

Annual Review

The law requires schools to hold an annual review of a student's IEP. Case managers are responsible for maintaining a log of their case load indicating when each student is due for an annual review. The case manager schedules this meeting prior to the end date of the current IEP. At the annual review, the team discusses progress on the current goals, current performance levels, and addresses new goals for the new IEP. Copies of progress reports on the previous goals should be attached.

Annual reviews should be held no later than the date of the initial IEP or last IEP Annual Review. It is strongly advised to schedule the meeting date prior to the actual due date to allow opportunity to reschedule the meeting if cancellations need to occur. Per ISBE guidelines, failure to meet the Annual Review due date results in non-compliance.

All forms associated with the respective type of IEP meeting (Annual Review or IEP Review) must be completed.

IEP MEETING FORMAT

At NO time shall an IEP be written for a student who is NOT eligible for special education. If a student no longer requires special education services, then the child must be re-evaluated. At NO time shall a student remain on an IEP when the student no longer requires special education services.

Format of Meeting

The IEP team shall designate a person to facilitate the IEP. This person shall be knowledgeable about the IEP process and be able to handle any conflicts that may arise. Another person shall be designated as the note-taker and should document the discussions held.

Notes should ensure what is agreed to in the IEP meeting and that it is clear and incorporated into the final agreed version of the IEP document. Items that should be reflected in the meeting notes may include:

- Any evaluation considered (including outside evaluations)
- Each placement option considered, and relevant discussion about each option
- Relevant parental concerns or requests, and any responses thereto
- Any option rejected by either the school district or the parent
- Identify all services in the written IEP
- Facts as presented in the meeting

- IEP team member's recommendations, questions, consent and disagreement
- IEP team member participation or lack thereof
- Define unfamiliar terms

Notes shall not simply be a verbatim recording of every statement made in the meeting. They should not include inflammatory or accusatory language that may aggravate what already may be a contentious situation in some cases. Finally, notes should not include a specific methodology for teaching or curriculum. If a particular methodology or curriculum is not necessary for a student to receive FAPE, then it does not need to be addressed in the IEP.

IEP conferences should begin with introductions and a statement of the purpose of the meeting, which is to develop an "Individual Education Program" or IEP. Parents should be informed that the process involves discussing the child's progress, setting educational goals for the next year, determining the special education services necessary to meet the goals, and determining the child's educational placement.

Since portions of the IEP may be written prior to the meeting, the facilitator MUST indicate that the IEP is in "**DRAFT**" form only and is meant for discussion purposes only. A final IEP will be developed during the meeting. (Failure to indicate that the IEP is a "draft" could suggest that the team "pre-determined" services and placement, which is a violation of special education rules and regulations. When providing draft IEPs, it is mandated that a copy of the draft be sent to the parent 3 days in advance of the meeting in order for them to have time to review and be prepared to provide input at the meeting.)

The team should review the student's present level of performance and growth on previous goals if available. All instructors and related service personnel should share input in this discussion.

Following a review of present levels, then goals and objectives should be developed.

After developing goals, the team should discuss the necessary accommodations needed. After accommodations are discussed, then the team can discuss the special education services and educational placement.

Placement decisions shall NOT be made until the goals and objectives have been discussed.

Throughout the process, parents should have the opportunity to participate in the discussions. Any parent concerns should be noted in the appropriate section of the IEP or on the Additional Notes page. The notetaker is responsible for documenting the parental concerns and the team's response to each concern.

The facilitator is responsible for ensuring that proper IEP procedures are followed and that consensus of team members have been obtained. The facilitator shall adhere to these criteria for consensus:

- Each person agrees they have been heard
- Group members support the decision even if it is not their first choice
- Everyone is committed and will support the decision as if it were their first choice
 - o It is not appropriate to make an IEP decision based upon a majority "vote" because the IEP team is composed of parents and school personnel as equal participants that should work towards a consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached the school district is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the IEP includes the services the student needs to receive FAPE.

At the end of the meeting, the facilitator will identify communication, follow-up and implementation issues that will need to be addressed once the meeting concludes. Finally, the facilitator will summarize decisions made during the meeting.

What Facilitators Should Do When Advocates Attend Meetings

Prior to the IEP meeting, seek parent consent to speak to their advocate to find out if there is anything specific that the parent will want to discuss in the meeting. This will help the facilitator narrow the focus and plan for the IEP.

During the IEP meeting, direct questions to the parent and the advocate. If an advocate speaks up in disagreement, turn to the parent and ask, "Is this true?" If the parent allows the advocate to speak for them, document this in the notes.

Enforce a code of conduct during the meeting. Do not allow the advocate or other IEP team members to behave inappropriately. Do not allow IEP team members to question the advocate's qualifications. If the advocate is belligerent, give a warning, then tell him/her that if behavior continues, you will ask them to leave.