IEP & IPRC Consultation Feedback – PAAC on SEAC

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IEP Initiatives

The development and implementation of the IEP
   1.   In what areas are you seeing improvement/challenges in the <u>development</u> of the IEP?

The experience of local chapters/SEAC members demonstrates that there are still many challenges around the province in development of the IEP. A common issue seems to be lack of clarity in what is written in the IEP, e.g. in strengths and needs, goals and objectives.

Some boards are improving their consultation with parents, while others have a ways to go.

The use of IEP templates can still be an issue, unless boards use the option of writing in individual statements instead of choosing from a list of prepared statements.

Timeliness of IEPs is still an issue especially in high school. Consideration should be given to preparation of draft IEPs at the end of the school year.

   2.   In what areas are you seeing improvement/challenges in the <u>implementation</u> of the IEP?

Communication with parents/students about implementation of the IEP continues to be an issue.

Implementation of the IEP is improving in some places, but it still a problem from the parent perspective in other places. There are still examples of subject teachers who will not provide accommodations that are in the IEP.

There is a problem with the availability of assistive technologies in a timely manner, and with adequate training time for students to learn to use the technology.

Review processes that school boards are using to support continuous improvement in their IEPs
   3.   Are you aware of IEP review processes (school/system)? (describe)

Some SEACs are involved in the school board IEP processes but others are not.

Professional learning resources and approaches
   4.   What resources/professional learning opportunities would support the IEP process?

All teachers need to understand how to develop and implement IEPs, so training must be part of preservice, induction year, and ongoing professional development.

In addition, teacher education at all these levels must include information about the needs of all individual exceptionalities and the range of strategies and accommodations that may be

appropriate for these exceptionalities.
Learning for All is very useful but insufficient to understand individual exceptionalities.

Parent and older student involvement
5. Describe how parents/students should be effectively involved in the IEP process?

Parents and students need to understand the IEP process first. Yearly information sessions have been recommended, and teachers could refer parents/students to the IEP 101 for Parents and Students online workshop.

Parent and student input should be sought out and welcomed before the IEP is developed, even before a draft is created. Teachers should be prepared to explain any items in the IEP.

There must be room for parent/student comments on the IEP form.

A dispute mechanism must be available when parents/students and teachers do not agree on the content or implementation of the IEP.

Overall
6. What do you need in **your** role in PAAC on SEAC to support more effective IEPs in any of these areas?
- Development
- Implementation
- Review processes
- Resources/Professional Learning
- Parent/student involvement

PAAC on SEAC should be consulted about any proposed changes to IEP processes, and the development of professional development tools.

PAAC on SEAC is uniquely placed to support parent/student involvement through the SEAC members we support.

Other

There is one big problem in the structure of the IEP:
Students who need instruction in basic academic skills but are otherwise working on grade level curriculum expectations, do not have a place on the IEP to set measurable goals and monitor progress toward those goals. In such situations the basic academic skills could be considered Alternative Skills Areas for the purposes of the IEP, but this is not a common practice.
LDAO recommends that the Ministry of Education promote this use of Alternative Skill Areas to ensure monitoring of student progress in remedial academic skills.

IEP & IPRC Consultation Feedback

IPRC/IEP Documentation

1. How should documents be retained (where, how long) that are considered by IPRCs? What are your reasons for suggesting these practices?

Parents need to be asked what assessment reports they wish to have stored in their child's OSR, where teachers will have access. Otherwise there should be a file in the Student Services or other professional services office that can only be accessed with the permission of the parent (or 16+ student), except by the professional who did the assessment.

Parents need to be told that they can view their child's OSR from time to time to make sure that materials are still relevant to their child's educational needs.

2. To what extent is OSR access an issue to parents? What are the issues (if any)?

Many parents are not aware that they can have access to the OSR or that there is a process for requesting removal of materials that they do not consider beneficial to the education of their child.

3. In what circumstances (if any beyond current requirements) would written reasons for IPRC decisions be helpful?

Written reasons for IPRC decisions would be very helpful for consideration at IPRC Review meetings, in order to discuss any changes that may require reconsideration of IPRC decisions.

Written reasons for IPRC decisions could facilitate discussions at a second meeting of the IPRC when the parent does not agree with the decision(s).

Written reasons for IPRC decisions should give the rationale for recommendations about supports and services (see below).

4. Should *IPRC Statement of Decisions* list supports and services in their reasons for special class placements? What are your reasons for suggesting this practice?

Decisions about special class placement should be made on the basis of the supports and services that would be available in the placement. Parents make decisions about accepting placements based on this information. They need to be assured that these supports and services will indeed be in place.

5. What information should schools seek from parents to improve the quality of IPRC decisions and IEPs?

- child's talents, interests, and strengths
- successful strategies at home that may also work at school

- what the child finds rewarding and motivating
- communication, social, and problem-solving skills
- learning style, self-concept, learning difficulties
- relevant assessments

Other

Please use this space to provide additional comments or thoughts not captured above

Documentation is useful when it conveys and records information that can be used to develop programming and can be reviewed on a regular basis. It is only useful if it is in plain, understandable language.

IEP & IPRC Consultation Feedback

Engaging Parents in the IPRC/IEP process

1. What are the benefits to parent engagement in the IPRC process? IEP process?

The following two responses summarize it nicely:

For both processes it fosters:
-better understanding
-an environment of collaboration
-opportunities for learning and problem solving
-continuous improvements of the process
-open dialogue

Parents are a valuable source of information. Engaged parents will involve the student in the process which furthers student performance. Strategies to be used in the school will often also have to be used at home for optimal internalization. Again students will benefit from the consistency. Parents are the best advocates for their children and can model the effective advocacy process for their children. The student can see how the parent as part of a team works in the best interest of their child to get the services the student needs. This is the best self advocacy training a student can have.

2. What are the barriers to parent engagement in the IPRC process? IEP process?

The biggest barriers seem to be a lack of understanding of the process on the part of parents, a lack of knowledge about parental rights, a lack of trust between parents and educators, a perception on the part of parents that their input is not welcome or not taken seriously.

Other factors include different cultural expectations about the role of the school, and logistical issues such as getting time off work or getting a babysitter.

3. What effective methods and/or strategies are used to foster parent engagement and/or involvement in the IPRC process? IEP process?

LDAO chapters and SEAC reps talked about communications between school and parents, e.g.

- careful explanations of the processes, in advance of any meetings
- welcoming atmosphere/ open door policy in the school
- regular informal meetings scheduled at a mutually convenient time to review student progress
- use of a communication book between home and school

Other suggestions:

- referral by the school to local parent association chapters for information and ongoing support
- involvement of school councils and SEACs in educating parents about special education processes
- bringing multicultural community agencies into the school to share the school's knowledge of the processes, and the agencies' knowledge of the cultural issues.

Other

Please use this space to provide additional comments or thoughts not captured above.

It was the consensus of PAAC on SEAC members that the IPRC/IEP processes in place do not need to be changed a great deal, but that the Ministry of Education needs to ensure compliance with the legislated processes and memoranda.