4J Student Services Newsletter

The Prior Written Notice

November 2023

English Language Learners with IEPs

We must invite ELD Teachers to IEP meetings

Are any of your students English Learners (ELs)? Do they currently qualify for English Language Development services? If so, their ELD teacher is considered a member of the student's IEP team. A recent ODE audit of our English Language Learner supports indicated that IEP teams in 4J routinely forget to include the ELD teacher, as well as miss some required ELD data in the IEP itself. Here are the requirements:

- An ELD teacher must attend the IEP meeting (or provide written input ahead of time);
- The student's current linguistic levels--English Language Proficiency Assessment [ELPA] scores/descriptors--must be included in the PLAAFP; and,
- The ELPA assessment must be included (every year) in the statewide assessment section.

Your ELD teacher can provide this information to the IEP Team. In addition, you can see the student's ELPA in the *Ellevation* data system, which is an EL program management platform that organizes all EL student data and supports instructional planning for multilingual students. Being able to access both current and longitudinal EL student data ensures the best instructional decisions are being made for our EL students.

All 4J educators are able to login to the Ellevation program and will only be able to access the EL students assigned to them in Synergy. Access the Ellevation login page HERE. You may access a short Ellevation Basics tutorial HERE.

If you are unable to access your account, or need access to a student who is not listed, please contact Lily Gold, ELD Program Coordinator, at gold_l@4j.lane.edu

Upcoming Events

Important dates on the SSD Calendar

November is Native American Heritage Month!

November 1st: School Psychologist/SpEd Consultant Meeting

November 8th: Referral Review Team

November 8th: Motor Team Meeting

November 9th: Mid-term Grading Day (no students)

November 9th: Classified Pathways training

November 10th: Veteran's Day (holiday)

November 16th: Speech Language Pathologist Meeting

November 16th: Mind/Body Divergence Alliance Town Hall (at Churchill)

November 20th-22nd: Parent/Teacher Conferences (no students)

November 23rd-24th: Thanksgiving (holiday)

November 29th: Referral Review Team

December 1st: Special Education Child Count *aka* CENSUS:

This is the count that determine our federal/state special education funding for next school year.

- Every student must have a current IEP and Eligibility by the end of the day on December 1st.
- The paperwork must be finalized in Synergy by the end of the day on Monday, December 4th.
- Please make this your priority! Even if every Case Manager in 4J has just *one* out-of-date IEP or Eligibility, it can result in hundreds of thousands of *lost dollars* that could have been used to hire staff and provide services to students.

Frequently Asked Questions

Some of your colleagues have been asking…

➢ Where can I find a Release of Information when I need one?

Synergy does not have a Release of Information, also known as a Authorization to Disclose/ Exchange Information. The one we use most commonly is actually from the ODE website, but with 4J information at the top. It can most easily be found in the Appendix of the SpEd Procedural Manual, under Agendas & Common Forms: HERE.

A separate Authorization document must be created (and signed by the parent) for each agency, doctor, psychologist, or other entity from whom we are seeking information or communication.

➢ If a student with an IEP is diagnosed with an additional disability (by a doctor or psychologist), do we have to immediately reevaluate to add that eligibility?

When a parent provides us with a report or other evidence of a medical or mental health diagnosis, we are required to *consider* that information and how it may impact the student. Having a diagnosis is not the same as having an educational eligibility for special education -- and, a student is only required to have a single eligibility in order to receive any special education support for which there is *evidence of need*, regardless of whether or not it is directly related to the student's disability.

Therefore, when receiving a new diagnosis, and possibly a request for reevaluation, we recommend asking the IEP team to review that information and, if necessary, amend the IEP to adjust services in light of new evidence about the student's needs. Then, when the three-year-reevaluation date comes around, the team can consider evaluating for new or additional eligibility categories.

➢ When a student has a Behavior Support Plan, how does that relate to their IEP?

Behavior Support Plans, as well as Safety Support & Success Plans, should be included as an Accommodation on the IEP Service Summary. [Don't forget to *also* check Behavior on the Special Factors page and create a social/emotional/behavioral goal that aligns with the BSP.]

Remember that the Behavior Support Plan and Safety Plan must "live" in Synergy in *two places*…

1. Attach it to the IEP Process in Synergy; and,
2. Add it to the *Documents* tab on the SIS side of Synergy. This will trigger the "B" flag on the student's record, allowing general education folks to access the BSP -- this may take up to 24 hours to appear, though.

Breaking News

ASDP Docs now available in Spanish

Abbreviate School Day requirements continue to be a challenge for all of us. One little bright spot is that, now, ASDP documents (found here) are now available in Spanish.

Check them out on the ASDP page in the SpEd Procedural Manual.

SSD Spotlight

SpEd Parent Engagement Night

On October 25th, SSD held a Parent Engagement Night in the Ed Center auditorium and over 60 parents attended. After some introductory remarks from SSD Director, Seth Pfaefflin, parents met in small table groups for discussion about how special education is working in 4J. They also submitted comments that were recently sorted and summarized.

Many parents were very pleased with their children's services and progress. Others wished we had more staff, more training, and more communication between schools and parents. One interesting finding was that there were roughly an equal number of parents who wanted more inclusion for their children as there were parents who wanted less inclusion.

The next opportunity for parent and community input will be at the Mind/Body Divergence Alliance Town Hall, at Churchill High School, on November 16th. Please join us!

Reminders

DHS Caseworkers *cannot* serve as Parents in SpEd

Child welfare personnel from the Department of Human Services (DHS) may participate in all meetings pertaining to a child on their caseload. However, they may *not* sign Consent forms or be listed as the Paren on an IEP or Placement form. Both SpEd and DHS regulations prohibit them from serving as parent, *even if DHS has legal custody of the child*. Any of the following *may* act as a parent for special education processes:

- A biological or adoptive parent of the child;
- A current foster parent of the child;
- A legal guardian of the child (**but not a state agency**, like DHS);
- A person in a parental relationship, such as grandparent, stepparent, or other adult with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare.

If more than one person is qualified to act as the parent, the biological/adoptive parent is presumed to be the "parent" for special education purposes. The district must provide that parent the opportunity to participate. The exception would be if that individual's parental rights were terminated by a court of law.

If there is no person who meets the above requirements to serve as parent, then an educational surrogate must be assigned by either the school district or the court system.

If a DHS caseworker attempts to assert themselves in the "parent" role, please refer them to OAR 413-105-0050 for an explanation of their role in special education.

IEPs Must Contain SMART Goals

IEP goals are expected to be SMART -- specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound.

- **Specific**. Instead of stating that "Student will pass his English Language Arts class with a grade of C or higher," find out what lagging reading, writing, or organizational skills are preventing the student from succeeding in ELA, and write a goal or two around those specific skills.
- **Measureable**. Not only should a level of success be included in the goal ("75% of the time with fewer than two adult prompts"), but a measurement tool must also be included ("based on data from teacher-created observation records").
- **Attainable**. Do not use the same goal multiple years in a row! Adjust the goal to a more attainable level. Goals should be rewritten to allow for successful progress, given the student's specific needs and circumstances. For instance, it is not reasonable to expect a middle school student to achieve grade-level writing standards if they cannot yet write a complete sentence.
- **Relevant.** Annual Goals should follow directly from information and data in the PLAAFP. If a social/emotional goal is for the student to deal with frustration by asking for a break, the PLAAFP should indicate how the student currently deals with frustration and how often they currently ask for a break.
- **Time-bound.** IEP goals should be written for a one-year time span. "Within one year, Student will…" It is always acceptable to include short-term objectives that have shorter time spans.

Need ideas for creating goals? Check out GoalBook resources linked HERE.

Have an idea or a topic for a future newsletter? Contact Karen Apgar at apgar_k@4j.lane.edu