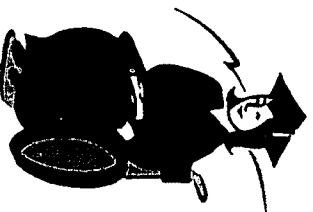


Pennsylvania Special Education Funding Commission of 2013

June 13, 2013 Meeting

The Nuts and Bolts of Special Education: How It Works for Students and Schools



Presented by :

**Dr. Malcolm Conner, Special
Education Advisor, Bureau of Special
Education, PA Dept. of Education**

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- ❖ Federal law, first enacted in 1975.
- ❖ Implemented through federal as well as Pennsylvania statutes and regulations.

Statutory Purpose of IDEA

❖ “Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.”

IDEA, 20 U.S. Code 1400(c)(1)

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

- ❖ Federal and state law guarantee every eligible child with a disability the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

Special Education

- ❖ Special education is defined as “specially designed instruction” and the “related services” needed by the child to benefit from that instruction.

Evaluations for Special Education

- ❖ An “initial evaluation” starts the process of determining whether a child needs special education.
- ❖ The school must use a variety of testing tools and strategies to gather information on the child’s developmental, academic, and functional levels.

Eligibility for Special Education

- ❖ The evaluation team must decide two things:
 - (1) Whether a child has a disability that makes it difficult to learn; and
 - (2) If so, whether the child needs special education services and supports as a result of that disability.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

- ❖ An IEP is a written plan that describes the unique needs of a child who is eligible for special education and explains the specific services and supports the child needs to make progress in school.

IEP Team

- ❖ **School staff and the parent meet as a team to write and review the IEP. Older students also may be included.**

Least Restrictive Environment

- ❖ The law presumes that children with disabilities should be taught in the “least restrictive environment” with children who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.

Progress in the General Education Curriculum


- ❖ The IEP is designed so the student's needs are met and the child can make progress and be involved in the general education curriculum - what all other children at their grade level are taught .

Support Options for Students Eligible for Special Education

- ❖ In general, supports can assist children to learn academic skills (learning support), to control behaviors (emotional support), or to acquire basic living skills (life skills).
- ❖ Examples include curriculum adaptation, therapies (speech, physical, occupational), school health services, assistive technology, transportation, behavior counseling, and training and assistance for teachers.

Specially Designed Instruction

- ❖ All supports and services must be “based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable”
 - research studies showing that the strategies are successful in helping children with similar needs to learn and make progress.



Other Key Aspects of Special Education

- ❖ **Extended School Year (ESY) Services – summer services.**
- ❖ **Transition Planning – services to prepare for post-high school goals.**
- ❖ **Written Notices and Dispute Resolution Processes.**

Service Options for Students with Disabilities Not Eligible for Special Education

- ❖ *Service Agreement/ Accommodations Plan* pursuant to Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*.
- ❖ *Accommodations* under the *Americans with Disabilities Act*.
- ❖ *Tutoring or counseling services*.

**Pennsylvania
Special Education
Funding
Commission of
2013**

