Coffee Break for Special Education Leaders: Engaging Families in the IEP Team Meeting Process

October 14, 2020

PaTTAN's Mission

The mission of the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) is to support the efforts and initiatives of the Bureau of Special Education, and to build the capacity of local educational agencies to serve students who receive special education services.

PDE's Commitment to Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Our goal for each child is to ensure Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams begin with the general education setting with the use of Supplementary Aids and Services before considering a more restrictive environment.

DISCLAIMER

The information provided in this module is considered best practice and is NOT REQUIRED BY LAW

Family Engagement

Family Engagement promotes equitable partnerships among schools, families and communities to actively advance student achievement through shared commitment, decision-making and responsibility.

#PAFamilyEngagement

Regulations and Implications for Practice

IDEA	
ESSA	
PA State Performance Plan (SPP)	**Indicator 8**
Danielson Framework	**Component 4C - Communicating with Families**
PA System for Principal Effectiveness	**Component 4A – Maximizes Parent and Community Involvement and Outreach**

AGENDA

- School Leader Advocacy
- Effective Communication in the IEP Process
- Shared Decision-Making in the IEP Process
- Resources

School Leader Advocacy

Special Education Advocacy

- Gather ideas from all team members
- Enlist the ongoing input and wisdom of families
- Invite families as partners in their children's learning
- Continue and expand family engagement practices
- Conduct regular check-in calls
- Use multiple methods of outreach to communicate with families
- Ensure that major communications to families are provided in their home language.

The Ten P's to Enhance Cooperation & Collaboration

- Principal
- Problem Solver
- Planning
- Practical
- Participate
- Passion
- Positive
- Potential
- 'Polish the Apple'
- Prepare
- Protect

Adapted from R. Lavoie, 2008

Effective Communication

Enhancing Family Engagement Training Modules

Module 1 -- Welcoming all Families into the School Community	**Module 2 – Communicating Effectively**
Module 3 – Supporting Student Success	Module 4 – Speaking Up for Every Child – *Coming soon!*
Module 5 – Shared Decision Making – *Coming soon!*	Module 6– Collaborating with the Community – *Coming soon!*

Module 2 Communicating Effectively

- Reviews the elements of communication
- Discusses building home-school partnerships through effective communication
- Examines types of communication
- Analyzes home-school communication processes

Communication and Cultural Diversity (Module 2)

Over one-third of students in Pre-K through grade 12 classrooms are from minority groups, and the families of an increasing number of students are immigrants, many with native languages other than English.

National Center for Education Statistics

Elements of Diversity

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Language
- Nationality
- Culture
- Socioeconomic status
- Sexual orientation

Effective Cross-Cultural Communication

- Learn and maintain etiquette
- Be respectful
- Avoid slang, idioms, and double meanings
- Keep it simple
- Practice active listening

(Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007)

Culture and Special Education

The two meanings of culture:

- defining dimensions of identity of race, religion, spoken language, or ethnic background
- uniqueness of each individual school or the set of rituals, rules, values, and moral code that shapes behavior and relationships within the school building

Special education maintains its own laws, procedures, vocabulary, documents, as well as researched-based instructional methods, techniques, and strategies

Villegas & Lucas, 2002 & Deal & Peterson, 2009

Effective Communication

Before the IEP Team Meeting

Technical Aspects of Special Education for Leaders

1. Laws/Regulations
2. Disability knowledge/instructional services
3. Teacher support
4. Family Engagement

Minimize Frustration and Conflict in IEP Team Meetings

1. Experience is the best teacher
2. Suggest Agreements
3. Minimize educational jargon
4. Learn more about the families' cultures and support parents to learn school culture
5. Make sure that there is a comfortable physical environment for the IEP meeting
6. Create a contact information brochure

Family Engagement in the IEP Process

- Gather ideas from all team members
- Enlist the ongoing input and wisdom of families
- Invite families as partners in their children's learning
- Continue and expand family engagement practices
- Conduct regular check-in calls
- Use multiple methods of outreach to communicate with families
- Ensure that major communications to families are provided in their home language.

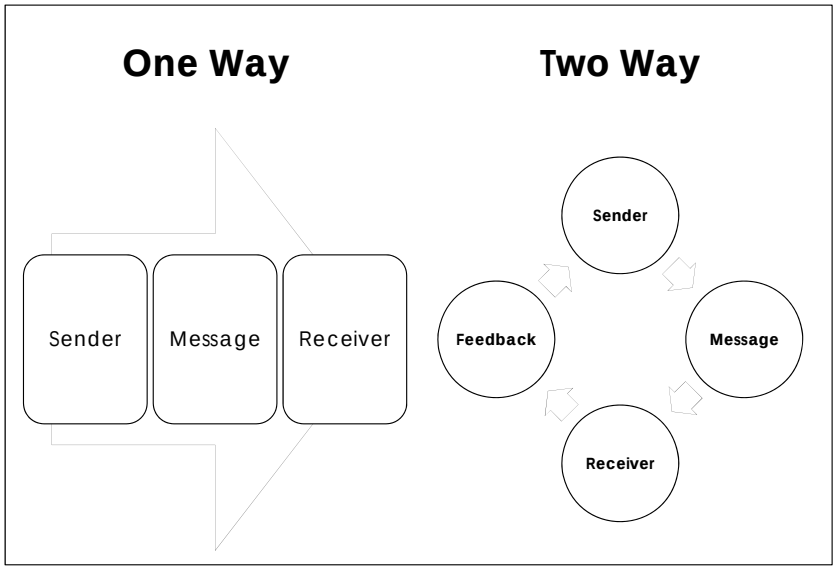
Prior to IEP Team Meetings

- Call to invite parents to the meeting
- Tell parents how valuable their input and contributions will be
- Accommodate parents' schedules as much as possible
- Consider transportation logistics with them, if possible
- Be prepared to welcome and encourage parents' contributions.

Effective Communication

During the IEP Team Meeting

Types of Communication



Tips for Effective Communication During the Meeting

- Keep it positive
- Sit beside the parent
- Be aware nonverbal communication
- Share all ideas by writing them out
- Check for understanding
- Ask for parent ideas directly
- Provide clear explanations of
  - Sections of the IEP
  - Timelines
  - Team member roles & responsibilities
  - Recap of parent rights

What to Communicate

- Student progress
- Policies and procedures
- Grade-level expectations
- Families engaged as valuable allies

(Casp, 2015)
e, 20

Review Procedural Safeguards During the Meeting

- To Refuse to Consent
- To Mediate a Dispute
- To Be Given a Hearing if You Disagree with the IEP the LEA has Offered for Your Child
- To Special Protections in School Discipline
- To File a Complaint Against Your LEA
- To Remove Your Child from Special Education Programs

Review NoREP/PWN During the Meeting

1. the list of Types of Action Taken available on the *NOREP/PWN with families*
2. action proposed or refused and explanation
3. description of other options that the IEP team considered
4. Parental consent

2. Discuss which actions require the LEA to issue
   - Parental Consent only
   - *Procedural Safeguards Notice*

Shared Decision-Making

Shared Decision-Making

- Sharing views
- Solving problems
- Taking action toward shared goals

High-Impact Strategies

Strategies with positive, life-long benefits:

- Link to Learning
- Building Relationships
- Developing Dual Capacity

(Mapp, Henderson, and Hill, 2014)

Outcomes of Shared Decision-Making

Educators will be able to:

- Connect family engagement to learning and development
- Engage families as co-creators

Families will be able to engage in these roles:

- Co-creators
- Supporters
- Encouragers
- Monitors
- Advocates

Modified from The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships, 2019

Effective Communication

After the IEP Team Meeting

After the Meeting

- Check in
- Follow up

Questions?

PaTTAN Publications pg.1

- Annotated
  - Invitation To Participate In The IEP Team Meeting Or Other Meeting
  - Evaluation Report
  - Individualized Education Program (with COVID-19 Guidance)
  - Agreement to Waive Reevaluation
  - Reevaluation Report
  - Notice Of Recommended Educational Placement/Prior Written Notice (NOREP/PWN)
- Answering Special Considerations for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired
- Assistive Technology in the IEP: A Guide for IEP Teams
- Annotated Positive Behavior Support Plan
- Education ABCs
- Education Leader - Educational Benefit Review (EBR)

PaTTAN Publications pg. 2

- Frequently Asked Questions: English Learners (ELs) with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- Formative Assessment: Monitoring the Progress of Students with IEPs
- Functional Behavioral Assessment Process
- General Due Process Hearing Timelines for When the Parent Files a Complaint
- Parents' Rights: Understanding the Procedural Safeguards Notice
- Pennsylvania Parent Guide to Special Education for School Age Children
- Special Education Timelines
- Students Who Are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deaf-Blind: Safety Checklist for IEP Teams

PaTTAN Publications pg. 3

- Teachers' Desk Reference: Communicating with Parents
- Teachers' Desk Reference: Extended School Year (ESY)
- Teachers' Desk Reference: Family and Community Engagement
- Teachers' Desk Reference: Preparing for An IEP Meeting
- Teachers' Desk Reference: The Shared Responsibility of Educational Team Members
- Understanding the Language of Special Education: A Glossary for Parents and Educators
- Writing Effective IEP Goals

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- Annotated Individualized Education Program with COVID-19 Guidance https://www.pattan.net/Forms/Annotated-Individualized-Education-Program-with-CO?NodeId=1542128
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PaTTAN Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network

Amira Hill-Yancy
ayancy@pattan.net

Kimberly Jenkins
kjenkins@pattan.net

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Tom Wolf, Governor