

GETTING READY FOR AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) MEETING

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

INTRODUCTION

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document that is the District's offer of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) developed and agreed to by a team that includes the parents, at a meeting, and documents:

- Whether the student is eligible for special education and related services.
- The student's present levels of educational performance and unique educational needs.
- The goals and objectives the student is to achieve.
- The special education, related services, accommodations, and modifications the student requires and will receive.
- The appropriate instructional setting for the student, including any and all supplementary aids and supports the student may require to progress satisfactorily in his/her educational program.
- How the student's educational progress will be assessed and reported to the parent.

THE IEP IS:

- An agreement, that the student will receive what is specified in the IEP.
- A communication vehicle enabling parents, professionals and, if appropriate, the student as equal participants to make joint informed decisions.
- A compliance tool enabling school districts and State and Federal agencies to determine whether a student is receiving a free appropriate public education by assessing whether the IEP meets legal requirements and whether the student is receiving what is documented on the IEP.
- A student-centered management tool used to ensure that a student is provided needed special education and related services.
- A commitment of resources necessary to enable the student to receive needed special education and related services and make satisfactory progress in his/her educational program.

WHEN MUST AN IEP MEETING BE HELD

An IEP Team must meet whenever any of the following occurs:

- A student has been assessed pursuant to an assessment plan. This includes initial assessments, triennial assessments, or other assessments.
- At least annually, to review the student's progress and eligibility and make necessary revisions.
- A student demonstrates a lack of anticipated progress.
- The parent or District staff member requests a meeting to review the IEP.

Note: IEP meetings must be held within 30 calendar days of a parent request. There is no legal limit to the number of IEP meetings that may be requested by the parent.

- There is a proposal to change the student's eligibility, services, or placement. Note: If there is a belief that the IEP team will consider exiting the student from special education services because the student no longer has a disability or require special education services, an assessment of the student is required. (*See Developing a Special Education Assessment Plan*).
- There is student misconduct that results in a second suspension.
- If suspensions continue, on day 11, when the student must return to the school site and an IEP meeting is held to determine appropriate services.
- When a student with an IEP transfers into the LAUSD from another school district.

IEP meetings must be held within the following timelines:

- Sixty (60) calendar days from receiving the signed assessment plan from the parent.

Note: The 60 calendar days does not include days between the student's regular school sessions or terms, or days of school vacation in excess of five school days. If a signed assessment plan is received within 20 days of the end of the regular school year, the IEP must be held within 30 days after the beginning of the subsequent regular school year. If the signed assessment plan is received during the student's school vacation the IEP meeting must be held within 60 days of the date that school reconvenes.

- Thirty (30) calendar days from the time that a parent or teacher requests a meeting to review the IEP.

Note: The 30 calendar days do not include days between the student's school sessions or terms or days of school vacation in excess of five school days.

- Within twelve (12) months from the date of the previous IEP meeting.
- Thirty (30) calendar days from the enrollment of a student with an IEP transfers from another school district.

- District policy requires that an ITP be developed prior to the student's fourteenth birthday, to ensure that an ITP is in place when he/she reaches age fourteen. See *Transition Services for Students with Disabilities, ages 14 and older in this ePPM*.

MEMBERS OF THE IEP TEAM

The following persons are required at IEP team meetings:

1. One or both parents of the student. The term parent means:

- A person having legal custody of a child.
- A person acting in place of a parent, such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives.
- An individual designated by the parent to represent the interests of the student.
 - Note: In such cases the school should attempt to obtain the designation in writing from the parent including the scope of the representation such as the representative's participation in the IEP meeting, whether he/she is authorized to sign the IEP and whether the representation is limited to one or more IEP meetings. If it cannot be obtained in writing, document the reason why and the means by which the designation was obtained.
- A foster parent if the natural parents' authority to make decisions has been limited by court order and the foster parent has an ongoing, long-term parental relationship with the child, is willing to assume the role of parent in educational decision-making and has no interest that would conflict with the interest of the child.
- The student, if age 18 or older, for whom no guardian or conservator has been appointed.
 - Note: While the student's parents must also receive notice of the meeting, the roles and responsibilities of parents described in this e-Manual revert to the student.
- A surrogate parent appointed for a student who is a ward of the State or for a student whose parent is unknown or whose whereabouts cannot be determined. See the *Surrogate Parent* section of this ePPM for information regarding the appointment of a surrogate parent.

Note: If the parent chooses not to attend, or after a reasonable number of attempts employing various modes of communication, they do not respond, the IEP meeting may be held without the parent's attendance. Document all attempts on the *IEP Meeting* screen in Welligent, upload any and all documentation on the *Attached Documents* section of the IEP Management screen and consult with the Local District Special Education Administrator prior to conducting the meeting.

2. An administrator or administrative designee. The administrator/administrative designee must:

- Be qualified to provide or supervise the provision of special education.
- Be knowledgeable about the general curriculum and linguistically appropriate goals, objectives and programs.
- Be knowledgeable about the availability of the resources of the District, including program options available to address the needs of the student.
- Have the authority to commit District resources and be able to ensure (by such means as administratively directing, coordinating, monitoring, reporting on, etc.) that the delivery of services that are described in the student's IEP will actually be provided.

3. At least one special education teacher or special education provider of the student.

Note: If the only special education service the student is or may be receiving is language and speech related services, the speech-language pathologist may be the special education provider.

Note: At an initial IEP meeting, the special education teacher should be the special education teacher who may be serving the student or a special education teacher with the appropriate qualifications.

4. At least one general education teacher of the student, if the student is or may be participating in general education.

5. A person knowledgeable about the assessment procedures used to assess the student, familiar with the results of the assessment and qualified to interpret the instructional implications of the results. This may be one of the teachers listed above. Psychologists and related services providers participating in IEP meetings may not serve as administrative designee or act as chair of the IEP meeting.

Note: A member of the IEP team is not required to attend in whole or in part if the parent and District agree that attendance is not necessary because the member's area of the curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed. If the area of the curriculum or related services is to be modified or discussed, the member can be excused from attending if the parent and District agree, and written input is provided to the parent and the District prior to the meeting. Parental agreement must be in writing. See LAUSD Reference Guide 3804.0 *Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team Membership Requirements and the IEP Team Member Excusal Process* for more information.

6. When appropriate, the following persons must also attend the IEP meeting:

- The student.

Note: The student must be invited if an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) is being developed or reviewed at an IEP meeting. If the student is not going to attend the IEP meeting, document the reason on page 1 of the ITP. If the student is a minor, it is up to the parent to decide if the student will attend the meeting.

- At the discretion of the parent and/or the District, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise concerning the student, including related services personnel, as appropriate.
 - For a student who is being considered for eligibility as a student with specific learning disabilities:
 - One person qualified to conduct individual diagnostic examinations of students, such as a school psychologist, speech-language therapist, or reading teacher.
 - At least one person, other than the student's general education teacher, who observed the student's academic performance in the general classroom setting, for example a special education teacher, psychologist, administrator, or another general education teacher.
7. When an ITP is being developed for a student age 14 or younger, at the discretion of the IEP team, representatives of the agencies, other than the District, that are likely to provide or pay for the provision of transition services are to be invited.
- Note: With the consent of an adult student or the parents, an agency may be invited regarding transition planning. If the student is on an inter-district permit, a representative from their district of residence must be invited. (See *Inter-district Permit* section of this ePPM).
8. For a student who is being considered for dual placement (placement in a nonpublic and public school):
- Representative(s) from the nonpublic school and the public school where the student will be dually enrolled, including general education teachers, special education teachers and administrators.
 - A representative from the student's school of residence if the public school in which the student will be dually enrolled is not the school of residence.
9. Representatives from other agencies as appropriate. The IDEA and California law permit school districts to utilize state certified non-public schools and agency providers (NPS/NPA providers) to meet the requirements of federal and state special education laws in serving students with disabilities. IEP teams should be aware that NPS/NPA providers may attend IEP team meetings, and as collaborative participants in the IEP meetings, provide feedback on student progress and offer recommendations in their area of service and expertise.
10. District staff that have responsibilities for behavior intervention, as appropriate.
11. For a student who has been placed in a group home by a juvenile court, a representative of the group home must be invited.
12. It is expected that IEP team members will participate in the meeting to its completion and not attend to other duties during the meeting. However, general education teachers are required to participate, at a minimum, in the following:

- Positive behavioral interventions and strategies
- Present levels of performance
- Supplementary aids and services
- Goals and objectives that will be implemented in the general education classroom.
- Program and curricular modifications
- Supports for school personnel
- Instructional interventions and strategies

SCHEDULING THE IEP MEETING

Since it is essential that IEP team members are available and prepared for the meeting and that meetings are held within required timelines, effective scheduling is important.

The District's Welligent IEP system provides a master calendar of the dates by which annual reviews and three-year IEP reviews must be held. Using the Welligent IEP system, schools can schedule IEP meetings far enough in advance to coordinate and facilitate team member preparation and participation. Since the administrator/designee will probably attend more IEP meetings than other staff, systematic planning will be helpful for his/her time management.

In many schools, IEP meetings tend to cluster at the beginning or end of the school year, making school wide planning even more important. Annual IEP reviews that also include an assessment of the student require longer range scheduling, since assessment plans must be prepared, assessments conducted and reports written before the IEP meeting can be held.

Since the amount of time needed for an effective IEP meeting will vary depending on the needs of the student, be sure to schedule an appropriate period of time to discuss and resolve all relevant issues. Scheduling of IEP meetings back to back for short periods is not considered to be reasonable.

Note: Administrators should verify the availability of all staff (including itinerant Related Services providers) required to attend before scheduling the meeting.

NOTIFYING PARTICIPANTS OF THE IEP MEETING

District policy requires that parents receive written notification of their child's IEP meeting at least 10 calendar days prior to the meeting using the *LAUSD Notification to Participate in An Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting* form. The notice must be in the parent's primary language.

The notice form can be completed and produced in the District's major languages by using the Welligent IEP system. Complete the form in English and complete all relevant fields. Be sure to:

1. Check the purpose(s) of the IEP meeting.

Note: The notice for a student age 14 and older must have the box checked that the IEP meeting will include post-secondary goals and transition services.

Note: If the IEP meeting has been scheduled to discuss a change in placement, the “Change in Placement” checkbox must be selected.

2. Check the titles of the individuals who are being invited to participate.

Note: Enter the participants on the IEP Details screen of the Welligent IEP.

3. Specify a contact person to whom the parent can direct questions.

4. Send a copy of the notification form to the parents in their primary language.

5. Provide the parents with the appropriate copy of the form and attach copies of *A Parent’s Guide to Special Education Services (Including Procedural Rights and Safeguards)*, *The IEP and You*, and *The ITP and You* (when an individualized transition plan will be developed or reviewed at the IEP meeting) in the parent’s primary language.

6. Notify staff at least 10 calendar days prior to the meeting using the Welligent IEP system. Students attending IEP meetings must receive a copy of the notification.

7. Reminder: If an ITP is being developed the student must be invited to participate. If an ITP is being developed for a student that involves the participation of representatives from outside agencies, be sure that they are notified of the meeting.

8. Enter the date the notification form was sent to the parents on the IEP Meeting screen of the Welligent IEP System.

9. Record attempts to convince the parents to participate in the IEP meeting. The District must show an effort to arrange a mutually agreed upon time and place for the IEP meeting. An IEP meeting can be held via video or audio conferencing or other alternative means. Documentation should include:

- a. Detailed records of telephone calls made or attempted and the results of those calls.
- b. Copies of correspondence sent to the parents and any responses received.
- c. Detailed records of visits made to the parents’ home or place of employment and the results of those visits.
- d. Written or verbal confirmation provided by the parents that they do not wish to attend the IEP meeting, verified in the Welligent IEP System by a signed *Notification to Participate in an Individualized IEP Meeting*, a logged telephone call or personal conversation with date, a logged record of a visit to home or place of employment with date, or an email message or fax. The District may collect evidence of recorded attempts to convince and document the results of these attempts in the Welligent IEP System.

10. When the *signed* form is returned, enter the date received on the bottom of the form and scan and upload the form to the relevant IEP in the on the IEP Management screen under *Attached Documents*.
11. If after a reasonable number of documented efforts (at least 3), the parent does not respond to the *Notification to Participate in an Individualized Education Program Meeting*, the IEP meeting may be held without the parent's participation. Document all attempts on the IEP Meeting Screen in Welligent, upload dated correspondences with evidence of mailing, etc. and consult with the Local District Special Education Administrator prior to holding the IEP meeting.
12. If the parents have requested that the meeting be rescheduled, try to find a mutually agreeable date and then send them a notification form with a new date.

PREPARING FOR AN IEP MEETING

To ensure an effective and efficient meeting, the following actions prior to the IEP meeting will be of assistance:

1. Anticipate concerns and be prepared to address them at the meeting. Conduct Preparation Activities so that the IEP team is knowledgeable of the programs, supports, services and options available to support the student. See LAUSD REF- 5904.1 *Determining Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment* for details.
2. Be sure that all staff participating in the IEP meeting received the Notification and are able to attend.
3. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff, including that they:
 - Arrive at the IEP meeting on time and prepared.
 - Remain at the IEP meeting as long as is required.
 - Remain attentive to the proceedings throughout the duration of the IEP meeting.
 - Not delegate their responsibility to another staff member unless that person is in a position to assume that particular responsibility.
 - Ensure that the cultural and linguistic needs of parents and students are addressed.
 - Provide any reasonable accommodations the parent may have requested to access the meeting.
4. Review the assessment plan on the Welligent IEP system to ensure that all assessment reports have been completed, uploaded to the relevant IEP, translated and a copy of the report has been provided to the parents if requested. Prepare copies of the assessment reports for the meeting.

Note: If the parent requested a copies of assessment reports, forward to them at least 4 days prior to the meeting.

5. Review the signed Notification on the Welligent IEP system to determine if independent educational evaluation reports that were to be submitted prior to the IEP meeting have

been received. If not contact the parents or evaluator(s) to remind them to provide the report(s) in time for the meeting. Make necessary copies.

6. Have staff review assessment reports including independent educational evaluations, if they are available prior to the meeting.

Note: It is appropriate for staff to come prepared to IEP meetings with findings and recommendations related to components of the IEP. These may or may not be written on an IEP form and may be revised during discussion at the IEP meeting. It must, however, be made clear to parents at the onset of the meeting that such findings and recommendations are provided for review and discussion. At no time should a complete draft IEP be prepared prior to the meeting.

7. Have staff summarize information on the student's present level of educational performance, including:

- Report cards
- Class tests
- Standards-referenced assessments, such as performance-based assessments and curriculum-based assessments
- Anecdotal records
- Behavioral reports
- Checklists and other teacher evaluations
- All assessment reports
- Reports from providers of transition services
- Performance on State and District-wide assessments
- Observations from parents, including how the student applies what he/she has learned at school in the home and community.
- Comments from the student

8. Have staff review the student's current IEP, unless it is an initial IEP meeting, to determine the progress the student has made in meeting IEP goals and objectives and prepare recommended changes based on student data.

Reminder: While decisions at an IEP meeting are to be based on input from all participants, participants may come prepared with draft recommendations for team consideration.

9. Have staff review the student's current accommodations, modifications, services and placement and develop recommendations for consideration at the IEP meeting.

10. If the IEP meeting is the annual review prior to the three year review, staff, including those staff who may have responsibility for conducting the three-year reassessment, and the parent, should discuss whether the student is appropriately identified, is achieving IEP goals and objectives and functioning appropriately within the school setting, and consider District policies regarding 3yr reevaluations in order to make a recommendation as to whether a reevaluation may be necessary. Make sure that the parent understands that they can request a reevaluation at any time before the next IEP meeting.
11. If the student's need for assistive technology may be a concern at the IEP meeting see *Assistive Technology and Low Incidence Programs* guidelines in this ePPM on information to be collected in planning for the IEP meeting.
12. If there is a belief that the IEP meeting may lead to a placement determination other than the student's school of residence or the school the student is currently attending, obtain information about appropriate and available placements that may be considered at the IEP meeting. Be prepared to discuss the potential benefits and negative effects of any proposed educational placements and inform the parent on the Notification form that placement change may be discussed. See the section on *Determining Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment* in this ePPM, for further information.
13. If there is a belief that the IEP meeting may lead to a recommendation for a related service that is currently not available at the school the student is currently attending, the appropriate related service office should be contacted in advance to allow the office to identify District staff to provide the service at the school of attendance, or at another school as close to the student's home or school as possible.
14. If the student will be participating in the IEP meeting, have the school staff responsible for the delivery of special education services provide the student with instruction on his/her role, rights and procedural safeguards. The instruction should be based on the information contained in the *Parent's Guide to Special Education Services (Including Procedural Rights and Safeguards)*, *The IEP and You* and, when appropriate, *The ITP and You*.
15. If the student will be turning 18, both the student and the parents must be notified at least one year in advance that the student at will be assuming the rights, roles, responsibilities, and communication previously held by the parents, unless the court determines otherwise. Document this notification on *Section N, Procedural Safeguards and Follow-up Actions* of the IEP document during the meeting.
16. Encourage parents to prepare for the IEP meeting by:
 - Reviewing their child's current IEP.
 - Visiting their child's current placement.
 - Reviewing reports of their child's progress.
 - Preparing observations of their child's performance at home and in the community.
 - Meeting with their child's teacher(s).

- Noting progress they are pleased with or concerned about.

17. Review the completed *Parent Request/Reasonable Accommodations* form, signed *Notification* or the Welligent IEP system to determine if the parent has requested any accommodations, such as an interpreter at the meeting and arrange for the provision of the reasonable accommodations. Make arrangements for any equipment (including someone knowledgeable about its operation), materials, forms etc. that may be needed at the meeting

Note: If the parent intends to audio-record the IEP meeting, they must give notice to the administrator/designee at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. If the parent gives notice to some other District employee, that District employee shall advise the parent to whom the request should be directed. If the parent audio records the meeting, the school may also audio record the meeting without parental approval. If District staff want to audio record the meeting (school initiates the request), parents must be notified in writing at least 24 hours prior to the meeting and informed that they have the right to refuse to have the meeting recorded. Any recording made by the District is subject to the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and thus subject to confidentiality requirements.

18. Determine who will be responsible for updating the IEP document in Welligent during the meeting.

19. Assign a person to be responsible for ensuring that the computer is there and operational.

20. Reserve a meeting room that has privacy, sufficient space and seating for all the IEP meeting participants, and can support the effective use of any equipment that may be required.

21. Prepare an agenda for the meeting.

22. Determine who will chair the IEP meeting. This will usually be the administrator/designee or it may be another member of the IEP team. It may not be the psychologist or related services provider. The selection should be the individual who is most capable of facilitating a productive meeting, informed of program options and authorized to commit District resources.