

Every Minute Counts

Calculating IEP Services to Improve Student Outcomes
in Washington State Technical Assistance Guide 2024



Center for Technology in Education



Prepared by:

Dr. Jennifer Kouo
Assistant Research Scientist
CTE, Johns Hopkins School of Education
jennifer.kouo@jhu.edu

Dr. Andrea Harkins-Brown
Assistant Research Scientist, Assistant Deputy Director
CTE, Johns Hopkins School of Education
andrea.parrish@jhu.edu

Vy Phung
Research Assistant
CTE, Johns Hopkins School of Education
vphung1@jhu.edu

Table of Contents



About the Every Minute Counts Project and Introduction to the Technical Assistance Guide	1
Overview	1
Focus Groups	1
Resulting Themes and Recommendations	1
Putting It All Together, Together! Tools for the Journey	2
Considerations for Reading and Applying the Technical Assistance Guide and Workbook	2
Checkpoint # 1 Serving ALL Students	4
Access to the General Education Setting for Students with Disabilities	4
A Culture of Inclusion for Students Receiving Special Education Services	6
Listening to Families and Community Partners	7
Recommendations	8
Recommendation 1: Change the Culture	9
Recommendation 2: Build Knowledge and Capacity around Inclusionary Practices	10
Recommendation 3: Increase Opportunities for Collaboration and Co-Teaching	11
Recommendation 4: Think Creatively and Iterate	13
Recommendation 5: Documenting Service Minutes in the IEP	14
Recommendation 6: Listen to Families and Community Partners	15
Putting It All Together, Together! Tools for the Journey	16
Checkpoint # 2 Student-Centered Decisions	17
Schedules and Credit	17
Default Time Increments for Services	17
Availability of Highly Trained Educators and Service Providers	17
Limitations of Online IEP Platforms	18
Listening to Families and Community Partners	18
Recommendations	20
Recommendation 1: Return to the Intent of the IEP	20
Recommendation 2: Make Student-Centered Decisions	21
Recommendation 3: Consider the Workload and Shift Educators' Roles and Responsibilities	23
Recommendation 4: Improve Online IEP Forms and Platforms	24
Recommendation 5: Listen to Families and Community Partners	24
Putting It All Together, Together! Tools for the Journey	25

Checkpoint # 3 Data-informed Decisions and Progress Monitoring	26
<i>Collecting, Understanding, and Acting Upon Data</i>	26
<i>Listening to Families and Community Partners</i>	27
<i>Recommendations</i>	28
<i>Recommendation 1: Make Data-Informed Decisions</i>	28
<i>Recommendation 2: Increase the Capacity to Collect Data</i>	29
<i>Recommendation 3: Write High-quality Goals and Conduct Progress Monitoring</i>	30
<i>Recommendation 4: Monitor the Delivery of Services</i>	31
<i>Recommendation 5: Listen to Families and Community Partners</i>	31
<i>Putting It All Together, Together! Tools for the Journey</i>	32
Checkpoint # 4 Preparing Future Educators and Collaboration with School Systems	33
<i>Disconnect between Training and Practices</i>	33
<i>Listening to Families and Community Partners</i>	33
<i>Recommendations</i>	33
<i>Recommendation 1: Partner to Prepare Future Educators and Support New Educators</i>	33
<i>Recommendation 2: Listen to Families and Community Partners</i>	35
<i>Putting It All Together, Together! Tools for the Journey</i>	35
Resources for School Leaders, Administrators, Educators, Families and Community Partners	36
<i>Resources on the IEP Process</i>	36
<i>Family Engagement</i>	36
<i>School Culture and Presuming Competence</i>	37
<i>Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) and Evidence-based Practices</i>	37
<i>Identifying Frequency, Location, and Duration on the IEP Service Matrix</i>	38
<i>Continuum of Placement and LRE</i>	38
<i>Inclusionary Practices</i>	39
<i>Inclusive School Building Scheduling</i>	40
<i>Access Points to General Education</i>	41
<i>Universal Design for Learning (UDL)</i>	41
<i>Teacher Collaboration and Co-Teaching</i>	42
<i>IEP Goals and Objectives</i>	43
<i>Progress Monitoring</i>	43
<i>Books</i>	44
<i>Trainings</i>	45
About CTE	46
About the Special Education Division of OSPI	46
Acknowledgments	46

About the Every Minute Counts Project and Introduction to the Technical Assistance Guide

Overview

Every Minute Counts: Calculating IEP Services to Improve Student Outcomes in Washington State

is a collaborative project between the Center for Technology in Education at the Johns Hopkins School of Education and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction Special Education Division of Washington State. Members of the Special Education Division have identified an existing need to support school districts in utilizing best practices for determining the amount and types of special education and related services included in students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). According to the Supreme Court's landmark ruling in *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District* (2017), the educational benefit requirement of IDEA is satisfied, and a student has received a FAPE if the student's IEP sets out an educational program that is 'reasonably calculated to enable the child to make progress appropriate in light of his circumstance' (p. 16). The concepts of "educational benefit" and "reasonable calculation" provide a general guideline for making decisions regarding the appropriate level of services for students with disabilities (SWDs). Further information on *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District* (2017) can be found in the **Report of the Existing Policies, Guidance, and Related Resources**. Therefore, IEP Teams are seeking additional guidance and structure for determining the service minutes for SWDs to ensure an individualized discussion of a student's needs as outlined in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) section included in the IEP and ensure access to general education standards, curriculum, and settings.

The guidance developed from the Every Minute Counts Project is intended to support school districts in utilizing best practices for *all* students with disabilities in *all* learning environments, including traditional and non-traditional settings.

Focus Groups

Following the **Report of the Existing Policies, Guidance, and Related Resources**, focus groups were conducted from May to October 2022 with a total of 91 families and community partners, Directors of Special Education, representatives from teacher preparation programs, and pre- and in-service educators. This guide presents the perspectives and recommendations of the focus group participants and is combined with best practices identified from the previous report, linked above.

Resulting Themes and Recommendations

This technical assistance guide includes four main *checkpoints* that frame the barriers surrounding the determination of special education and related services minutes in each student's IEP. Each checkpoint contains *recommendations* to address these barriers. Weaved throughout are intentional sections entitled *Listening to Families and Community Partners*. These sections amplify the voices of participating families and community partners. Additionally, the guide contains quotes from families and community partners, which are indicated in dark blue, and from Directors of Special Education, representatives from teacher preparation programs, and educators, which are indicated in gray.

Putting It All Together, Together! Tools for the Journey

This workbook accompanies **the Every Minute Counts: Calculating IEP Services to Improve Student Outcomes in Washington State – Technical Assistance Guide**. Both are useful tools that begin with student-centered decisions in IEP development and cultivating inclusionary practices that can then expand to the entire school through the development of inclusive school-building schedules. The workbook aims to help IEP teams draft the IEP and ensure close communication and collaboration with students and families. We hope that IEP Teams recognize the importance of the intention-setting sections, as well as placeholders to insert the student's name throughout the workbook to keep all discussions and decisions student-centered. The workbook is not meant to be prescriptive and not all components need to be completed. Rather, we hope that IEP Teams engage in rich discussions, maintain collaborative relationships, and identify areas of the workbook that are most purposeful in catalyzing personal and school culture change.

As you review this technical assistance guide and utilize the corresponding workbook, we welcome your feedback to continually improve this tool. We encourage readers to provide feedback here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/5QJYdyqu3W>.

Considerations for Reading and Applying the Technical Assistance Guide and Workbook

The Technical Assistance Guide and accompanying workbook is intended for state and local leaders, representatives from teacher preparation programs, preservice and inservice practitioners, including both general education and special education educators, and families and community partners. Develop a personalized plan for reviewing and applying this Technical Assistance Guide and accompanying workbook by considering the suggestions below:

1. Consider reading the entire guide and then add intentionality to rereading and reflecting on certain sections. For example, consider rereading the Listening to Families and Community Partners sections and the powerful quotes included.
2. Consider assigning a Checkpoint to be read each month and conducting school-wide discussions on the barriers identified, the perspectives shared by families and community partners, and the recommendations in each Checkpoint.
3. Have an open mind when reading the Technical Assistance Guide and take time to reflect and read the actions steps in the Recommendations section to find opportunities for growth.
4. Engage in sustained discussions that lead to actionable goals and steps to be taken on school-wide or by specific school teams. These goals and steps can target one or more Checkpoints.
5. Utilize the Technical Assistance Guide to inform strategic multi-year planning.
6. Review the full workbook and determine sections which may be applied by IEP Teams.
7. Remember that any action steps taken must be directly connected to, and include the voices of families and SWDs.
8. Routinely return to the Technical Assistance Guide and workbook to reflect and further improve inclusive practices.
9. Ensure that school families and community partners have access to the Technical Assistance Guide and accompanying workbook.
10. Engage and continually involve school families and community partners in the abovementioned discussions and goal-setting.

11. After sharing the Technical Assistance Guide and workbook, consider scheduling listening sessions to learn and continue to collaborate with students, families, and community partners.
12. Provide feedback, share success stories, and communicate recommendations on how additional training can be developed to support partner groups here:
<https://forms.office.com/r/5QJYdyqu3W>.

Checkpoint # 1 Serving ALL Students

Access to the General Education Setting for Students with Disabilities

The continuum of special education service delivery options include, but are not limited to, those indicated below in Figure 1. Special education and related services are transportable and are to be delivered to the student in a setting that is responsive to the strengths, needs, interests, and preferences of an individual to ensure a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

According to the LRE principle of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), SWDs must be educated in the general education setting to the maximum extent possible. Particular attention must be taken when making placement decisions (i.e., general or special education setting) that begin with the LRE in mind and the IEP Team should consider how a student with a disability may increasingly access instruction in general education if they are placed in a more restrictive environment. These factors also impact the writing of IEP goals and the development of the service matrix.

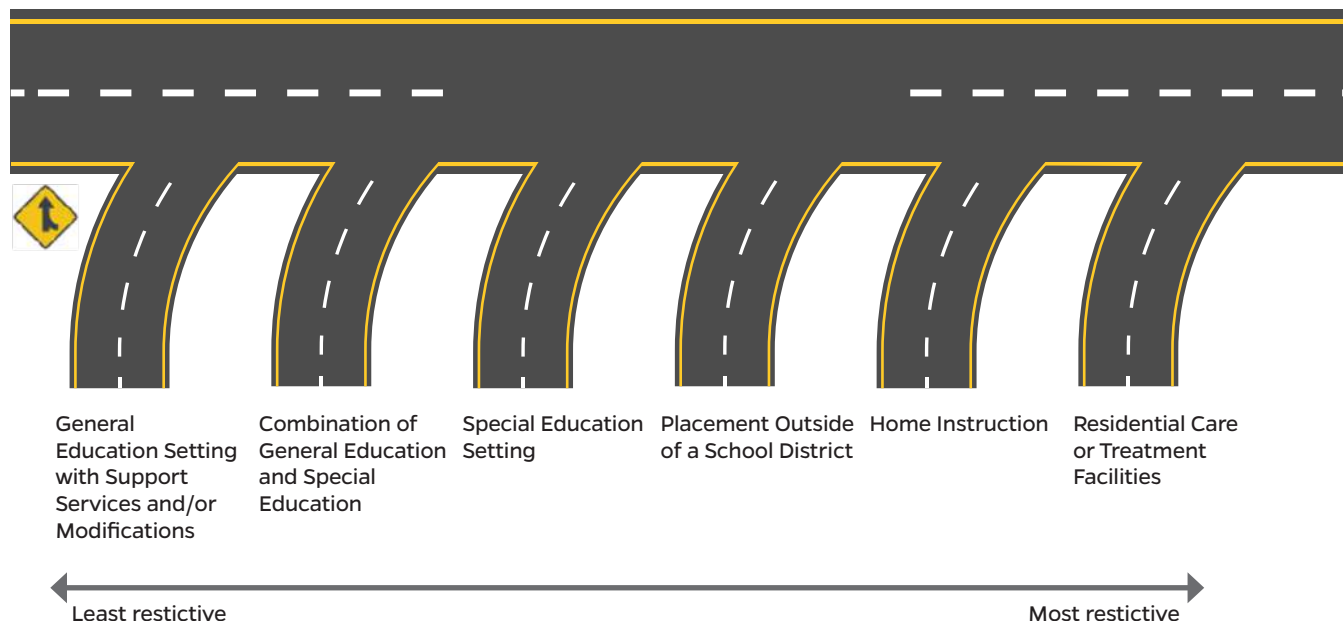


Figure 1. Continuum of Placement Options Providing *On-Ramp* Access to General Education

“

It seems to me that special education has a culture of being a long-term maintenance educational program. Students rarely come out. I believe that's because when they are being pulled to learn one thing, they aren't exposed to other things. Implications are huge and impact student identity and efficacy as a learner. I would hope that we could be more optimistic-minded about special education and have an early goal - for at least some students - that they will make up ground over the short term with intensive interventions and then potentially exit.

”

However, many focus group participants indicated that placement options are not always presented based on the continuum presented in Figure 1. LRE is expressed on a student's IEP as the percentage of time a student with a disability spends in the general education setting. By this definition, the IDEA emphasizes that special education is a service, not a place. Figure 1 shows the continuum of service delivery options available to students, at various levels of time spent inside and outside of the general education setting. However, focus group data indicates that services in Washington may be thought of as discrete places or special programs that run in parallel with the general education setting as it is presented in Figure 2. Participants voiced concerns that once students were placed into a “placement lane” they were not given opportunities to merge into less restrictive environments to spend greater amounts of their school day with typical peers and learn and practice academic and/or social skills needed to be successful in inclusive environments. This is alarming as it suggests that SWDs must learn skills and meet a set of ambiguous requirements before they are to be included in the general education setting, *instead of* general education being diverse and malleable to benefit all students through the provision of accommodations, supports, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

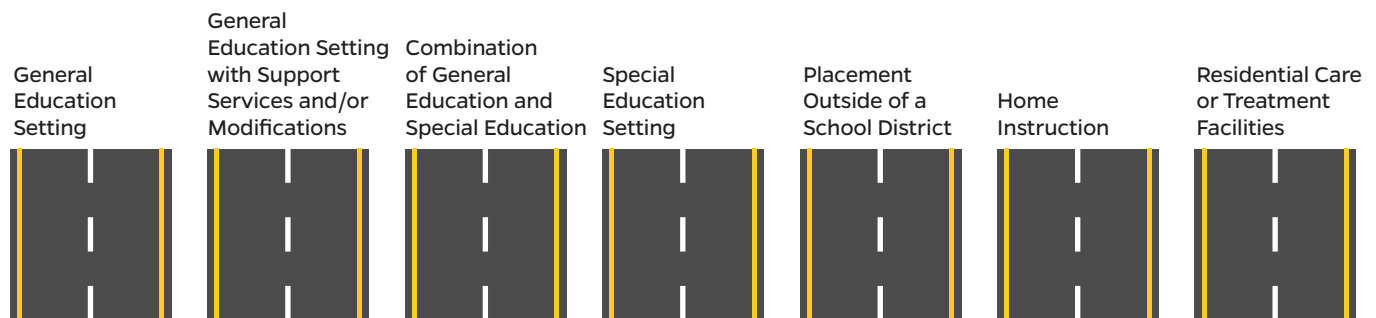


Figure 2. Divided Placement Options with Limited Opportunity for Inclusion

“

I think one of the biggest mind shifts is that they are all our kids and that we're all in this together and we don't have the option not to educate them, because they're challenging in some way. And I particularly am saying that because of behaviors. We have some teachers who will say, 'Well, they can earn the right to come back to general education,' or 'Their behavior is not good enough to be in the general education environment.' Well, how are they supposed to gain skills to be in the general education environment? If they're never in the general education environment, or they're not there often enough to catch the lessons that you're doing, or the community and building on things that you're doing. I don't know how they're supposed to gain those skills.

”

Special educators shared during the focus groups that oftentimes they recommended their students be included in the general education setting, but that other educators were often resistant stating that a student with a disability would be unsuccessful.

“

I would say that if the [general education] teacher thinks they need more specialized [instruction] they always come to me, but if I think they're ready for more general education time I always have to go into them.

”

Data collection and analysis may play a part in why special educators initiate these conversations. Based on the available data (e.g., data on IEP goals, social and academic progress), special educators may suggest providing special education services inside the general education setting, rather than removing a student for small group instruction. As discussed in a later section, special educators shared that they often were the primary collectors of student progress data and were more rapidly observing growth toward intended learning targets.

A Culture of Inclusion for Students Receiving Special Education Services

Inclusionary practices were identified as essential for SWDs to gain access to and be successful in the general education setting. Many special educators clarified that they wanted SWDs to be included in more than just breakfast and lunch, but also be meaningfully included during academic instruction. Many participants shared that some educators are willing and seeking opportunities to include SWDs, while others are hesitant. For some special educators participating in the focus groups, they found that referrals for special education and placement outside of the general education setting were increasing.

To facilitate meaningful inclusion, the cultures created in the school and in individual classrooms is critical. Anyone who has driven in different cities or countries may have experienced different styles of drivers. Drivers in one place may be more impatient, while drivers in another may provide ample space to merge onto the highway. Administrators and classroom teachers have the power to create a culture that is welcoming to all students. Indeed, many participants reflected on the inclusive or less-inclusive cultures of school buildings and districts they have been a part of during their careers as educators and leaders.

A culture of inclusion also translates to IEP Team meetings. Participants shared that the general education teacher's involvement may seem like “a box to check,” but the participation and input of the general educator is critical in making inclusive IEP decisions around specially designed instruction (SDI) and special education services. General education teachers are essential in reporting on students' progress on grade level standards. Their engagement in IEP Team meetings supports the design of an IEP that bridges the gap between present levels of performance and grade level standards.

“

I think it's really looking at those patterns of practices and where we can start interrupting and breaking those.

”

Focus group participants emphasized the need for additional training to help all educators be able to support SWDs. As many shared, special education is not a place and there is no *magic wand*. Instead, there are opportunities where services can be delivered within the general education setting, rather than removing a student with a disability from their typical peers. In addition to building capacity through additional training, attitudinal shifts toward inclusion are necessary for productive IEP Team conversations. This begins by presuming that a student with a disability is competent to learn, work, and thrive in all types of environments and can benefit from being included in general education settings. Collectively, all teachers can learn and grow together to benefit all students.

“

We are in this together. We are educators. We can do this together. We're going to knock down these barriers that these kids have so that they can participate because they have every right to access core, and there might be some areas where they really do still need the lesson broken down into small enough chunks, and in a special way that they need to go to a different room to get that. There will still be those times for sure, and it probably needs to be way less often. And I think we've shot ourselves in the foot in some ways, in special education because we've been so helpful. And so, we've kind of helped the general education teachers to believe that we've got this magic IEP desk down the hall in that special room, and we really have to communicate that old [concept] 'Special Education is a service, not a place.'

”

Listening to Families and Community Partners

“

I think a lot of it is just the atmosphere and the mindset of what these kids can do, and it's just a shame that so many don't have that.

Now, my son's in a school where it's a lot more supportive. So, seeing both sides, I would say that [it] makes a big difference in terms of how they place the student and how many minutes sometimes they receive. [There is] a sense of value like they respect our kids. I would say that they tend to be more flexible and creative than the way those minutes are designed. So in that respect it's kind of team dependent which sometimes can be inspired by administrators. That's what we see, a lot, at least as an advocate from other parents that it's largely that culture can be driven by that school administrator.

...this idea that more minutes pulled into a segregated setting is the answer. And then, just over time, it becomes more and more like that. There's not an imagination to discuss how that child would receive specially designed instruction or support in a general education setting versus being pulled out all the time.

”

Focus group findings showed that when a school did not have an inclusionary mindset they had lower expectations for SWDs. In these cases, when members of the team did not understand that with the appropriate supports, all students can learn, families were faced with the burden of trying to shift the decisions, practices and perspectives of a school or district. These were immensely difficult decisions for families. Many received information that it was their right to be an equal member of the IEP Team and that disagreements would be resolved collaboratively. However, families received conflicting messages stating that inclusion was unrealistic.

Families shared that they often navigated these conflicts with uncertainty as they tried to determine whether they should fight and make their voices heard or accept what the school team was offering. Others gained a better sense of their rights as parents as they connected with other families of SWDs and sought out trainings and additional resources. With this new knowledge, which they oftentimes found without the support of other educators or staff, families identified the “correct terminology” to assert their rights as a member of the IEP Team and to better navigate the IEP process.

Without knowledge of no cost dispute resolution options available (IEP facilitation, citizen complaint process), many families committed financial resources to retain a lawyer to resolve disputes on LRE.

“

It scares me that the further down the rabbit hole I go into just wanting to do what's right for my son and be a good parent that the end of that road is legal action. And I'm thinking like that's where this has to go to get what I need.

”

As families asserted their rights and pursued and escalated complaints related to increased inclusion and services for their children, families who were Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), expressed fear of retaliation from the school or district. During this period of conflict, which greatly impacted families and members of the school community, families were concerned about how educators and staff may treat their children. Many shared that since their child was nonverbal or had limited communication skills, they were not able to obtain information about their child's daily performance at school. The potential for retaliation led many families to question whether pursuing additional services was worth the risks. Families also communicated concern about the implementation of the IEP. For example, families raised concerns about their child being meaningfully included in the general education setting and receiving the necessary supports to help their child feel welcomed and experience success.

“

When we did move as a [IEP] Team to help her have access to more general education settings, it was a failure, and it harmed her because those settings were not set up to be responsive to her needs. The curriculum in those settings was not accessible to her, and there was no effort to ensure that the curriculum is accessible to her.

”

Recommendations



Figure 3. Finding Access Roads to Meaningful Inclusion

Recommendation 1: Change the Culture

Action Steps	Resources
<p>Administrators can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish inclusionary practices as a school-wide goal. Communicate that inclusion benefits all students. • Reframe the role of educators. Instead of dividing teachers into lanes of general educators and special educators, consider all teachers as <i>service providers</i>. This emphasizes that services are portable. • Consider changing language and titles to create parity between general and special educators. For instance, refer to all educators as <i>coaches</i>. • Remove labels to refer to programs within a district or school (i.e., LRE C, resource room, autism program, etc.). This communicates that SDI is a service and not a place. • Find meaningful access points to increase the inclusion of SWDs by reconsidering the school's inclusive building schedule, curricular resources, or implementing additional inclusive instructional practices such as UDL or co-teaching. • Develop educators' capacity to presume competence of all students and build a culture focused on strengths as opposed to deficits. Provide opportunities and supports so that SWDs are successful in general education by building on their strengths and interests. This supports educators to shift their mindset. • Create a culture where removing a student with a disability from the general education setting is the exception rather than the rule. • Recognize that shifting toward a truly inclusive culture will require every educator to be on board for the journey. Educators may need professional development, collaborative time to plan and problem solve, and increased opportunities to practice inclusive strategies. As a school administrator or leader, welcome and support opportunities to support educators' capacity for growth. A growth mindset applies to students, educators, <i>and</i> administrators! 	<p><u>Is Your School Inclusive?</u></p> <p><u>Special Education is Not a Place: Avoiding Pull-out Services in Inclusive Schools</u></p> <p><u>"Don't We Already Do Inclusion?" School Improvement Planning Tool</u></p>
<p>Educators can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model positive language and actions. • Deemphasize labels to refer to programs within a school (i.e., LRE C, resource room, autism program, etc.) to communicate that SDI is a service and not a place. • Provide appropriate supports and meaningful opportunities beyond non-academic activities, such as lunch and recess. Find onramps that allow SWDs to access academic instruction in the general education setting. • If a SWD needs to be placed outside of the general education setting, provide a justification for this decision that is grounded in objective and current progress monitoring data. 	

Students can: Use positive, prosocial language to communicate with and refer to their peers.	
--	--

“ We’ve even had to reframe and ask the students at the high school, ‘What do you want us to call ourselves? How will that make you feel?’ They’ve even changed the nomenclature to coach because everyone who succeeds in life has a coach. Everyone who does well at sports has a coach, so coaches are positive versus ‘resource’ is negative. So, like we’ve been just working on our language around how we’re providing services, and that’s making a difference whether it’s our bus drivers or nurses our front office staff or our parents. We’re all across the board. We’re trying to change our language.

I actually had the privilege for the first time ever, of working with a teacher who does not want her students pulled out, no matter what.

How the teacher creates the culture in the classroom, so students are accepted no matter what despite the noise or disruption is dependent on how the teacher demonstrates a welcoming environment and attitude. It makes a huge difference.

”

Recommendation 2: Build Knowledge and Capacity around Inclusionary Practices

Action Steps	Workbook Resources
Administrators can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional learning opportunities that expand each teacher’s toolbox. Empower all educators to learn about and apply UDL to remove barriers for all students by providing multiple means of engagement; representation; and action and expression. • Build teachers’ capacity to differentiate and apply a variety of evidence-based practices for SWDs with fidelity. • Support special educators to strengthen their knowledge and capacity collectively by targeting priority behaviors or skills that can be more challenging to address in the general education setting. Build in collaborative planning time so that educators can address these behaviors or skills and push-in to model additional support strategies. 	Collaboration and Educator Growth
Educators can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage fully in professional learning opportunities, including informal forms of support to colleagues such as peer mentoring. • Apply and extend new knowledge provided through professional learning opportunities. • Advocate for professional learning opportunities which meet established areas of growth. • Engage in professional learning communities which focus on the implementation of inclusionary practices. 	

Recommendation 3: Increase Opportunities for Collaboration and Co-Teaching



Figure 4. Collaboration between General and Special Educators during IEP Development Leads to a Successful Inclusion Journey

Action Steps	Workbook Resources
<p>Administrators can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide dedicated time for collaboration and co-planning amongst educators and related service providers. Refrain from relying on informal, on-the-fly collaboration as the sole method for facilitating inclusion.• Set a goal to increase the capacity of <i>all educators</i>, rather than just a few key staff. Oftentimes, early adopters are asked repeatedly to do this meaningful but challenging work. It is important to strategically build the capacity of all staff in the school to promote an equitable distribution of workload.	<p>Considerations for Inclusive SDI and Services Before the IEP Team Meeting</p> <p>Progression Monitoring Plans Before the IEP Team Meeting</p> <p>Implementing the Progress Monitoring Plan After the IEP Team Meeting</p>
<p>Educators and related service providers can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop the IEP collaboratively. Include all service providers in the data collection, data analysis, and co-development of the IEP.• Collaborate with one another (i.e., special educators and general educators) to support the learning of all students.• Find opportunities to provide targeted support for SWDs within the general education setting where it is most needed. For example, a special educator may help with reading or during science class for a specific student or students. A special educator can provide support and model the use of accommodations like speech-to-text or use of graphic organizers. Another example may be providing wraparound services to address challenging behaviors within the general education setting. This may include a collaboration with a behavioral specialist or a mental health counselor.	<p>Developing Standards-Aligned IEPs (ospi.k12.wa.us)</p> <p>Comprehensive Inclusive Education: General Education and the Inclusive IEP TIES Center</p> <p>OSERS Policy Guidance on Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) (PDF)</p> <p>Project Forum National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) Standards-Based Individualized Education Program Examples</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the curriculum through the lens of finding access points for including SWDs. For example, an access point to the third-grade standard on the order of operations for a SWD working on identifying symbols and numbers may be to sort symbols. Another student’s access point may be to identify the parentheses and conduct the operation inside the parentheses, which is the next access point in the order of operations. Critically analyzing the curriculum in this manner can lead to improved ways of adapting work for students in all content areas.• Look for ways to deepen your relationship with your co-teacher. Effective collaboration requires nurturing a co-teaching relationship and having the dedicated time to strategically plan and develop lessons that are responsive to the needs of all students.• Find creative ways to build the capacity of paraprofessionals, such as including them in IEP meetings, professional learning workshops or invitations to join collaborative planning sessions.	
---	--



Figure 5. Increasing the Capacity for Inclusion is Like Learning to Drive a Car

“ If one’s writing letters, another starting sentences, and one writing paragraphs, then I can start to work with the general education teacher to collaborate. Like maybe I come in and guide it. You tell me what we’re doing on Monday and then maybe I’ll come in two days with the student and then go over here two days and so you just kind of get creative and work with the teachers on how we can best provide the service for this student in this class. ”

Recommendation 4: Think Creatively and Iterate

Action Steps	Resources
<p>Administrators, educators, and related service providers can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work as a team to identify student-specific strategies that work. The process of inclusion sometimes requires trial and error to determine what strategies will best meet a student’s needs. Similarly, collaboration and co-teaching necessitates creative thinking and iterative solution-finding. This may involve identifying student skill levels based on data to determine how best to meet students’ needs within the general education setting. If a student is served outside of the general education setting, this may include creative plans to ensure the student returns to the general education setting in the future.	<p>High-Leverage Practices for SWDs: CEEDAR Center</p>

“

[Looking at the] whole child is working really well, and I think teams are getting really creative in their problem-solving around serving students. And I think we’re moving away from kids who must go there to receive this special thing. I think we’re beginning to take those hats off and say, ‘How can we serve all students?’

”

Recommendation 5: Documenting Service Minutes in the IEP

Action Steps	Resources
<p>Educators and related service providers can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine a student’s services based on current, relevant data. The IEP, including SDI and service minutes, must be based on data showing a student’s progress or a need for increased supports.• Determine the time and intensity of services based on students need for specially designed instruction, not based on the building schedule.• Beyond the annual review, the IEP process should be conducive to iterations where teams may meet to adjust the IEP based on data.• Consider the general education classroom first. Remember that an increase in special education and related service minutes does not necessarily mean more restrictive placements. Instead, those minutes can occur in the general education setting.• Involve general educators in the discussion of services. IEP Teams can use the written response areas within the IEP, meeting minutes and/or instructional plans to delineate out how educators will collaboratively implement services to the student within the LRE.• Recommend concurrent services thoughtfully. Concurrent services are those which occur simultaneously and should be used thoughtfully based on the needs of the students. Such services should be clearly documented in the IEP and are expected to increase as there are added onramps for inclusion in the general education setting.• Especially within the Supplementary Aids and Services of the IEP, consider the counseling and training needs of families, as well as the training needs of general educators. Such training may assist with understanding the needs of the student, understanding child development, and acquiring the necessary skills to effectively implement the student’s IEP. To be responsive to the individual student and reflective of school district practices, this training should be delivered by qualified personnel who know the procedures to meet the training parameters.	<p>Comprehensive Inclusive Education: General Education and the Inclusive IEP</p>

Recommendation 6: Listen to Families and Community Partners

“

All students benefit from inclusion. All educators benefit from inclusion. All families benefit from inclusion. The future benefits from inclusion.

They need to learn about each other, and they need to learn to work with each other. We are never going to work well as a group if we're not all in the same room. My son went to school with kids [with disabilities] in preschool. And so, when he was in elementary school, he was very open, and so were the other kids that advocated with him. So, I think the schools need to pay a little bit more attention to complete inclusion and there are students who would love to come into the room and help to work with their peers. But we spend so much time trying to sort people out and trying to diagnose people and figure out what their problem is, instead of dealing with what you're being faced with. Where can my kid get the best education, it's always in the regular classroom. I don't care what the modifications need to be that needs to be where it is.

Identify equitable resolution processes that do not tax families' mental health or finances. Require inclusive practices training like UDL, maintain natural proportions in classes, and follow the portability rule. If the service is portable, bring it to the student. Have everyone read the ['Myths of Inclusion'](#) from OSPI. Move kids into their neighborhood schools and make supports like sensory rooms available to all students.

Let's teach all children about disability and how we can learn from each other. Let's make accommodations the priority of the IEP and make a public database of accommodations available to parents because you cannot request something you do not know exists. Let's train parents on IEPs, let's train new and existing teachers on disability, let's create [an] accessible multimodal learning curriculum, always assume competence, make the grade level curriculum expectations and lessons available to all parents, let's have a language access poster in every school lobby or website. A student should not have to prove he is learning to have access to the general ed curriculum, he should be taught using different approaches involving all the senses. Universal design should be the norm.

”

Action Steps	Workbook Resources
<p>Administrators can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for inclusion amongst your youngest learners. Early inclusive opportunities support all learners. Even at a young age, students can model acceptance of others' differences for adults. Prioritize increasing opportunities for all students to serve as peer mentors. • Foster collaborative partnerships between families and professionals. Be forthright and transparent with families so that everyone on the IEP Team can work towards a singular goal of helping SWDs succeed in the general education setting. • Encourage the representation of families and students to actively participate and provide feedback. Identify family liaisons and hold community forums that allow families to meaningfully participate and advocate for district policies and/or initiatives. • Take transparent action related to feedback shared during community forums and discussions with families and advocates, such as through policy changes or additional professional development for educators, staff, and/or families. • Ensure that all educators, administrators, and school leaders receive and abide by <u>Inclusionary Practices Handbook</u> (Lynn & May, 2021) that disrupt ableism and increase supports for SWDs and empathy for their families. 	<p><u>Communicating Progress to the Family After the IEP Team Meeting</u></p>
<p>Educators and service providers can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide families with ample time to review the draft IEP. Model that the IEP is a draft by engaging in open discussion during the IEP Team meeting and revising the document based on discussions that occur. • Provide foundational training or provide accessible resources to families so that they are informed, equal members of the IEP Team. • Create avenues for families to connect, find support, and learn together as they navigate the IEP process and partner with their child's school. 	

Putting It All Together, Together! Tools for the Journey

Below are a list of specific sections of the workbook which directly connect to Checkpoint # 1 Serving ALL Students:

Considerations for Inclusive SDI and Services Before the IEP Team Meeting

Progression Monitoring Plans Before the IEP Team Meeting

LRE and the Student's Schedule During the IEP Team Meeting

Implementing the Progress Monitoring Plan After the IEP Team Meeting

Communicating Progress to the Family After the IEP Team Meeting

Collaboration and Educator Growth



Checkpoint # 2 Student-Centered Decisions

Schedules and Credit

The school building or bell schedule was identified as a main driver of service minutes on students' IEPs. Participants shared that if there was a one-hour block for math, students would automatically be pulled out for that entire block of time.

With decisions driven by the building schedule, the transition from elementary school to middle school and later to high school can lead to drastic changes as the class periods become longer. The rigidity of schedules is especially apparent at the secondary level. Removing students from the general education setting causes a student to miss rigorous academic instruction, access to the grade level curriculum, and involvement with general education peers. Removal may also cause a student to miss a subject area or topic that is particularly motivating or enjoyable to the student.

Another removal factor pertains to existing program design. Students identified as needing a specific type of program may all have a matching set of service hours, based on the program's prescribed model. Not only does this practice not support student outcomes but it also goes against the IDEA requirement that special education services must be individualized. That could mean a student spends a portion of their day in the general education setting and a portion of their day in another special setting. There is no one-size-fits-all model when it comes to identifying services.

Default Time Increments for Services

Focus group participants agreed that in addition to basing decisions on the schedule, there were often unexplained increments of time for services. For example, services were routinely provided in 30-minute increments five times weekly with little explanation of the rationale. Educators struggle to determine the correct dosage and implement services with fidelity, especially without an accompanying rationale. Specificity is needed to outline how SDI is being delivered in the identified time increments.

Availability of Highly Trained Educators and Service Providers

Focus group participants voiced concern that decisions may center around the schedules of educators and service providers, instead of students. Participants also recognized that equal, incremental blocks of time for delivering services are easier to manage by educators but shifts the focus away from student needs when making decisions.

Across the field of education, there is a critical shortage of educators and related service providers. This is of particular concern for more remote areas of the state where there are not enough staff to provide varying levels of support and services across a continuum.

In addition to not enough educators entering the field, turnover has become an increasing challenge. These issues have led to an increase in hiring educators with emergency endorsements who, while able to be assigned as special educators, are not appropriately trained and unable to write and implement an IEP or behavior intervention plan under IDEA. Therefore they require direct support from certified special educators. Many service providers have increasing caseloads and are thus struggling to provide the necessary service minutes documented on students' IEPs.

Limitations of Online IEP Platforms

The IEP process and the online platforms used can be constraints for IEP Teams. This is especially the case for IEP Teams working to be responsive to individual student needs by increasing inclusion opportunities, collaborating and co-teaching, and finding novel solutions. Focus group participants grappled with how to complete the IEP service matrix when there was an increasing level of collaboration and co-planning to deliver SDI and services within the general education setting. The IEP document and platform may also not provide enough flexibility to be reflective of the fluidity of day-to-day instruction and the involvement of a greater number of educators when delivering SDI and related services.

Understanding that the IEP is a legal document, compliance remains at the forefront of many IEP Team members' minds. Many felt that the process of developing an IEP has transformed into a process of checking boxes and that there is a disconnect between the true intention of the IEP and its implementation.

“
The other thing that concerns me is that emphasis on compliance. Everything's about compliance and not about student-centered kinds of decision-making and so that concerns me because, can you write a compliant IEP, yes, but is it actually going to make a bit of difference for the students?
”

Listening to Families and Community Partners

“
Pathways or programs are not individualized. Kids get put in boxes. Yes, it is supposed to be individualized but that's not easy, so they try to make it fit their cookie-cutters.

“The availability and convenience of the staff seem to be the biggest factor. Few schools have a good block schedule that takes into account the needs of special education. Historical practices also seem to be a factor. For example, OT and Speech personnel are used to pull-out services. Asking them to push-in sometimes creates confusion.
”

Families shared that the IEP process and determination of services were focused more on compliance and “checking boxes” and less on the individual student that should be the center of the IEP. At times, families felt that decisions were made based on the convenience of the adults.

“

I have at times felt like a valued partner, but at other times I felt teachers were thrust into these roles of a lot of paperwork, making the meetings contentious as I try to get the services needed for the goals desired while the teaching staff is more focused on completing paperwork so they can leave for the day. As a parent, I would appreciate teachers being given additional time to engage, listen, and collaborate before the big thick paperwork comes out.

”

As mentioned regarding inclusion, families also found that there was a conflict between what they had been told about the IEP process and the reality. Many understood the IEP process according to IDEA to be iterative, where parents could request an IEP meeting at any time and that a meeting would be convened. However, in practice, this was not the case, and at times educators would be upset if asked to meet more than the annual meeting. Additionally, families had been informed that the IEP process is collaborative. Instead, many experienced struggles with making changes to the IEP during the meeting, even though the document was considered a draft.

Furthermore, the IEP process and determining service minutes were not transparent. Families expressed frustration that educators and schools did not help to educate families and facilitate the bi-directional flow of information to help them be informed and involved IEP Team members. Some were concerned that families who did not have a better understanding of their rights were at a disadvantage which could impact families’ experiences and the services their child receives.

A theme across all focus groups with families and community partners was the need to educate oneself to be a better advocate for their student. Trainings and finding resources online or through advocacy and family groups empowered many families during IEP Team meetings. Families recognized the sacrifice and privilege that some families had to partake in trainings or take time from work or quit their job to become their child’s advocate. For many families, long nights and weekends were required to understand special education law and to also become an advocate to support not only their child but the children of countless other families struggling to navigate the IEP process.

“

Because I am a parent who knows a lot of lingo, I think that has elevated my status as a valued partner in terms of the feedback I offer has weight to it.

”

Similar to arming oneself with knowledge about special education law and understanding the correct terms and having the right connections, bringing an advocate or lawyer, for many, proved to be the only option and perhaps part of the process or expectation to become a valued partner in the IEP process. Families shared that hiring a lawyer suddenly led to increased responsiveness from their school or district. But the financial burden is immense for many families. For some, they were dipping into their child’s inheritance. Seemingly the only path, families also felt that the special education dispute resolution process heavily leaned in the school district’s favor, which has the resources to cover the cost of an attorney.

Special education advocates participating in the focus groups found their work to be important, but many recognized that they were simply helping families manage and negotiate a special education system that seemed broken and normalized the need for advocacy and due process. The continuum of due process also does not guarantee good outcomes. As mentioned, the distrust brought about by the dispute resolution process harbored distrust and families felt the need to be watchdogs to ensure that the IEP was being implemented as developed. Furthermore, families continuously worried from year to year about what instructional programming would look like. What would happen if their child had a different teacher or different administration? What might happen if they needed to move to a different school? What happens as they transition to secondary education?

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Return to the Intent of the IEP

Action Steps	Workbook Resources
Administrators, educators, and service providers can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the focus on the student's IEP, while also ensuring compliance. • Remember that SDI is necessary to making progress in the general education setting. 	<u>Intention Setting Before the IEP Team Meeting</u> <u>Considerations for Building the School Schedule and Intention Setting</u>
Service providers can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think carefully about who should provide the service. When completing the service matrix, consider broadening the idea of who is providing SDI after it has been designed by the special educator. This is connected to the recommendations for increased inclusion, collaboration, and co-teaching and once again, emphasizes that special education is a service, not a place. 	

Recommendation 2: Make Student-Centered Decisions

Action Steps	Resources
<p>Administrators can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a re-design of the school’s inclusive building schedule, particularly if the schedule becomes a barrier to including SWDs. When creating the schedule for the year, schedule SWDs first. • Provide time for an inclusionary period in the inclusive building schedule for all students to receive added support and enrichment. This period can also be a starting point for growing the co-teaching model in a school. 	<p><u>Data Collection to Determine the Effectiveness of the Current SDI and/or Related Services being Delivered</u></p> <p><u>Considerations for Determining SDI and Services in Preparation of the IEP Team Meeting</u></p> <p><u>Intention Setting During the IEP Team Meeting</u></p> <p><u>Determining SDI and Services During the IEP Team Meeting</u></p>
<p>Educators and service providers can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that a student’s needs drive the team’s recommendation for minutes of service, not the school schedule. Student data must be the foundation for these decisions and should show student progress based on any services that are being implemented. • Discuss how services were provided during COVID when flexibility permitted groups to meet differently. • Ensure all service recommendations are based on student data. Some providers may prefer frontloading services and then fading out, while others may wish to provide services multiple times a week and then determine the fade-out plan. Remember that the approach should be data-based and remain centered on the student with no other preferences or schedules of service providers. • Consider providing services in the general education setting first and continually to find access points to the general education setting and curriculum through push-in supports. • Gather multiple sources of data from all IEP Team members to determine the supports and service minutes needed to meet annual goals and to close any gaps in performance. • Consider where the individual student’s starting point for service minutes and decrease or intensify these based on the data. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think strategically about closing the gap between a student’s present level of performance and the grade level expectations as well as how that gap can be bridged across general education settings. • Review the IEP several times a year to have ongoing, learning conversations and to identify opportunities to improve IEP development. This scheduled time could further help both general and special educators to collaborate on progress notes for the IEP and to assess and track SDI. 	
--	--

“ We’ve really worked hard this go around is the scheduling component and how so many IEPs were linked to what the schedule was. And when that schedule would change, teachers would freak out because especially during COVID, we ended up going to a three-period, four-period day schedule, and periods were 80 minutes. And so, it was a perfect time to really dig in, and we had already started that work to change that and to give students what they really actually needed. But that was a really good time for us to really dig in. Let’s look at what he really needs. What kind of classes in the end? What does that SDI look like for that individual student? ”

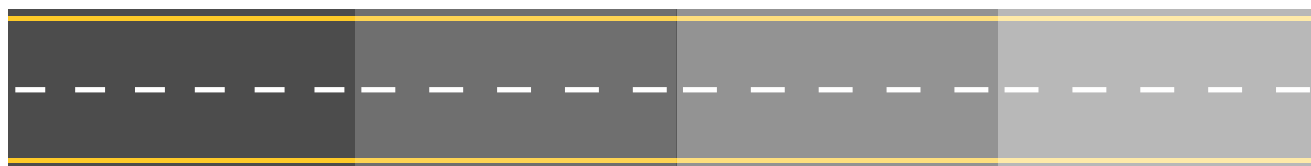


Figure 6. Frontloading services and then determining a fade-out plan

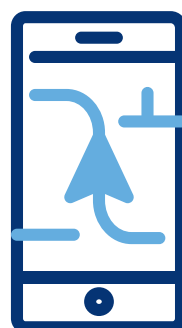


Figure 7. Student Data is the GPS that Guides Decisions

“

Empowering teachers, telling them you believe in them and that they can do this, and then also being there as a coach and support. Trusting them as professionals when they start to make those changes and not coming down on them when they do their best and it's not maybe the most compliant based but using those as coachable opportunities.

What is great is once you sort of can talk to the staff and release them from their own structures that they sort of bind themselves to, they're very capable of thinking about kids' needs and designing service delivery models that are once or twice or three times a week versus the standard five daily. It's almost like you have to grant them permission and then, in some cases, model what that walk through a service matrix with them and then sort of talk out loud about that. And in my experience in three school districts to ones I've modeled that they take it and run with it and apply that across their IEPs. It's the provision of a model in the granting of permission and you see wonderful things that case managers can figure out and flexibility and not feel guilty about not serving five days a week. I think that's a big part of it is they think they have to justify their existence by the amount of time they spend with kids and so, and you also see that as the services [gets] reduced, [you] see more consult minutes being added to the IEP for general education teachers for that structured collaboration time. I think we have great people in classrooms and schools. It's this giving them a vision that they can see themselves working within, and then they take that and apply it as professionals.

”

Recommendation 3: Consider the Workload and Shift Educators' Roles and Responsibilities

Action Steps	Resources
Administrators can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify time to train, collaborate and debrief with paraeducators on how to support and collect data for SWDs. Place SWDs with the most experienced content area teachers and provide supplemental support from special educators. Reconsider the role of special educators as ones that push-in and general education teachers are working with them to provide SDI. When possible, based on student needs, allow special educators to provide indirect service minutes and general education teachers to provide direct minutes, including the content, delivery, and methodology. Special educators would take on different roles around the general education curriculum that would require a deep understanding of the learning standards and core content of the curriculum (e.g., providing feedback and resources for universally designed lessons). 	<p><u>Principal Leadership: Moving Toward Inclusive and High-Achieving Schools for SWDs</u></p> <p><u>The Role of Special Education Teachers in Promoting an Inclusive Classroom</u></p>
Educators and service providers can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write IEPs that are implemented by general education teachers, and designed and overseen by special educators, who are shifting to the role of case manager. 	

Recommendation 4: Improve Online IEP Forms and Platforms

Action Steps	Resources
<p>State and district leaders can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate ways that IEP platforms can include a place for IEP Teams to showcase the shift toward inclusion, collaboration, and co-teaching. This can include scheduled co-planning time and plans for effectively using the scheduled time. • Evaluate ways that IEP platforms can include multiple names of educators responsible for providing SDI and services across multiple locations, especially within the general education setting. This will help to more accurately present how the student is receiving supports and services in a more inclusive setting and in collaboration with more than one educator. • Provide a textbox under the service matrix to clearly describe the rationale for the IEP Teams' decisions on the frequency and duration of services. This dedicated textbox may also include information on the nature in which services will be delivered to the student. • Design or adopt a platform and/or other compliance mechanisms that allow for services to be updated in a streamlined, well-documented manner. 	

Recommendation 5: Listen to Families and Community Partners

Action Steps	Resources
<p>Administrators can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training on inclusive practices and develop building policies that increase inclusivity. For example, a block schedule should include a time when students have intervention or enrichment time. 	<p>OSPI Inclusionary Practices Project resources: Community Conversation Toolkit</p> <p>Family Resource Library</p>
<p>Educators and service providers can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about students' personal attributes, strengths, and gifts from families and the student and incorporate these as part of the IEP process. • Facilitate conversations that are individualized; not based on templates or algorithms. The <i>I</i> in IEP is <i>individualized</i>. Discussions and decisions about the student should be strength-based and strictly data-based. • The focus on student data and outcomes data is necessary during IEP development. • Solicit and incorporate the feedback provided by members of a student's family. 	

Putting It All Together, Together! Tools for the Journey

Below are a list of specific sections of the workbook which directly connect to Checkpoint # 2
Student-Centered Decisions:

Intention Setting Before the IEP Team Meeting

Data Collection to Determine the Effectiveness of the Current SDI and/or Related Services being
Delivered

Considerations for Determining SDI and Services in Preparation of the IEP Team Meeting

Considerations for Building the School Schedule and Intention Setting

Intention Setting During the IEP Team Meeting

Determining SDI and Services During the IEP Team Meeting



Checkpoint # 3 Data-informed Decisions and Progress Monitoring

Collecting, Understanding, and Acting Upon Data

Many schools and districts apply the multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework and collect data to make data-informed decisions. Focus group participants shared the need to build the knowledge and capacity of all educators to accurately collect and analyze data to make decisions. The ability to understand how to use this data was of immense importance to participants.

Data serves as the foundation for the development and discussion of the PLAAFP and goals and objectives, and it informs decisions regarding special education and related service minutes. With limited data literacy, educators may struggle to accurately make determinations.

As previously shared, focus group participants who were special educators felt that as the main data collectors, they were oftentimes the ones initiating conversations about ways SWDs could be included in the general education setting. Because general educators may be less involved in data collection and discussions, their awareness of student progress may be limited. This emphasizes the need for data collection to be shared amongst special and general educators to ensure that all have a bigger picture of the whole student. Shared data collection can involve the special educators being responsible for collecting data on students' progress on IEP goals, and general educators collecting important and relevant data on how students are making progress on the curriculum.

“

I think [it's] one of the challenges we have. I think it needs to start with actually taking consistent data. Maybe it's not the amount, but it's coming to an IEP Team where teachers or staff [typically] use a lot of subjective data and lots of observation. So really working on training our staff on how to collect data based on IEP goals, you know, making sure that at that IEP table, the general education teacher is actually not just there to sign that line, but actually giving that kind of meaningful input into how a student's doing.

”

Participants also shared that educators can sometimes be intimidated by the data collection process and may falsely believe that the collection of data should yield a polished presentation. Instead, educators should be aware of the variety of different progress monitoring tools and receive support from other educators and school leaders on how best to collect, organize, and interpret data.

In conjunction with data, monitoring the implementation of service minutes was a challenge identified by focus group participants. Missing information on the dosage of services, as well as progress monitoring data, can mean that IEP Teams are making decisions without that key data.

Listening to Families and Community Partners

“

My child receives services in his study skills classes. But I am not convinced that the minutes are happening, and they do not appear to be making a difference. There hasn't been an improvement in his reading or writing. I really do not feel like those minutes are happening.

”

The lack of transparency or involvement of families, especially as it related to the actual implementation of service minutes and progress monitoring data, led to frustration for many families. Without a transparent mechanism to track the services being provided and a consistent approach to monitoring their child's progress in response to services, many were left to wonder if the components of the IEP were being implemented. This limited accountability was alarming for families.

Without progress monitoring data, the process of determining minutes on the IEP continues to be a mystery for some families. For many, the decision of service minutes had been predetermined before the IEP Team meeting. Without clarification, families felt they were being dismissed when challenging or asking questions about the predetermined service minutes, despite being an expert on their child.

“

Overall, I would say that the determination of service minutes has been opaque to me as a parent. I couldn't understand the service matrix until we hired an advocate to help us understand and get better services and goals.

”

A seat at the IEP meeting does not guarantee that families will be valued partners. Families continued to share a theme of only being present but not valued or heard at the IEP Team meetings. Like concerns shared about whether their children were being meaningfully included in general education settings with the appropriate supports to ensure student success, families communicated that they did not belong or feel supported at the IEP table.

“

When I started advocating, I can share my experience was very similar to the families I work with, usually parents are told what the IEP will be instead of co-creating the IEP. Families feel they are not treated as an equal partner of the IEP team, I have had families share [that] they are treated as if their opinions or questions are not as important. Families also struggle because there is not a clear pathway to language access. Families often mention school staff can be dismissive because of the families' communication but it is an issue beyond communication because I have also heard families who have an intermediate English proficiency who are also ignored and not treated the same as a native speaker. Families usually want to be active participants in their child's education but encounter system barriers.

”

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Make Data-Informed Decisions

“

For me, at least, a lot of it has come down to the culture in the building, I used to work in a building where every student was a general education student first and teachers were responsible for knowing their students and collecting that data. I used something called ‘Snapshot Folders’ and every two weeks, these folders went back and forth between general education and special education teachers where teachers were collecting data on their IEP goals in the classroom.

This entails looking at the data from the evaluation, any IEP data, general education assessments, district and state testing, feedback from the teacher and ESAs, as well as parent input. If the student is able to provide feedback, I think that is valuable as well. After considering all the data, the IEP team should be thinking about the least restrictive environment for the student. If that is in the general education setting, then that should be where the student receives the SDI. The amount of minutes should also be a team decision. The challenge with this [is] that not all team members always agree, so going back to the data is what is important. If the student is not making progress in one setting, it might mean another setting needs to be tried to see if that is the least restrictive [environment]. It is also important to continually think outside of the box when skills are not transferring from a more restrictive environment to another. This might mean doing a mixture of services or adding paraeducator support to help with the transfer and generalization of skills.

”

Action Steps	Resources
Administrators can: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a culture of making data-based decisions. Communicate to educators that data does not always need to be presented in a polished way, but that accurate and timely data is key.• Encourage educators to establish a consistent pattern for collecting and analyzing data. Set aside time to analyze data in a timely manner to make informed decisions that benefit students.• Create a culture that encourages iterative revisions to IEPs based on continuous data collection.	<u>Building Capacity through Support and Accountability</u> <u>Sustaining a Culture of Openness and Inquiry</u>
Service providers can: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utilize all available data including evaluations, testing, class performance, and parent/teacher input. Then create a working team of special and general education teachers to develop a plan for scaffolding, modifying, and delivering curricular content.	

“

And so, I always try to encourage them to try something new, try something different. And let’s come back to the table in six to eight weeks and revisit it and look at the data and go over it and then make some decisions. And so oftentimes, I think especially IEP Teams don’t really enjoy that because they don’t want to change in IEP. They don’t want to amend [it]. And so, I feel like sometimes that is a deterrent in that process. So, I really try to encourage that in the RTI process when we’re determining with that what we should do with the student. And so, I really push those teams to let’s try something different. Let’s try something new.

”

Recommendation 2: Increase the Capacity to Collect Data

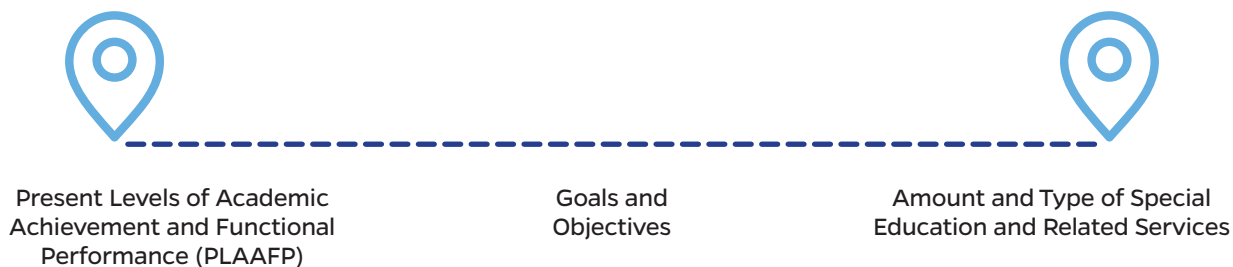


Figure 8. Data is the Starting Point of the IEP

“It will take true collaboration with general education for not only a change and shift in practice but also with data collection.”

Action Steps	Workbook Resources
<p>Administrators, educators, and service providers can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Train all members of the IEP Team in data literacy, so that student data is effectively used to drive IEP decisions, including the PLAAFP, goals and objectives, and services.• Build educators’ knowledge of valid tools for data collection that guide decisions, such as curriculum-based assessments. Failure to do this can lead to negative impacts on the student and lost time.• Encourage educators to collaborate when creating data collection systems so that they are streamlined and easy to utilize across multiple settings.	<p><u>Progression Monitoring Plans Before the IEP Team Meeting</u></p>
<p>Teachers can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consult with members of the evaluation team (e.g., school psychologists, SLPs, BCBAs) to understand the patterns of strengths and weaknesses of the student when an IEP is being developed. Educators should ask clarifying questions to fully understand the evaluation results and school psychologists can summarize results of evaluations in a way that both educators and families understand.• Identify the role that paraeducators may play in collecting data. If paraeducators will be involved, ensure they have the requisite knowledge and support they need to collect valid and reliable student data.	

Recommendation 3: Write High-quality Goals and Conduct Progress Monitoring

“

Data should be collected weekly or twice monthly depending on the area of SDI. For example, a writing goal may need to be [done] twice a month versus a decoding goal that can be done weekly. Based on the progress, the data collected can demonstrate if the student is making progress or not. If little progress is occurring, it means there is a need for a change in programming. This could be an increase in minutes, a change in instructional practices, or a change in setting. It is also important that data based on more functional goals (e.g., behavior, adaptive, social-emotional) may need to include peer comparison. For example, when working on increasing a student's stamina for participating in academic tasks like writing, it behooves the IEP team to have comparison data of other peers in the class.

”

Action Steps	Workbook Resources
Administrators, educators, and service providers can: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a school-wide approach to progress monitoring and create routines and space to analyze and take data-based action and iterate on educational programming.	<u>Considerations for IEP Goals and Objectives</u> <u>Implementing the Progress Monitoring Plan After the IEP Team Meeting</u>
Service providers can: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write IEP goals and objectives in a manner that allows for effective data collection in an inclusive setting. IDEA states that IEP goals must be measurable (e.g., behavior, conditions, criterion). Therefore, the development of IEP goals and objectives must involve the active participation of general education teachers to create reasonable goals and objectives that can be tracked. This approach can prevent the practice of the special education teacher serving as the sole collector of progress monitoring data.• Document special education and related service minutes in the IEP to reflect how the student will accomplish the standards-aligned goal within the inclusive setting.• Develop and implement a progress monitoring plan for each student. Progress monitoring is essential in fading intervention and transitioning to less restrictive environments.	

Recommendation 4: Monitor the Delivery of Services

Action Steps	Workbook Resources
Administrators, educators, and service providers can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a school-wide approach to accurately monitor service minutes. These procedures should be less steeped in compliance, but instead, be an opportunity to increase the effectiveness of determining services for students in the future. 	Data Collection to Determine the Effectiveness of the Current SDI and/or Related Services being Delivered
Educators and service providers can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create routines and space to analyze and take data-based action and iterate on educational programming. 	

Recommendation 5: Listen to Families and Community Partners

“

...if I could plead for anything, it would be for better tracking of how each individual school and district serves the highest need kids. If you want to research a school, there's plenty of information out there about test scores and college placement. But that just tells us about the demographics of the school! I want to know how well a school is helping kids who need it. What is the delta from when they began the year and ended it? That's the true measure of a quality school.

”

Action Steps	Workbook Resources
Administrators can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase accountability and shared responsibility for focusing on student outcomes by emphasizing this in the School Improvement Plans (SIPs) 	Communicating and Collaborating with the Family Before the IEP Team Meeting Communicating Progress to the Family After the IEP Team Meeting Communicating and Collaborating with the Family After the IEP Team Meeting
Educators and service providers can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify streamlined monitoring tools to track the implementation of service minutes and to track student progress toward their goals and objectives. These tools should allow families to access this information, and such data must be the foundation for determining services. Review the student's educational record, past IEPs, and documentation of interventions and strategies that have worked and have not worked for the student in the past. Request input from the family on what strategies have been useful in the past, either at home or at school. 	

“

Please require schools to track the services they provide so that they can be held accountable to what they agree upon in the IEP. As far as I'm concerned, the IEP is just a piece of paper that nobody bothers to look at and has no bearing on what my son actually does at school.

”

Putting It All Together, Together! Tools for the Journey

Below are a list of specific sections of the workbook which directly connect to Checkpoint # 3

Data-informed Decisions and Progress Monitoring:

Data Collection to Determine the Effectiveness of the Current SDI and/or Related Services being Delivered

Considerations for IEP Goals and Objectives

Progression Monitoring Plans Before the IEP Team Meeting

Communicating and Collaborating with the Family Before the IEP Team Meeting

Implementing the Progress Monitoring Plan After the IEP Team Meeting

Communicating Progress to the Family After the IEP Team Meeting

Communicating and Collaborating with the Family After the IEP Team Meeting



Checkpoint # 4 Preparing Future Educators and Collaboration with School Systems

Disconnect between Training and Practices

Preparing future educators is a challenge with practices varying widely from district to district, but is important for preparing teachers for developing an IEP and providing services in the LRE. Participants recognized that both in-service and pre-service teachers continue to have opportunities to learn about best practices for determining the amount and type of services.

Instructors from teacher programs also shared that they struggled to teach IEP development as many of their candidates did not engage in IEP Team meetings and do not have access to online IEP platforms. Instructors also recognized that as their graduates entered the classroom as first-year educators, many experienced conflicting practices and did not always feel comfortable voicing their concerns to new colleagues. Additionally, participants shared that teacher candidates needed increased training in the areas of progress monitoring approaches and data literacy.

Listening to Families and Community Partners

Families shared their desire for more educators to graduate from teacher preparation programs with an understanding of both general education and special education to ensure that the future of education is more accessible to all students. Trainings on partnering with families and inclusionary practices were identified as important for all educators in training, as well as school administrators and leaders.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Partner to Prepare Future Educators and Support New Educators

“

Really, special education preparation and general education preparation programs need to work together to ensure a similar message. This concept should not be taught in isolation. New principals and superintendents also need this embedded in their preparation programs. We can't continue to work in silos at the higher education levels.

”

Action Steps	Resources
<p>Members of teacher preparation programs can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow preservice teachers access to the IEP and data management platforms that they are likely to encounter in their internship(s) and their in-service teaching. • Provide teacher candidates with authentic practice experiences in developing IEPs. This could be conducted through case studies or practice simulations set up in the IEP platform. • Provide training and scaffolded practice activities related to progress monitoring and data literacy for all teacher candidates. • Review how courses in the program are structured. Ensure that courses address future educators' knowledge and skills in content-specific pedagogy, rather than skills-based deficits specific to disabilities. This shifts the attention from a categorization-based model to a skills-based model. • Prepare future educators to have conversations and collaborate with other IEP Team members around data-informed decisions. 	<p><u>Collaboration and Educator Growth</u></p> <p><u>CEEDAR Washington: Inclusionary Resources Directory</u></p> <p><u>CEEDAR Center: High-Leverage Practices</u></p> <p><u>CEEDAR Inclusive Services Innovation Configuration</u></p>
<p>District leaders can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with members of teacher preparation programs to address the teacher shortage and to prepare high-quality educators who are qualified to support SWDs. • Serve as guest speakers in teacher preparation courses, and likewise, faculty may support districts by providing additional professional development around IEP development. • Collaborate with members of teacher preparation programs and hold open discussions regarding current practices and how those practices may evolve would be beneficial for both the school districts and teacher preparation programs. 	
<p>School-based administrators can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as guest speakers in teacher preparation courses, and likewise, faculty may support districts by providing additional professional development around IEP development. • Provide a strong mentorship program for new teachers. Whenever possible, identify a mentor who is skilled at IEP development. • Encourage new teachers to share their knowledge and to identify opportunities where IEP development practices can change and be improved. 	

Recommendation 2: Listen to Families and Community Partners

Action Steps	Resources
Members of teacher preparation programs can: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shift the focus from the disability categories to evidence-based practices for specific content areas and skills that could support all students. Any disability-based discussion should focus on the ways that type of disability may impact student performance in the classroom.• Provide preservice teachers with direct training and experience in partnering with families of SWDs.• Incorporate special education and inclusionary practices into leadership training programs for prospective school administrators.	<u>Systemic Support for Special Education: Making it a More Integral Part of General Teacher Preparation</u>
District leaders can: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Train new and current school administrators on inclusionary practices, including how to effectively partner with families of SWDs.• Incentivize prospective school administrators to complete leadership programs that include direct instruction in special education.	

Putting It All Together, Together! Tools for the Journey

Below are a list of specific sections of the workbook which directly connect to Checkpoint # 4 Preparing Future Educators and Collaboration with School Systems:

Collaboration and Educator Growth

Resources for School Leaders, Administrators, Educators, Families and Community Partners

Resources on the IEP Process

OSPI Special Education Technical Assistance Paper No. 1 (TAP 1) Revised - IDEA: A Review of the Basics

The TAP provides “basic requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA), Part B and addressed in OSPI governing special education, [and] Chapter 392-172A.” Topics mentioned in TAP 1 include FAPE, the Procedural Safeguards Notice, Prior Written Notice, IEP Development, Placement Decisions and LRE Requirements, Services for Transfer Students, Transfer of Educational Records, and Revocation.

The IEP Checklist Quiz by Brookes Publishing

The ten-question IEP Checklist quiz will allow you to assess your knowledge of the IEP development process while ensuring you know effective, compliant, and best practices to follow.

MAPS Student-Centered Planning

MAPS is “a creative, person-centered planning tool that uses both process and graphic facilitation to create a shared vision of a positive future for individuals and families.” The site provides a brief overview of the steps in the MAPS process.

10 Tips for Navigating IEP Meetings for the General Education Elementary Teacher

This blog post provides brief information about the IEP process and the essential role of general education teachers in IEP teams to meet students’ needs during IEP meetings with ten tips.

Common Core Instruction and Special Education

The PowerPoint presentation focuses on Common Core State Standards (CCSS) to ensure participants understand the framework, unpack and identify essential elements, meet students’ needs and improve student outcomes in general education curriculum and CCSS, and monitor students’ progress with formative assessments.

Progress Center Resources for Educators & Related Service Providers

The site provides resources for both educators and related service providers to support the development and implementation of high-quality educational programming for students with disabilities.

Family Engagement

PAVE Special Education is a Service, Not a Place

The resource for families provides information on key vocabulary and components of the IEP process, including LRE and FAPE.

PAVE IEP Goal Setting Present Levels SDI and Smart Goals Video

”This video provides more detail about the rights of a student with an IEP. A three-step process is provided to help family caregivers make sure a student’s IEP goals are supporting the right help in the right way. Learn about Present Levels of Performance (PLOP), Specially Designed Instruction (SDI), and SMART goals to become a well-trained partner in the IEP team process.”

PAVE Steps to Read, Understand, and Develop an Initial IEP – Service Matrix, Present Levels, and LRE

”This article provides tips to help family members read through a draft IEP and prepare to participate on the IEP team that finalizes the Individualized Education Program before services begin.”

Family Engagement and Guidance from WA OSPI

”These pages are dedicated to providing students, families, and community members with information about special education, to ensuring that students and families know about their rights, answering questions they may have about how the process works and sharing ways that partners may provide input and get involved.”

9 Ways to Boost Family Involvement in the IEP Process by Brooks Publishing

This blog post discusses nine tips to give IEP teams strategies to include the participation of parents throughout the IEP process. These tips are excerpted from *Getting the Most out of IEPs*, by Colleen Thomas and Paul Wehman.

Family Engagement: Collaborating with Families of Students with Disabilities by the IRIS Center

“This module—a revision of *Collaborating with Families*, which was originally developed in cooperation with the PACER Center—addresses the importance of engaging the families of students with disabilities in their child’s education. It highlights some of the key factors that affect these families and outlines some practical ways to build relationships and create opportunities for involvement.”

School Culture and Presuming Competence

Shelley Moore: Five Moore Minutes - The Importance of Presuming Competence

This YouTube video “will encourage you to reflect on your assumptions about disability and start to take action to disrupt the ableist structures in education by taking a very important first step... presuming competence in all students.”

Presume Competence by Hussman Institute for Autism

“The goal of this manual is to collect the essential components into a practical, comprehensive set of practices—so that families, teachers, and friends can engage people with autism within the activities of daily life at home, in school, and in the community.”

Center for Disability Rights: Ableism

This blog post focuses on defining ableism, providing examples of ableism in our daily lives and ways we can de-root ableism.

Hidden Curriculum as One of Current Issue of Curriculum

This brief journal article provides some definitions of the hidden curriculum, brings awareness to the issues and understanding of the concept, and reviews current research and practical implications.

Jung, L. A., Frey, N., Fisher, D., & Kroener, J. (2019). Your students, my students, our students: Rethinking equitable and inclusive classrooms. ASCD.

“*Your Students, My Students, Our Students* explores the hard truths of current special education practice and outlines five essential disruptions to the status quo.”

The Whole Child Approach to Education

“Launched in 2007, ASCD’s Whole Child Initiative is an effort to change the conversation about education from a focus on narrowly defined academic achievement to one that promotes the long-term development and success of children.” This website provides resources and opportunities for partnerships and collaborative action.

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) and Evidence-based Practices

What is Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) and Who Can Provide It? by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

This document defines what SDI is and what it is not through a summary and examples, and also who can provide SDI.

Specially Designed Instruction Key Features and Characteristics Self-Check by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

This checklist is provided as a quick self-check resource for those involved in developing and implementing IEPs.

What Is “Special” About Special Education? Specially Designed Instruction for Students With Disabilities Within a Multi-tiered System of Supports

“This document was developed to clarify the relationship between *Specially Designed Instruction, Tier 1 Instruction and Interventions* within a multitiered system of supports (MTSS) for educators developing, improving and maintaining systems of support for all students.”

CEC High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities

“In partnership with the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR), the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) has developed and published a set of high-leverage practices (HLPs) for special educators and teacher candidates.” This website provides several resources, including practice-based learning opportunities, professional development materials, webinars, videos, and a glossary.

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)

This website provides several resources including practice guides, intervention reports, reviews of individual studies, data from study reviews, and online training.

IES Evidence-based Teaching Practices

This infographic is a quick reference guide containing evidence-based practices that can impact learning that teachers can use daily to support effective instruction.

IRIS Center Evidence-based Practice Summaries

“These research summaries covering instructional strategies and interventions offer information that includes level of effectiveness as well as the age groups for which a given strategy or intervention is designed.” Topics include assessment, behavior and classroom management, content instruction, diversity, early intervention/early childhood, learning strategies, mathematics, MTSS/RTI, reading, literacy, language arts, school improvement/leadership, and transition.

Identifying Frequency, Location, and Duration on the IEP Service Matrix

Every Minute Counts: Calculating IEP Services to Improve Student Outcomes Report of the Existing Policies, Guidance, and Related Resources

The comprehensive report presents the research literature, existing policies at the federal and state level, and other related resources on determining special education and related services. A number of themes are identified, as well as guiding questions and considerations.

WA November 2019 Special Education Update - Identifying Frequency, Location, and Duration on the IEP Service Matrix (p. 8-10)

This portion of the document provides an example of a summary of the services/service matrix and additional information on identifying and defining the frequency of services and concurrent services.

AESD/OSPI LRE Case Studies Series—1 of 3, AESD/OSPI/CCTS LRE Case Study Webinar Series 2 of 3, and AESD/OSPI LRE Case Studies Series—3 of 3

The series of PowerPoint presentations discuss LRE and progress monitoring.

Continuum of Placement and LRE

Considering LRE in Placement Decisions

This portion of the e-module series on LRE provides a summary, LRE provisions in IDEA, key terms, meanings of terms such as “regular educational environment,” “satisfactorily educated,” “supplementary aids and services,” considerations about other settings, placement decisions by group, and notifying parents.

IRIS Center Information Brief: LRE

“The information included in this document presumes a broad understanding of such basic concepts as IEPs, IEP teams, and instructional accommodations, among others.”

Special Education Reopening Guidance: Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Case Studies

This document provides information on the “considerations for IEP development and implementation across reopening models,” elementary case studies, behavior case studies, transition case studies, preschool case studies, and FAQs in the appendix.

WA OSPI LRE Self-Assessment Tool

“The following process is helpful for examining local practices to create improved educational options for students with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).”

Inclusionary Practices

CEEDAR Inclusive Services Innovation Configuration

This innovation configuration identifies the components of inclusive services that should be incorporated in teacher preparation at the preservice and inservice levels. These components can be used to evaluate general and special education teacher preparation and professional development programs. Preparation in these components will establish the foundation for increased participation of students with disabilities in the general education curriculum and improved results on high-stakes tests.

WA OSPI Inclusionary Practices Professional Development Project

This website provides information on the project design and implementation, an interactive map, project highlights, resources, and research.

Inclusionary Practices Handbook (Chapters 1 & 2) and Inclusionary Practices Handbook Chapter 3.

Instructional Strategies for Inclusive Settings

The Inclusionary Practices (IP) Handbook is an OSPI guidance document on inclusionary practices for educators, families, and school administrators in the state of Washington.

TIES Center and Haring Center for Inclusive Education Comprehensive Inclusive Education: General Education & the Inclusive IEP

“This planning process is based on a vision and expectation that each student can actively participate, belong, contribute, and learn in the school and larger community.” The IEP planning process has a planning worksheet to guide you through the four parts focusing on collaborative conversation, creating an inclusive IEP, education day-at-a-glance, and ongoing collaboration.

Villa, R & Thousand, J. (2016) The inclusive education checklist: A self-assessment of best practices. Naples, FL: National Professional Resources.

“The book offers a checklist of 15 key inclusive education best practices that together comprise quality inclusive education. Each chapter details an individual best practice and provides a list of 8-32 best practice indicators that deconstruct the best practice.”

Myths & Facts about Inclusionary Practices

“This resource was developed to challenge those myths and highlight the facts of why inclusionary practices work for each and every student.”

TIES Center Debunking Myths about Inclusive Education for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities

“There are many myths about including students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in general education classrooms.” Six myths are debunked within this brief.

Best Practices for Planning Paraeducator Support from WA OSPI

“This best practices document is intended to help administrators and IEP teams effectively assign and utilize paraeducators to improve student outcomes and increase meaningful student participation in general education environments.”

Forward Together: A School Leader’s Guide to Creating Inclusive Schools by National Center for Learning Disabilities and Understood

The guide addresses “key topics related to establishing common beliefs, creating an inclusive culture, and implementing effective instructional practice, this Guide helps school leaders identify and enact key practices for effectively serving the 1 in 5 [individuals with learning and attention issues nationwide], and all students.”

Paula Kluth’s Inclusion Rules

Paula Kluth is a consultant, author, advocate, and independent scholar. Her new site provides resources and tools for inclusion that can support a self-advocate/advocate, educator, paraprofessional, administrator, or parent.

Inclusive School Building Scheduling

Haring Center for Inclusive Education Mastering Scheduling Tips and Case Study

This eleven-minute YouTube video goes over a brief overview of school building scheduling and presents a case study from one of their IPP Demonstration Sites.

Haring Center for Inclusive Education Inclusionary Practices & Systems Master Schedules Tip Sheet

This two-page document gives a brief overview of school building schedules and provides tips about important things to remember and a case study to show the process for building a schedule.

About Time: Master Scheduling and Equity

This report provides school and district leaders with advice about how to use the building schedule to advance equity in their communities. It illuminates ways the schedule can both undermine and advance equity and provides a framework to help schools and districts pivot from technical to strategic scheduling to expand access and opportunity for all students.

Mastering the Master Schedule

Schedules should be dynamic—subject to change based on students’ needs. They should be flexible enough to accommodate new learning pathways for career- and college-bound students while also supporting remediation programs for struggling learners. And they should allow for a wide variety of learning levels within each classroom, so all children receive an equal shot at achieving success.

Scheduling: Seven Period Day

This research brief discusses the school schedule as a tool for improving the instructional program, shares several different schedule approaches and discusses the seven-period day in detail. It provides an analysis of advantages and disadvantages of the model and shares factors that must be considered when thinking about a seven-period day.

From Theory to Practice: A Jigsaw Approach to an Elementary Master Schedule

The site provides in-depth guidance and recommendations on developing equitable elementary school schedules.

8 Steps to Building an Elementary School Schedule

A daily schedule is vital to a school functioning at its optimum level. The schedule, if done correctly, will ensure that the school day can meet the needs of all students.

Principal’s Playbook: Elementary School Scheduling

The site provides guidance and examples of elementary school schedules.

Principal’s Playbook: Middle School Scheduling

The site provides guidance and examples of middle school schedules.

Characteristics of Inclusive Schedules

The rating scale helps schools review current practices and identify opportunities to improve inclusive scheduling.

Ruby Bridges Elementary Master Scheduling Journey Presentation

Example of Master Schedule at McMicken Heights Elementary School

Northshore School District Sehome High School Inclusionary Master Schedule Presentation

Sample Middle School Schedule with Teacher Planning Periods

Sample Middle School Schedule with Split Planning Periods

Access Points to General Education

Access Point Frameworks and Performance Tasks

“The WA-AIM tests are to be administered on a one-to-one basis by professional staff members or para-educators who have been instructed in proper administration procedures.”

TIES Center The General Education Curriculum – Not an Alternate Curriculum!

“The purpose of this Brief is to help parents determine whether their child with significant cognitive disabilities is provided meaningful access to the general education curriculum.”

TIES Center Providing Meaningful General Education Curriculum Access to Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

“The purpose of this brief is to answer the question of what access to and progress in the general education curriculum means for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.”

Strategies to Improve Access to the General Education Curriculum

“To assist state and local technical assistance providers and administrators in selecting research-supported practices, the professionals at the Access Center compiled information on strategies in the following areas: Instructional Methods and Practices, Media and Materials, Supports and Accommodations, and Assessment.”

Standards-aligned IEP Resources

Developing Standards-Aligned IEPs

The 2018 Special Education Monthly Webinar Series focuses on developing standards-aligned IEPs.

Comprehensive Inclusive Education: General Education and the Inclusive IEP | TIES Center

The comprehensive inclusive education planning process developed by the TIES Center is intended to support the creation and provision of a curricular and instructional program based on the acknowledgment that (1) each child is a general education student; (2) the general education curriculum and routines and the Individual Education Program (IEP) comprise a student’s full educational program; and (3) the IEP for a student qualifying for special education services is not the student’s curriculum.

OSERS Policy Guidance on Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) (PDF)

The document clarifies that an individualized education program (IEP) for an eligible child with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) must be aligned with the State’s academic content standards for the grade in which the child is enrolled.

Project Forum National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) Standards-Based Individualized Education Program Examples

This document presents a seven-step process to be used in developing a standards-based IEP.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) UDL Guidelines

“The UDL Guidelines are a tool used in the implementation of Universal Design for Learning, a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn.”

UDL-Aligned Strategies

“UDL-aligned strategies are instructional methods and tools used by teachers to ensure that ALL students have an equal opportunity to learn. All of our strategies are aligned with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines. These guidelines help you to select strategies that remove barriers in instruction so that all students can achieve their learning goals.”

UDL Wheel

This is a “Universal Design for Learning DIY template. These UDL Guidelines and checkpoints can assist educators in designing flexible lessons and curricula that reduce barriers to learning and provide innovative and supportive learning to meet the needs of all learners. They can also help educators evaluate existing curricula goals, materials, methods and assessment.”

Universally Designing Instruction to Provide High Leverage Practices for All Learners in General Education Classrooms

This document provides a list of resources about Universal Designing Instruction (UDL) and briefly describes each resource.

UDL vs Differentiated Instruction

This portion of the guide briefly overviews “definitions of UDL and differentiation, differences and interconnections, UDL vs DI: the dinner party analogy, reflection questions, useful resources, [and] next steps.”

Improving Instruction, Accessibility, and Outcomes – MTSS, UDL, and DI

“The intent of this professional development module is to give instructors of candidates in teacher and administration preparation programs the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to equip candidates with the practice of providing multi-tier instruction and interventions matched to students’ needs.”

Top 5 UDL Tips for Learning Environments

Use the Top 5 UDL Tips for Learning Environments as a tool to reflect on your learning environment.

Nelson, L. L. (2014). Design and Delivery. Planning and Teaching Using Universal Design for Learning. Brooks Publishing, Maryland.

“K-12 educators will learn how to use the three key principles of UDL—Engagement, Representation, and Action & Expression—to present information in multiple ways and meet the needs of diverse learners. Written in first person, like a face-to-face talk with a passionate educator, the book gives teachers a reader-friendly UDL primer and a practical framework for implementation, with detailed guidelines on lesson planning and checkpoints that help them stay on track.”

Teacher Collaboration and Co-Teaching

Are Today's General Education Teachers Prepare to Meet the Needs of Their Inclusive Schools?

"This paper examines the extent to which preservice and current educators are lacking in their ability to assist special needs students and how and why it is imperative that universities and school districts restructure coursework and staff development to provide, at the very least, adequate training for all current and future educators."

Leverage the Power of Collaborative Expertise

This brief opinion essay discusses "two recent reports from researcher John Hattie: What Doesn't Work in Education: The Politics of Distraction and What Works Best in Education: The Politics of Collaborative Expertise."

10 Tips for Using Co-Planning Time More Efficiently

"This article provides 10 tips for how teachers can efficiently plan together, even with limited time. In addition to general tips for planning, using a WHAT/HOW/WHO planning approach can help teachers maximize their planning time and still create a universally designed and differentiated lesson for an inclusive classroom."

IEP Goals and Objectives

Quick Check Chart: Measurable Annual Goals

This checklist provides brief information on measurable annual goals, measurement characteristics, and types of criteria.

Determining Measurable Annual Goals in an IEP

This publication article defines annual goals, explains the focus of academic and functional goals, how IEP teams should write annual goals, principles of formulating goals, step-by-step procedures, a questions and answers portion, and a sample towards the end.

Progress Monitoring

AESD/OSPI Webinar Series: Progress Monitoring & Collaboration for Inclusive Practices

The objectives of this webinar include: (a) foster collaboration among special educators, general education partners, and system leaders to support inclusionary practices; (b) highlight effective strategies for providing inclusive instruction across school reopening models; and (c) share strategies, innovations, and resources.

Washington's Roadmap for Special Education Recovery Services: 2021 & Beyond - Appendix: Progress Monitoring (pg. 10-11)

The appendix on progress monitoring highlights the importance of visually graphing and analyzing data and provides additional resources for progress monitoring.

Progress Monitoring: Legal Issues and Recommendations for IEP Teams

This journal article is "a review of recent decisions concerning progress monitoring reveals five primary areas of concern regarding progress monitoring."

IRIS Center Monitoring and Reporting Student Progress

This module briefly overviews topics including "Developing a Progress Monitoring Plan, Reporting Progress to Parents, [and] Implications of *Endrew* on Progress Monitoring and Reporting." Throughout the module, legislation and litigation guidance follow each topic presented.

How to get Meaningful IEP Data

This post briefly overviews IEP data collection, including: “Why IEP data is necessary. What is good, solid IEP data, and what does it look like? Who should collect the data for an IEP? When and how should IEP data be given to parents?”

Progress Monitoring for IEP Goals

This website provides a brief overview of progress monitoring, steps for progress monitoring, data collection, student progress, graphing data points, expectations, benefits, and essential questions.

Practical Tips for Better IEP Goals and Data Collection

“Excerpted and adapted from Cindy Golden’s new book, [The Data Collection Toolkit](#), this post is a starting point for writing better IEP goals and putting a solid data collection system in place.”

National Center on Intensive Intervention: Progress Monitoring

“Progress monitoring, a key component of a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), occurs throughout the data-based individualization (DBI) process to assess responsiveness to the validated intervention platform, as well as adaptations to the intervention.” The site provides guidance on developing a progress-monitoring plan and resources for both academic and behavioral progress-monitoring tools.

National Center on Intensive Intervention: Using Academic Progress Monitoring for Individualized Instructional Planning (DBI Professional Learning Series Module 2)

“This training module demonstrates how academic progress monitoring fits into the Data-Based Individualization (DBI) process by (a) providing approaches and tools for academic progress monitoring and (b) showing how to use progress monitoring data to set ambitious goals, make instructional decisions, and plan programs for individual students with intensive needs.”

Teaching and Assessing Data Literacy: Resource Guide for Supporting Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers

“*The Teaching and Assessing Data Literacy: Resource Guide for Supporting Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers* is intended to support the work of instructors in developing data literacy learning objectives, instruction, and measures.”

IES WWC Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decisions Making

“This guide offers five recommendations to help educators effectively use data to monitor students’ academic progress and evaluate instructional practices.”

UDL Tips for Assessment

These UDL tips for assessment are focused on learning goals, offering authentic opportunities, engagement and content knowledge, formative assessments, barriers to access, learner variability and flexible assessments, rubrics, involving learners, summative assessments, and building communities.

Lembke, E.S., Smith, A, Thomas, C.N., McMaster, K.L, & Mason, E.N. (2019). Using student assessment data, analyzing instructional practices, and making necessary adjustments that improve student outcomes. In High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classroom

“The book focuses primarily on Tiers 1 and 2, or work that mostly occurs with students with mild disabilities in general education classrooms; and provides rich, practical information highly suitable for teachers, but that can also be used for teacher educators and teacher preparation programs.”

CEEDAR Assessment Practices Within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports

This document focuses on the foundations of MTSS Assessment, universal screening, progress monitoring, intensifying instruction using data-based individualization (DBI), and using MTSS data. Additionally, the innovation configuration (IC) matrix is found in the appendix.

Reporting & Use of Assessment Results from James Madison University

This provides information on the Assessment Cycle focused on student learning outcomes with seven steps. This resource concentrates primarily on the final steps that involve “reporting assessment results and, most importantly, using those results to make programmatic changes to improve student learning.”

Focus on Five: Teaching Paraprofessionals About Data Collection

This introduces five tips to teach paraprofessionals about data collection. These tips focus on explaining why data collection is essential, how to model best practices, taking turns to review and observe the data collection process, discussing the data with each other, and giving feedback.

Books

The IEP Checklist: Your Guide to Creating Meaningful and Compliant IEPs by Clarissa E. Rosas and Kathleen G. Winterman

“How can you design effective IEPs that improve student outcomes and meet legal requirements? This one-stop IEP guide has the answers your team needs to create great IEPs and put them into action.”

Developing IEPs: The Complete Guide to Educationally Meaningful Individualized Educational Programs for Students with Disabilities by Keith J. Hyatt and John W. Filler

The text “focuses on the IEP process from both procedural and substantive perspectives as it relates to students from 3 through 21 years of age (information is congruent with the 2017 U. S. Supreme Court decision in *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*).”

Better IEPs How to Develop Legally Correct and Educationally Useful Programs by Barbara D. Bateman and Mary Anne Linden

The guide supports educators’ understanding of IEPs from a legal standpoint and focuses on a student-centered approach.

The Complete IEP Guide: How to Advocate for Your Special Ed Child by Lawrence M. Siegel

The text is a resource for families to be well-informed advocates for their children during the IEP process.

Six Shifts to Improve Special Education and Other Interventions: A Commonsense Approach for School Leaders by Nathan Levenson

“Combining research with evidence from his own implementation work in more than a hundred districts, Levenson makes the case for a wholesale rethinking of how interventions are delivered summarized by six essential ‘shifts.’ Designed to be practical and draw on the talents of existing staff, Levenson’s shifts are paired with concrete advice and lessons learned from the field to improve special education and general education interventions such as Response to Intervention and Multi-Tiered Student Supports.”

Trainings

Washington Education Association (WEA) Special Education Support Center (SESC)

Provides training and professional development opportunities for all special education stakeholders including educators (both general and special education personnel), school administrators, paraprofessionals, ESA staff, parents, and community members.

WA Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment (PAVE)

PAVE provides support, training, information, and resources to empower and give voice to individuals, youth, and families impacted by disabilities. PAVE envisions an inclusive community that values the unique abilities, cultures, voices, contributions, and potential of all individuals.

About CTE

The Johns Hopkins University School of Education Center for Technology in Education (CTE) changes lives through knowledge that matters.

CTE believes that thoughtful, learner-centered technology makes education more inclusive and accessible, which in turn improves the lives of all people. Since its launch in 1986, CTE has designed, developed, and implemented technology-enhanced solutions to address a wide range of challenges in educational and work settings across the globe. Committed to staying on top of emerging trends and meeting their audience where they are, CTE builds and uses innovative tools to expand knowledge and solve real-world problems. With an inclusive and individualized approach, they create technology that transforms practice and promotes success for individuals of all abilities.

In the community, CTE's team is on the ground in learning settings, classrooms, and schools to help ensure their programs are implemented with fidelity. Their culture of research and learning targets continuous improvement, with ongoing efforts to explore new avenues of access, build partnerships, and share expertise.

About the Special Education Division of OSPI

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) oversees the fiscal and programmatic requirements of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which ensures all children with disabilities have access to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). The OSPI's Special Education Division collaborates with Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Educational Services Districts (ESDs) to ensure improved educational results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities, including the submission and review of both quantitative and qualitative data provided by LEAs to ensure that LEAs are implementing the fiscal and programmatic requirements of the IDEA. The Special Education Division also provides students, families, and community members with information about special education, to ensure that students and families know about their rights, answering questions they have about the special education process, and sharing ways that partners may provide input and get involved.

Acknowledgments

The development of the Every Minute Counts: Calculating IEP Services to Improve Student Outcomes in Washington State – Technical Assistance Guide and the accompanying workbook could not have been possible without the impactful stories and experiences, thoughtful perspectives, and recommendations of the focus group participants. We thank the families and community partners, as well as the Directors of Special Education, representatives from teacher preparation programs, and pre- and in-service educators who participated and are thankful for their support and guidance.

Thank you also to the efforts of Andrea Harkins-Brown, Assistant Deputy Director of CTE, Vy Phung, Research Assistant, Nick Gillon, Johns Hopkins School of Education, Andrea Schanbacher, Project Administrator, Gina Cash, Project Administrator, and Sara Egorin-Hooper, Project Administrator.

Additionally, we are thankful for members of Washington OSPI, including Dr. Tania May, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education, Dr. Cassie Martin, Executive Director of Special Education, Jennifer Story, Program Improvement Coordinator, Dr. Rebecca Lynn, Program Improvement Supervisor, Alexandra Toney, Special Education Program Supervisor, Dr. Liz Stewart, Program Improvement Supervisor, and Paula Kitzke, Program Improvement Supervisor.

Every Minute Counts

Calculating IEP Services to Improve Student Outcomes
in Washington State Technical Assistance Guide 2024



JOHNS HOPKINS
SCHOOL of EDUCATION

Center for Technology in Education

