

## IEP Process: The School Administrator's Role in Planning an IEP Meeting

### Objective

Reflect on personal practices and procedures related to the school administrator's role in planning an individualized education program (IEP) meeting, 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 to planning the IEP meeting.

#### 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 an IEP meeting is for the IEP team to work collaboratively to identify the special education services and supports that will be delivered to the student, based on her unique needs. This process produces a written record, the IEP itself, which formalizes these services and supports. When planning for an IEP meeting, the school administrator should take steps to:

- Assemble an appropriate IEP team
- Review student information
- Schedule the meeting

There are a number of procedures and practices that school administrators can implement 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 planning an IEP meeting at your school.
2. Based on your survey results, discuss how well your current practices ensure that:
  - An appropriate IEP team is assembled
  - Student information is reviewed prior to the meeting
  - The meeting is scheduled within the appropriate time frame and at a time parents can attend
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.

<b>S</b>	Specific	Clearly stated descriptions of each goal element
<b>M</b>	Measurable	Quantifiable by a defined standard that can be observed in some way
<b>A</b>	Actively Phrased	Involving actions that are clearly observable
<b>R</b>	Realistic	Practical but ambitious and challenging and based on relevant information
<b>T</b>	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 proper actions are taken when planning an IEP meeting. Read each statement carefully and circle the number that best represents your current practice, 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	Oversee the formation of a properly constituted IEP team comprising the individuals specified by IDEA, including the student's parents	0	1	2	3	4
2	Make sure all IEP team members have working knowledge of information provided by the teacher and parents as part of the referral for an evaluation	0	1	2	3	4
3	Make sure all IEP team members have working knowledge of evaluation reports and documentation from the eligibility meeting	0	1	2	3	4
4	Provide parents with an opportunity to confer with relevant professionals regarding evaluation results	0	1	2	3	4
5	Schedule the IEP meeting within 30 days of the eligibility determination	0	1	2	3	4
6	Provide advance notice of the meeting to all IEP team members	0	1	2	3	4
7	Make sure that a concerted effort is made to schedule this meeting at a time when the parents are able to attend	0	1	2	3	4
8	Send a written notice (invitation) to the parents that includes the date and time, location, purpose, and who will attend	0	1	2	3	4
9	Consider the amount of time needed during the meeting to ensure that participants are able to fully discuss and develop all of the IEP components and schedule accordingly	0	1	2	3	4

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As a school administrator, I (or a designated team member)...		never	rarely	sometimes	usually	always
10	Establish adequate class coverage for teachers attending the IEP meeting	0	1	2	3	4
11	Secure a distraction-free meeting space	0	1	2	3	4
12	Ensure that a sign-language interpreter or translator will be available if needed	0	1	2	3	4
13	Consider the team's physical needs	0	1	2	3	4
14	Avoid predetermining a student's placement or services	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/>).