

Questions to ask myself so I am better prepared for a school or an IEP meeting

Did you get a Meeting Notice? If you did not, ask for one.

Look at the meeting notice:

- Are the right people invited? Are there others who I would like to be there? For example, has the school invited a regular education teacher who understands the academic curriculum for my child's grade level in reading and math? Have they included the teacher where my child does their best, or where they struggle the most? If it is related to a specific issue do we have a district expert/specialist? If they don't have one, is there one in the community that the district can provide?
- Is someone invited who will know about the academic curriculum for next year? Especially if the IEP crosses over two school years.

Consider the current date, the date of the meeting and any upcoming deadlines (IEP ending date, Suspension timeline, evaluation cycle):

- Does the meeting time allow enough time for me to be well informed?
- Does it allow me time to bring others to the table or review any documentation?
- Is there a legal and specific timeline for the work we are planning to do? Have I been informed of that timeline?

What information has the school shared with me prior to the meeting about:

- My child's level of academic achievement (the level at which my child performs right now) on state and district-wide assessments? Norm referenced tests in specific areas or specific skills?
- My child's behavior with peers, teachers and staff? Is this information measurable, not opinion?
- Their vision for my child as they progress through their academic years?
- How my child has progressed on their current IEP goals and objectives? Have I receive clear detailed and measurable IEP progress reports?
- What have they told me? Do I understand them and have I been provided an opportunity to ask questions to gain understanding?
- What have regular education report cards told me this year?
- Whether or not my child participated in the general education curriculum? If the grades satisfactory? If there are modifications to the grading scale and are they clear and measurable?
- Whether my child successfully participated in the regular education classroom?

When you are reviewing a new Draft IEP:

- Has my IEP team provided me a copy of the draft IEP in enough time for me to review it ahead of time and prepare questions or concerns?
- Have I compared the previous IEP to the presented Draft, before the meeting, to look for changes or differences in all areas: goals, services, and accommodations?
- Does the future planning statement clearly reflect my child's and my vision for them now, in the next 2-4 years and the expected outcomes for their adult life?
- Have I looked at the current and Draft Profiles sections to see if I am able to identify areas of progress or where progress was not made?

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Have I shared any and all important information from other parts of my child's life or home/school experiences?

- Have I created and discussed a thoughtful Future Planning statement?
- Have I prepared for the section that addresses Parental Concerns?
- Have I shared any information that might be helpful from daycare providers, pediatrician, private therapists, community members that can add information about the needs of my child?

When reading the Profile Section of the IEP:

- Are there clear need based statements that lead to the development of measurable goals?
- Are the need based statements supported with clear assessments or evaluation results?
- If they are not, can the team identify an assessment or evaluation tool to give present levels that indicate need?
- Are the assessments and evaluations in this section current and relevant to the vision and future planning statement?
- Are there incidents or happenings in the past year that should be considered when we determine goals, services and accommodations moving forward?
- Should they be considered when formulating my vision or future plans?

What accommodations and services does my child currently use successfully to participate?

- In the general education curriculum?
- In the regular education classroom? In the special education classroom?
- Is it clear in the IEP how, where and when those are used?
- Is my child empowered to ask for them?

As my child moves toward graduation, what academic skills do I think my child still needs to master (ask this question no matter what age the child is):

- Have we as a team talked about creating an IEP that is truly individualized and prepares my child for adult life including work after school ends?
- Has the IEP team talked about college, post-secondary education and employment?
- Have we as an IEP team talked about work/volunteer skills and experiences that my child should learn and practice (ex. how to look for, get, and keep a job)? Is it in the transition plan?
- Does the transition plan balance work experience, social skills and academics according to my child's needs, desires, and abilities?
- Are you and the rest of the IEP team helping your child learn how to apply for a job, college, training program or work program to gain experience in jobs and careers that interest them?
- Are you and the rest of the IEP team helping your child explore assistive technology that would help with learning employment and adult living skills?
- Do you understand how Vocational Rehabilitation can help your child prepare for college or a career? Has school talked about assisting you in engaging this service?
- What does your child's ideal day look like? Have you shared that with the IEP team? What makes a bad day for your child at work or school (things I want to avoid)?