

FYI About the IEP
(Individualized Educational Plan)



South Lyon Community Schools
Special Services Department

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FYI About the IEP

We will begin our explanation of the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) on the first page. This page provides background information for annual reviews and the critical information on eligibility for initial IEPs. Be sure that you take the time to check this page for correct information regarding name, address and phone number. We use this information for our data base to send information from our office or to contact you, as necessary.

The information at the top of the page should reflect the current status of the student. This includes the IEP Date, Prior IEP Date, Initial/most recent reevaluation IEP Date, Birth date, Grade, Gender, and Student ID (optional).

In completing the area marked **The Purpose of this IEP Team meeting is to Discuss**, be sure that the box(es) checked reflect the same information as the box(es) checked on the letter inviting the parent to the meeting. Parents are to be informed, in writing, at least ten days prior to the IEP meeting as to the purpose of the meeting. Parents may agree to a shorter notice if they wish to expedite an IEP meeting.

Your signature in the **IEP Team Meeting Participants in Attendance** simply means that you are a PARTICIPANT and does not mean agreement to the IEP. You will also notice a box and/or a circle next to the names of the staff members. If the staff member checks the box, they are indicating that they can explain the evaluations and instructional implications of these for the student. If the staff member checks the circle, they are indicating that they are a team member who has observed the student who is suspected of a learning disability.

The critical information on this page is the **Eligibility for Special Education**. Be sure that the box indicating *Ineligible* or *Eligible* is checked. Both the name of the disability and the service number must be included as the primary disability. We are only required to list the primary disability, but some teachers may indicate a secondary disability, if applicable.

A new area on the IEP is **Attendance Not Necessary and Excusal Prior to the IEP Team Meeting**. With the reauthorization of 2004, parents may excuse a member of the IEP team from attending the meeting. This can only be done with parent approval. It is expected that the member not attending will provide the parent with a written report prior to the meeting and be available to discuss this report further should it be necessary.

In the area designated **Factors to Consider in Order to Provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** you will notice check boxes regarding areas that we must cover in our discussion of the IEP and the programs or services for your student. Be sure that the team members elicit your responses to these areas during the IEP and write comments, as necessary.

The **Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (Specify the Student Needs for Learning)** (PLEP) should list the areas of strength and deficits that impact your child's success in the general educational curriculum. All areas of deficit must be addressed. If your child receives an ancillary service, each ancillary service staff member

should contribute to the PLEP. Each Special Education staff member who provides a service to your child should develop a statement here regarding the manner that the student's deficit in that service area impacts their success. These same statements should be reflected at the top of each goal page written by each service provider.

For each question in the **Least Restrictive Environment**, you should notice that a YES has been indicated. If a NO was checked, an explanation is necessary. The Least Restrictive Environment is the general education classroom and the presumptive placement by law and should have been fully discussed to assure that it was considered for your child's placement.

The heart of any IEP is the **Annual Goals and Short Term Objectives** page. This page reflects the PLEP statements in each deficit area. The annual goal is then stated and should encapsulate the goal for one year. Short Term objectives are written in terms of *student* expectations. This is not the area to address teaching expectations. Student expectations are written as statements of what we will see the student do to assure success in the deficit area. Progress toward these goals must be reported to the parent at least every card marking. This page should be shared with parents at the card marking with indications of progress toward the goal. Parents should contact the teacher or service provider if they are unsure of the progress or have questions regarding amending or continuing the goal for the year. Evaluation, Criteria, and Schedules are explained in the boxes at the bottom of the page. You may have multiple pages of goals depending on the services provided and the goal areas addressed.

By using the area designated **Reporting Progress**, you may request progress reports more frequently than each card marking and use other criteria than the goal page to note progress, success in the general education curriculum or functional skills.

Special Education Programs/Related Services relates the goals/deficit areas to the programs and services needed. After reviewing the deficit areas and the goals addressing these deficits, the team decides what services will be necessary to support the successful attainment of the goals and minimize the deficit areas. Parents must be actively engaged in this discussion and seek clarification if they are unsure of the placement options. South Lyon Community Schools offers a full continuum of services within the district. Some low incidence populations require placement outside the district. In all cases, the least restrictive options should be considered first. Every program and service listed here should have been addressed in the PLEP statement and have a set of goals developed.

In addressing **Supplementary Aids/Services/Personnel Support**, the team will consider any other supports that would be necessary to provide instruction in the least restrictive environment. Many times this area is left blank due to the lack of a need for any supplemental supports. The deficits are generally addressed with programs and services without the need for supplemental supports.

Special Transportation is sometimes necessary to meet the needs of particular students. Some of these services must be prearranged with the transportation department. If there are concerns regarding transportation, be sure to advise the special education staff prior to the IEP

meeting so that they can try to resolve the concern or arrange for a representative from the transportation department to attend.

Non-Public School Pupils have been guaranteed the option to pursue special education evaluation and support. This section has been added to the IEP to assure all eligible programs and services have been offered to these students.

When completing **State- and District-wide Assessment**, the team must consider how the student's deficit areas affect their success in the assessment process. The presumption is that all students will take the MEAP at their grade level. The district wide tests are also to be administered in accordance with the district expectations for the student's grade. Other assessments may be given in the special education setting to evaluate eligibility and progress using instruments geared to the student's functional level. It is expected that all students be successful with the curriculum and Special Education students need to be exposed to and successful with the same instruments as their nondisabled peers. The results also provide parents with information on the child's success in relation to their peers. It is highly recommended that all students be administered the MEAP and district wide assessments. A number of accommodations are allowed for special education students. Be sure to ask for the input of the team as to the appropriate accommodations for your child. Also support the decision of the team to assess your child using their grade level MEAP and district wide assessments when it is deemed appropriate for your child. Participation in assessments helps students with disabilities by:

- **Giving them access to the general curriculum.** If students with disabilities have to take the same test as the rest of the students in their grade, they must learn the same material. While they may receive accommodations, the goal will be to involve them in the general curriculum as much as possible so they'll perform as well as they can;
- **Improving teaching and learning.** Assessment data can help us identify areas where our teaching and learning strategies are doing well and where they might need improvement; and
- **Ensuring accountability.** Results on assessments will let us—and you—know whether our schools and programs are meeting the high expectations we all should have of them. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education and Improvement Act, we must report to the public, just as we must for general education, on how well our programs are doing.

The **Commitment Signatures** page is designated for the district to agree/disagree to the IEP placement and services. It is also the place for the district to verify that the student is not eligible for services under the IDEA law. A district representative, usually a principal or member of the special education staff, will sign as the designee.

If your child is attending school outside the district, the **Non-resident Operating district** box will be completed by the operating district. The operating district is the district where the student is attending if not the home district. This is not filled out for the students attending a South Lyon Community School.

The **Operating District Notice Requirements** should not be overlooked when finalizing an IEP. Parents should read this information carefully as it is the list of assurances that reflect current law. At the end of this paragraph, the placement is designated and the beginning and ending dates are noted. *An IEP can never extend more than one calendar year. IEPs can be written for shorter time frames.* In South Lyon, a parent can request a new IEP before the ending date specified. Parents can also request a review of an IEP if they have concerns on services or programming.

The last box is critical for all parents/guardians. This is the **Adult Providing IEP Consent** box. All parents (students at the age of 18) must be informed of their rights and understand the content of the IEP. The first box must be checked to verify this. The parent then has the options listed in the remaining five boxes. If the parent is in agreement, then the second box would be checked and the parent would sign and date the IEP. Note that the student may and should be present to sign the IEP also. This is especially important as the student matures and is able to provide input into the IEP.

The parent also has the options to disagree and seek further actions. At the request for due process hearing or mediation, the director will be contacted and the due process procedures explained.

At no time, should we implement an IEP without the parent signature. We need to assure the parent and our staff that the parent knows their rights and has their option indicated. We will make two contacts by letter to assure that the parent has had the opportunity to make their option known to the district. If we are unable to get a parent signature, we may reconvene the IEP and discontinue service. Remember, the signature page is your opportunity to inform the district of your agreement or disagreement. This allows for your input and assures your rights. Don't assume that the district can guess at your intent. Use the options available and sign the IEP.

Secondary Student IEPs (over the age of 13)

Parental Rights and Age of Majority is applicable to those students reaching the age of 17. At this time, we must inform students that they will become emancipated adults at the age of 18. If the student is not able to function independently, it is the parent's option to pursue guardianship. Information on guardianship can be provided by the ARC of Michigan.

Students who have reached the age of 13 or over will have additional areas to be addressed in the IEPs. You will notice **Student's Post Secondary Goals** is critical to consider in the decision making process regarding programming for secondary students. Students begin to think about what their goals will be and get actively involved in the IEP process. Students should be encouraged to attend and provide input to their IEP. Secondary students need to take ownership for their education through this process. Their participation will increase and become more sophisticated every time they experience this opportunity to contribute. *See attached "Eight Steps to Help Students Develop IEP Goals".*

Statement of Needed Transition Services is for those students having reached the age of 15. Students and parents should be questioned regarding each listed area. Special Education and general education staff should be providing information on student strengths and areas of deficit for future employment and self care. Instructional supports and goals should be addressed to minimize deficits as they relate to employment and self care. Responsible parties should be indicated to assure goals are addressed.

Courses of Study Addressing Post-School Transition Needs for Post-Secondary Adult Activities is for those students having reached the age of 15. This section aligns with “**Statement of Needed Transition Services**” and allows for further discussion and documentation to assure programs and services are being provided for successful transition to post secondary education/employment.

Eight Steps to Help Students Develop IEP Goals

BY JAMIE L. VAN DYCKE AND
LORI Y. PETERSON

Students with disabilities can help compose their IEP goals and objectives, even in the elementary grades, through the following eight-step process. In some cases, students may only perform one or two of the steps.

1. Evaluate current performance: How am I doing now?

Students can use the statement of their present level of performance to develop their goals. For secondary students, performance levels are often tied to graduation and show areas for improvement. For elementary students, terms and symbols such as independent or with help, can be used to identify their areas of strength and need.

2. Choose goal topic or ACTION: What do I want to work on? Or, What am I going to do?

Here the student needs to present an action that can be physically observed (orally read vs. read; describe in writing vs. understand). Each action must have a measurable outcome (written document or problems; number of words). While many education goals are standards driven, opportunities can be provided to exercise choice and ownership of goals.

3. Determine CONDITION: What am I going to use to reach the goal?

Conditions include level of difficulty, accommodations, modifications, strategies, or any special materials needed to perform the action.

4. Set CRITERIA: How well do I want to do?

Help students identify a target point that can be reasonably accomplished in the time frame. Students may over or under estimate criteria in the beginning. Experience with the process will help them set realistic criteria.

5. Write the GOAL: What do I want to accomplish?

At this point students would use their identified Action, Condition, and Criteria to write their goal. To assist students, the formula provided can be used as a fill-in-the-blank tool:
FORMULA: Given (CONDITION), (student) will (ACTION) with this success (CRITERIA).

6. Take ACTION: Do it!

7. Evaluate ACTION: How well am I doing?

Students can apply the terms or symbol(s) they used in Step 1 to state their performance and progress toward their goal.

8. Determine and make adjustments: What do I need to change?

Students respond to questions (What worked? What didn't work? What would have made it better?) to determine and make changes to the goal.