

IEP Process: The School Administrator's Role During IEP Implementation

Est. Time: 1 Hour

Objective

Reflect on practices and procedures related to the school administrator's role in implementing an individualized education program (IEP), identify areas that need improvement, and set goals to improve in these areas.

Overview

School administrators play a critical role in ensuring that high-quality IEPs are developed and implemented for eligible students with disabilities. Doing so requires a solid understanding of the IEP process, including its associated legal requirements. More, the school administrator is responsible for establishing school-specific procedures and practices related to the process. Specifically, once a student has been deemed eligible for special education services, the school administrator should ensure that procedures and practices are in place for planning and conducting the IEP meeting and implementing the IEP. This activity will focus on procedures and practices relevant for implementing the IEP.

For Your Information

Although some districts may have a special education coordinator or liaison who handles many of the responsibilities associated with the IEP process, the school administrator is still ultimately responsible for overseeing the IEP process and ensuring adherence to the legal requirements. Failure to do so can result in legal ramifications.

The purpose of the implementation stage of the IEP process is to deliver the services and supports outlined in a student's IEP. In order for those services and supports to be implemented correctly, or with fidelity, the school administrator should make sure that:

- Parents are meaningfully involved in the IEP's implementation
- School personnel understand their responsibilities and have the skills and training necessary to deliver the supports and services outlined in the IEP

There are a number of procedures and practices that school administrators can apply to make sure these actions occur. It is important for school administrators to periodically examine their practices related to this part of the IEP process to identify areas that might need improvement.

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Activity

1. Complete the attached survey (see Page 3 below) and reflect on the practices currently applied when an IEP is implemented at your school.
2. Based on your survey results, discuss how well you think your current practices ensure that the services and supports outlined in a student’s IEP are implemented with fidelity.
3. Identify two practices from the survey that are in need of improvement (i.e., scored as 2 or lower). Write a SMART goal for each identified area of improvement.

S	Specific	Clearly stated descriptions of each goal element
M	Measurable	Quantifiable by a defined standard that can be observed in some way
A	Actively Phrased	Involving actions that are clearly observable
R	Realistic	Practical but ambitious and challenging and based on relevant information
T	Time-Limited	Involves a specified time-frame within which the skill is anticipated to be mastered

4. For each SMART goal, write at least two action steps with deadlines that will support your successful accomplishment of that goal.

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The following survey includes a list of actions (although not exhaustive) that school administrators can take to help ensure that the services and supports outlined in a student’s IEP are delivered with fidelity. Read each statement carefully and circle the number that best represents your *current* practice related to implementing these services and supports with fidelity, not what you have done in the past. There are no right or wrong answers. The best answer is your honest assessment.

As a school administrator, I (or a designated team member)...		never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always
1	Establish and maintain open lines of communication with parents	0	1	2	3	4
2	Frequently inform parents of their child’s progress toward meeting IEP goals and objectives	0	1	2	3	4
3	Involve parents in any changes to their child’s IEP	0	1	2	3	4
4	Make sure all individuals involved in the provision of services have access to the IEP	0	1	2	3	4
5	Make sure all individuals involved in the implementation of services outlined in the IEP know their responsibilities	0	1	2	3	4
6	Make sure all individuals involved in the implementation of services are informed of the accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided to the student	0	1	2	3	4
7	Ensure that school personnel have the knowledge and skills they need to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities associated with the IEP process and the implementation of the services and supports documented in the IEP	0	1	2	3	4
8	Create structures and opportunities to support collaboration among the multiple educators who are responsible for providing services and supports to students with disabilities	0	1	2	3	4

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As a school administrator, I (or a designated team member)...		never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always
9	Provide needed support for educators so that they can effectively deliver the services and supports outlined in the IEP (e.g., professional development)	0	1	2	3	4
10	Monitor whether the IEP is being implemented as planned	0	1	2	3	4
11	Monitor student progress toward meeting IEP goals and objectives	0	1	2	3	4
12	Adhere to required timelines	0	1	2	3	4

For in-depth information about the school administrator’s role in the IEP process, view our interactive learning module **IEPs: How Administrators Can Support the Development and Implementation of High-Quality IEPs** (<https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/iep02/>).