, sequential manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of PLP, based on unique student strengths and needs, provides basis for remainder of IEP. • Goals identify the knowledge and skills the student will achieve by the end of the school year based on needs identified in the PLP, and include consideration of measurable post-secondary goals based on identified transition needs for students who are or will be 15 during the period covered by the IEP. • Recommended special education program and services, accommodations, and modifications needed for student to achieve goals are discussed. • Placement is the last recommendation made in consideration of the least restrictive environment in which the student's IEP can be implemented. 	
<p>IEPs include documentation of recommendations in a clear and specific manner so that the IEP can be implemented consistent with the CSE recommendations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations are written in language the parents and educators can understand. • Recommendations are clearly stated as to identify the district's commitment of resources to assist the student in reaching his or her goals. 	
<p>Annual goals are identified to enable the student to progress in the general</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determination of individual needs (i.e., present levels of performance) provide the basis for written annual goals. 	

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<p>education curriculum and meet other disability related needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term instructional objectives, are identified to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ enable the student to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum (or for preschool students, in appropriate activities); and ○ meet each of the student's other educational needs that result from the student's disability. • Annual goals focus on the knowledge, skills, behaviors and strategies to address the student's needs. • Goals are developed in consideration of the student's need to progress toward the State standards by identifying the foundation knowledge (e.g., reading/math) necessary to meet the standards and/or the learning strategies that will help him or her to learn the curriculum content. • Targeted learning outcomes/goals are closely aligned to the general education curriculum and aligned with the age/developmental level of the class or grade level. • Annual goals define the path from the student's present level of performance to a level of performance expected by the end of the year. • IEP goals and objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ instructionally relevant; ○ measurable; ○ aligned with identified targeted needs; ○ reasonably achievable in the period covered by the IEP; ○ congruent with the student's ability/disability; and ○ designed to support participation and success in the general education curriculum. 	
<p>The CSE determines how student needs will be met in the least restrictive environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In development of the IEP, the CSE first considers all potentially successful accommodations, program modifications, supplementary aids and services, behavioral supports and services and special education services that can occur within the regular education environment before considering services or programs that remove the 	

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	<p>student from the regular classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CSE actively considers and recommends accommodations or modifications to instruction and/or the use of adaptive technology as necessary to ensure access to the general education curriculum. • The IEP includes support for school personnel (professional development or technical assistance) as needed to implement the IEP. 	
<p>The CSE demonstrates knowledge of grade level general education curricular and behavioral expectations and benchmarks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CSE membership includes persons with knowledge of NYS Learning Standards, grade level curriculum content, curriculum maps, and grade level and subject area skill sets, including recognized hierarchal and sequential order of skill acquisition. • The CSE uses knowledge of the continuum of appropriate academic and behavior intervention strategies for subject areas and age/developmental levels. • The CSE understands, discusses, and uses information about “hidden curriculum” (social interaction) issues and considerations specific to grade, classroom or building in determining need for accommodations and supports of skill acquisition. • CSE considers issues of access, participation and progress in relation to each individual student's needs, including, but not limited to, consideration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ curriculum content; ○ modifications to instructional materials; ○ rate of learning; ○ physical environments; ○ demonstration of learning; ○ instructional approaches; ○ instructional supports; and ○ behavioral supports. 	
<p>Dimension: Resource Allocation</p>		
<p>Outcome: The district uses data on the needs of current and future students to determine the procurement, allocation and/or reallocations of resources required to support the CSE process and implement IEP services and supports for students.</p> <p>Driving Questions:</p>		

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the BOE and administration ensured availability of resources to support the CSE process? • Are the resources readily available to support implementation of the recommendations? 		
Quality Indicators	Look For	Comments/Evidence
<p>Professional development is provided to CSE members to ensure their understanding of their roles and responsibilities on the CSE.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district has documented a procedure for ensuring that members of the committee have access to professional development (PD) addressing their roles and responsibilities. • The district has documentation of provision of PD in an accessible format and timeframe. • The district has documentation of participation in PD for all who may participate as members of the CSE/CPSE, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chairperson ○ Special education teachers ○ Related service providers ○ General education teachers ○ Parent members 	
<p>The district understands its child find responsibilities to identify students whose needs may need to be addressed by the CSE.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district has equitable procedures and practices for child find, including procedures for students who are homeless, wards of the State, migrant, limited English proficient, home schooled and parentally placed in private schools located in the school district. • The district sends the CSE chairperson or representative to planning meetings for students transitioning from Early Intervention to preschool. • The district ensures that data used to determine student's need for referral for special education are collected through valid and reliable screening tools, including assessment of the effectiveness of general education instruction and supports (e.g., response-to-intervention). • The district plans strategically (e.g., longitudinal data on increases or decreases of students in certain disability categories, such as autism, that may result in the need to reallocate resources). • The district has procedures in place to complete individual evaluations of students suspected of having a 	

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<p>Students' needs determine the allocation of personnel and material resources.</p>	<p>disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full continuum of special education services is available to each student. • All members of the CSE team understand the purpose and LRE implications of each service along the continuum. • Students' needs for special education programs drive how the school district configures its special education services/ resources to meet those needs (e.g., staff are assigned as special class teachers, resource room teachers or consultant teachers depending on the number of students requiring such services as determined at initial and annual review meetings). • The district has a procedure in place to ensure students needing instructional materials in alternative formats receive them at the same time that other students receive their instructional materials. • District has procedures in place to ensure equipment and materials are provided to support student access of the general education curriculum (e.g., Assistive Technology, needed furniture such as tilt tables, bathroom lift, auditory enhancers) as recommended in the IEP. 	
<p>Dimension: IEP Implementation</p>		
<p>Desired Outcome: IEPs are implemented with fidelity and adjusted based on student response to instruction.</p>		
<p>Driving Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the chairperson identified a professional staff person(s) to inform staff of their IEP implementation responsibilities for each student? • Do all staff responsible for implementation of a student's IEP have a copy of (or, as appropriate, access to a copy of) the IEP? • Has the necessary follow-up occurred to ensure that implementation of the IEP and monitoring of progress toward the annual goals are occurring according to the method and schedule in the IEP? • Are instruction and/or related services adjusted to meet changing needs of the student? • Are services prioritized to ensure that the services are implemented in such a way as to address the student's needs with the greatest impact and least disruption of instruction? • What process/procedures are in place for parents and school personnel to inform the CSE if the student is not likely to meet his/her annual goals by the end of the year to consider changes to the student's IEP recommendations? 		
<p>Quality Indicators</p>	<p>Look for</p>	<p>Comments/Evidence</p>

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<p>Ongoing progress monitoring and formative assessment of student progress, goals and objectives is consistently implemented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLPs establish a measurable baseline of student’s abilities and needs for determining progress. • Instructional staff use a broad range of objective data collection methods to monitor student progress. • Impact achieved from implementation of recommended strategies is documented. • Instructional staff use data from progress monitoring to inform instruction. • Periodic reports to parents and others provide specific data, in measurable terms, on the extent to which the student has progressed toward meeting annual goals. • Progress is reported to parents in a manner that is understandable to them (measurable, jargon free, objective not subjective). 	
<p>Revisions to the IEP are made based on data indicating changes in student needs or abilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from progress monitoring drives decisions made to modify the IEP. • Staff use student progress data as evidence to assess the effectiveness of each special education instructional service and strategy that has been implemented to determine if the instructional approach is effective with the student. • Documentation verifies that interventions have been implemented with fidelity (training, observations) prior to request for change. • Evidence exists that when progress monitoring shows the student is not likely to reach his/her annual goals, the district schedules IEP reviews in a timely manner to review and, if appropriate, revise the IEP. 	
<p>Alignment between written document and actual practice is evident.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom instruction and activities are aligned with the IEP goals and objectives. • Special education teachers and related service providers are providing specially designed instruction individualized to the student’s needs and designed to support acquisition, generalization, and maintenance of knowledge, skill and learning strategies 	

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RESOURCES

NYS Documentation

- NYS Sample IEP and Guidance Document: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/formsnotices/IEP/home.html>
- Quality Indicator Review and Resource Guides: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/techassist/QIcover.htm>
 - Literacy
 - Behavioral Supports and Interventions
 - Special Education Instructional Practices
- Test Access and Accommodations Manual: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/testaccess/policyguide.htm>
- The following resources provide additional information based on federal special education legislation and regulations. Please consult Parts 200 and 201 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education on the Special Education website at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/lawsregs/part200.htm>.

Assessment

- OSEP Ideas that Work – Tool Kit on Assessing Students with Disabilities: <http://www.osepideasthatwork.org/toolkit/index.asp>.
- LEARNet Problem Solving System and Resource Website – Dr. Mark Ylivasker: <http://www.projectlearn.net>.

Data Driven Decision Making

- Data Driven Dialogue – A Facilitator’s Guide to Collaborative Inquiry; Bruce Wellman and Laura Lipton, Miravia, 2003
- Intervention Central – Dr. Jim Wright’s website of free tools and resources of academic and behavioral intervention strategies, publications on effective teaching practices, and tools that streamline classroom assessment and intervention. <http://www.InterventionCentral.org>

IEP Development

- Aligning IEPs to Academic Standards for Students with Moderate to Severe Disabilities; G. Courade-Little and D. Browder, IEP Resources, 2005
- Getting to Know Special Education: The General Educators Guide; G. Klor, LRP Publications, 2007
- From Gobbledygook to Clearly Written Annual IEP Goals; Barbara D. Bateman, Ph.D. and J.D., Tom Kinney, IEP Resources, 2006
- Writing Measurable IEP Goals and Objectives; Barbara D. Bateman and Cynthia M. Herr, IEP Resources, 2006
- Better IEPs How to Develop Legally Correct and Educationally Useful Programs; Barbara D. Bateman and Mary Anne Linden, IEP Resources, 2006
- Understanding, Developing, and Writing Effective IEPs; Roger Pierangelo and George Giuliani, Corwin Press, 2007

Team Process

- Seven Habits of Highly Effective IEP Teams: <http://www.ldonline.org/article/6360> or <http://www.lदानatl.org/newsbriefs/sevenhabits.pdf>

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- A Decision Framework for IEP Teams Related to Methods for Individual Student Participation in State Accountability Assessments: <http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/speced/toolkit/iep-teams.doc>
- Understanding Positions and Interests: http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/understanding_pos.cfm
- CADRE - The National Center on Dispute Resolution in Special Education: <http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/>
- Tested Tips for IEP Meetings: <http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/testedtips.cfm>
- Better IEP Meetings - Everyone Wins; Cynthia M. Herr and Barbara D. Bateman, IEP Resources, 2005