

Principals Want to Know

A tip sheet for principals that focuses on practical issues faced in schools.

Drawn from existing resources, these tips are designed to support instructional leadership practice.

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Individual Education Plans: Principals' Roles and Responsibilities

The Question:

"As a principal, what are my roles and responsibilities in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process?"

The Answer:

Here are five things you should know:

1. Principals' mandated roles and responsibilities
2. Other roles and responsibilities
3. Can a principal share IEP responsibilities?
4. The IEP and report card link
5. When should IEPs be developed?

1. PRINCIPALS' MANDATED ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A principal must:

- ensure IEPs are completed within 30 school days of a student's placement in a special education program;
- sign the IEP within 30 school days of a student's placement in the program;
- ensure the recommendations of the Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC) regarding special education programs and services, such as support personnel, resources and equipment, are taken into account when developing the IEP;
- ensure parents and the student, if the student is 16 years of age or older, are consulted in the development of the IEP;
- ensure that consultation with community agencies and postsecondary institutions that he or she considers appropriate is conducted in preparing a transition plan for students who are 14 years of age or older and who are not identified solely as gifted;
- ensure that a copy of the IEP is provided to the parent and the student, if the student is 16 years of age or older; and

- ensure that the current IEP is stored in the Ontario Student Record, unless a parent of the student objects in writing.

"Although the IEP is developed collaboratively, the principal is ultimately responsible for each student's plan. The principal must sign the IEP to indicate his or her assurance that the plan is appropriate to the student's strengths and needs and that it meets all of the standards outlined in this document."

Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation, 2000

2. OTHER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition, the principal:

- or vice-principal is expected to coordinate and oversee the work of the special education team, which may include the special education teacher, the classroom teacher, the teacher-adviser and support staff, in developing, monitoring, and reviewing each student's IEP (Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation, 2000 p.18);
- must ensure that relevant school board and community personnel who have previously worked and/or are currently working with a student with an Autism Spectrum Disorder are invited to provide input and participate in the IEP process;
- assigns to one teacher the responsibility for coordinating (not developing) the student's IEP;
- facilitates collaborative planning, evaluation and updating of the IEPs;



- ensures that IEPs are implemented and, as part of implementation, the student's learning expectations are evaluated and updated at least once every reporting period; and
- ensures that all school personnel who work with the student understand their responsibilities regarding the implementation of the IEP.

3. CAN A PRINCIPAL SHARE IEP RESPONSIBILITIES?

- The principal remains responsible for, and must sign the IEP;
- A principal can, however, assign duties to a vice-principal or a teacher related to coordinating and overseeing the IEP's development.

4. THE IEP AND REPORT CARD LINK

- *Growing Success* has introduced the Elementary Progress Report Card, which represents a formal reporting period. Since the formal review and update of the IEP should take place at least once every formal reporting period, there is a continued requirement for three IEP reviews in the elementary grades;
- In addition to the formal reviews, the IEP is a working document and can be adjusted on an ongoing basis in consultation with parents and the student.

5. WHEN SHOULD IEPs BE DEVELOPED?

- IEPs should be developed for students who are receiving special education programs and services;
- IEPs must be developed for students who have been identified through an Identification, Placement and Review Committee.

"A student's IEP must be included in his or her Ontario Student Record (OSR) unless a parent of the pupil has objected in writing."

The Individual Education Plan (IEP):
A Resource Guide, 2004

REFERENCES

- Education Act: http://www.elaws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_980181_e.htm
- Education Act: http://www.elaws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_900298_e.htm
- Ontario Ministry of Education: Special Education website:
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/speced.html>
- Ontario Ministry of Education (2004). *The Individual Education Plan (IEP): A Resource Guide*. Toronto: Author.
www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide/resource/iepresguid.pdf
- Ontario Ministry of Education (2000). *Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation*. Toronto: Author.
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/iep/iep.pdf>
- Ontario Ministry of Education (2010). *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools*. Toronto: Author.
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growingSuccess.pdf>
- Ontario Ministry of Education (2001). *Special Education: A Guide for Educators*. Toronto: Author.
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide/specedhandbooke.pdf>
- Ontario Ministry of Education (2007). *Policy/Program Memorandum No. 140: Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students With Autism Spectrum Disorder*
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/140.pdf>
- Remember that these five tips are meant to get you started on your understanding of IEP processes. You can learn more by reading the sources in the reference list. Add your own thoughts by joining the Ontario Education Leaders network: <http://ontarioeducationleaders.ning.com>