

Who May Request a Facilitated IEP Team Meeting?

A district, parent or adult student may request a FIEP Team meeting by submitting a written request to the WVDE at least 2 weeks prior to the IEP Team meeting. The parties must agree to use the FIEP process. The WVDE provides a form for requesting FIEP Team meetings at <http://wvde.state.wv.us/osp/compliance/>, however, the form is not required.

The Facilitated IEP is ...

- » voluntary and agreed to by both parties;
- » not used to deny or delay a parent/student's right to a hearing on the issue or to deny any other rights afforded under the IDEA;
- » conducted by a qualified and impartial facilitator who is trained in facilitation techniques;
- » free to the parties;
- » scheduled in a timely manner and adheres to all required timelines.

For additional information, contact:

West Virginia Department of Education
Office of Federal Programs
Building 6, Room 330
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Charleston, West Virginia 25305-0330
Phone: 304.558.7805
800.642.8541



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**Facilitated Individualized
Education Program (FIEP)
Process**
for Special Education

July 2017
West Virginia Department of Education
Office of Federal Programs

FOREWORD

Trust and open communication between the parent and the county school district are essential for a positive, long term partnership in the education of students with exceptionalities. Facilitated Individualized Education Programs (FIEP) result in improved relationships among educators and families and assist in improving outcomes for students with exceptionalities. IEP Facilitation is an optional process that is not required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). State educational agencies (SEA) and school districts may offer IEP Facilitation to parents and schools to support the development of an appropriate IEP.

INTRODUCTION

The West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE), Office of Federal Programs (OFP) encourages parents and districts to work together to resolve disputes before calling upon other formal dispute resolution processes. A Facilitated IEP Team meeting is the same as any other IEP Team meeting except that a facilitator joins the meeting. This is considered a dispute prevention process.

The Facilitator helps with communication among team members and does not make decisions about the student's IEP.

This brochure, written for parents of students with exceptionalities and district personnel, presents important information regarding special education and the facilitated IEP Team meeting. The WVDE, OFP, can offer additional information about the FIEP process.

304.558.7805

What is the Goal of IEP Facilitation?

The goal of a Facilitated IEP Team meeting is to develop an IEP that is supported by team members and benefits the student.

- Families and schools agree to have a facilitator join an IEP Team meeting.
- Facilitators maintain open communication and ensure that everyone at the IEP Team meeting can participate fully.
- If disagreements arise during the meeting, a facilitator can help the team clarify and resolve them.
- The facilitator typically does not address issues that are not related to the IEP.

What Are the Benefits of IEP Facilitation?

The facilitator models effective communication and listening, and assists with the IEP Team to identify points on which they *agree* and *disagree*. In addition, IEP Facilitation can:

- *Build and improve relationships* among IEP Team members, especially when they are having difficulty working together;
- Encourage parents and professionals to *consider new options* to address unresolved problems;
- Help *prevent disagreements* and avoid other dispute resolution processes; and
- *Maintain decision-making with team members* who know the student best.

The Facilitator:

- Is trained, experienced and impartial.
- Works with the IEP Team to create an agenda and ground rules for the meeting.
- Guides discussion by asking student-focused questions, such as:
 - » How is the student doing?
 - » What changes, if any, should be made to the student's goals?
 - » In what ways can we help the student reach his/her goals and objectives?
- Keeps team members on task and the meeting within the scheduled time.
- Asks questions to clarify points of agreement and disagreement and helps identify workable solutions to conflicts.
- Helps ensure that the language in the IEP reflects decisions made during the meeting.
- Does not take sides, impose decisions on the team, place blame or determine whether decisions are right or wrong.

Who Will Choose the Facilitator?

Facilitators are assigned on a rotational basis from a list of qualified facilitators who are available during the timeframe for the IEP Team meeting.