

Team Planning Guiding Questions

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STRATEGY 3: TEAM PLANNING ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

- Intentional team planning processes with clear guidelines about when and what type of meeting should occur to address attendance concerns.
- All teams have access to attendance and suspension data including out of school and in-school suspensions, as well as informal removals sometimes called "send homes."
- All teams have access to a bank of tools and guiding questions to identify and minimize barriers.
- School leadership and team members examine and constantly improve universal, early intervention and intensive supports.
- School leadership and teams ensure that students are not overly disciplined.
- School teams link with district wide teams to explore systemic solutions such as equitable access to vocational training, internships and community-based learning.

Guiding Questions for Teams

- Guiding Questions to Identify and Minimize Attendance Barriers across the areas of:
- Instruction
- Social/ Emotional/ Behavioral Needs
- School Climate
- Home issues

Available with webinar resources.

GUIDING QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY AND MINIMIZE BARRIERS Instruction

- Does the student need accommodations, or different ones, to eliminate a barrier to benefit from education opportunities?
- Do the instructional methods meet the student's needs?
- Do the instructional materials and equipment meet the student's needs?
- Is the staffing and level or type of personal assistance sufficient?
- Do the classroom organization and the instructional groupings meet the student's needs?
- Does the student need more frequency or duration of time with the special educator, volunteer or interventionist to reinforce skills, or use different (research based alternative) instruction to make progress?
- Would the student be more involved if alternative options are offered such as on-line courses, community college, internships and other community-based learning opportunities

Instruction (continued)

- Is the student bored, unchallenged, disengaged from the subject matter or school?
- Is the content rigorous enough?
- Does the student have credit deficiencies or feel defeated about being able to graduate?
- How many times has the student been suspended or removed from class?
- How many times has the student been retained? Over age?
- Does the student ask for help? Why not?
- Are any aspects of setting or physical environment negatively affecting the student?

GUIDING QUESTIONS/ MINIMIZING BARRIERS Social/Emotional/Behavioral

- Does the student need a behavior support plan, or a formal Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)?
- Would the student benefit from a self-management behavioral plan?
- Would the student benefit from Supplementary Aids and Services such as consultation or direct services from school psychologist, school social worker or other related service personnel; other appropriate support services?
- Is the school's positive behavior plan for all students in place and working?

GUIDING QUESTIONS/ MINIMIZING BARRIERS Climate

- Does the student feel a sense of belonging, connectedness and competency without barriers to learning?
- Does the teaching engage the student, or re-engage student if disengaged?
- Does the school the student is attending foster a sense of mutual respect, caring, safety and civil, pro-social, and responsible behavior that would encourage the student to attend?
- Is there a positive working relationship present between school staff and parent/caregiver?

GUIDING QUESTIONS/ MINIMIZING BARRIERS Home Issues

- Is the family homeless or unstably housed? frequent moves?
- Are there family difficulties that might contribute to frequent absences such as parent illness, conflicts, substance abuse, child care, finances, job related?
- Is the student responsible for tasks/chores that interfere with regular attendance or arriving on time?
- Is the primary caregiver incarcerated?
- Does the parent recognize the importance of regular school attendance and the impact on learning even tardiness produces?
- Does the family feel connected to the school?

Guiding Questions for All Teams Student support, 504, IEP

- Guiding Questions to Identify and Minimize Attendance Barriers across the areas of:
 - Instruction
 - Social/ Emotional/ Behavioral Needs
 - School Climate
 - Home issues
 - Specific deeper look questions for IEP Teams

Available with webinar resources.

YOUR SCHOOL'S IEP PROCESS

- Are there opportunities and tools to identify attendance barriers?
- Are there opportunities for self-advocacy, self-determination, youth voice, student-directed IEPs?
- Are there opportunities for parent/caregiver participation?
- Are teams engaged in practices that lead to high quality transition services?
- Are team members knowledgeable about when to include attendance goals and objectives in the IEP?

Deeper Look: Using the IEP Process

Guiding Questions to Examine Instruction

- What are the student's instructional needs related to their disability?
- Does the IEP adequately address the students academic deficits or difficulties
- Are the IEP supports appropriate and sufficient (need more/less, different)?
- Is the IEP fully implemented?
- Are the IEP goals appropriate?

Deeper look: Using the IEP process

Guiding Questions to Examine Social /Emotional / Behavioral Needs

- Does the student exhibit anxiety due to separation from the parent, taking tests, reading aloud, socializing with peers?
- Does the student exhibit anxiety following vacations, weekends, visits with a non-custodial parent?
- Are there physical complaints of stomachaches and headaches?
- Is the student not living at home? In foster care? Homeless?
- Is the student transitioning to a new school or newly entering 9th grade? (challenges due to transition from elementary to middle or middle to high school)
- Is the student depressed (lack of interest in activities, sleep difficulties, tired, irritable, feeling worthless/guilt)
- Has the student been hospitalized and not returned? Embarrassed to return after hospitalization?
- Has the student received a psychiatric diagnosis with medications that have altered functioning?

DEVELOPING ATTENDANCE GOALS IN THE IEP PROCESS

If chronic absence impacts learning, the IEP will include goals linked to the barriers and also a specific individualized attendance goal.

“ Regardless of the category of disability determined by the IEP team, the IEP needs to reflect all academic and behavioral goals needed to help the student to benefit from the educational setting including supplementary aids and services to improve attendance specific to the students needs”. (Wrightslaw)

SCENARIO

Shawn is a 10th grader with a learning disability. Shawn's mother moved after the beginning of the school year and Shawn had to enter a new school in late October.

Shawn has a specific learning disability that primarily affects reading. He is below grade level and receives services in a general education classroom. He is not readily making friends and is not particularly close to his teacher or other building staff.

Shawn has been absent 23 days of 95 he has been enrolled at his new school.

Shawn is not making the expected progress on his IEP goals.

SCENARIO- QUESTIONS

- Given what you know, what else would you need to find out?
- What information do you need?
- What would you be reviewing to determine attendance barriers?
- How will you minimize attendance barriers for Shawn?
- What instructional and behavioral supports are working or not working?
- What universal supports are working or not working?
- What early intervention and/ or intensive intervention is needed?
- What about goals for Shawn's IEP?

SCENARIO

Barriers: Shawn does not feel comfortable in his new school. No friends. He reads below grade level. Doesn't want to attend.

Possible Strategies for Reducing Barriers

1. Assign a peer mentor to greet Shawn at the door.
2. Instructional supports: Increase time with the special educator, individualized reading program with extra 1:1 support and access to technology, increase homework support,
3. Social/ emotional/ behavioral supports: Create a positive behavior support program with incentives identified by the student to reinforce class and homework completion and attendance.
4. Engage with parent to determine whether the school social worker can provide assistance in connecting the family with any needed community based health and mental health resources.
5. The case manager will ensure that supports are in place and monitor attendance for 2 months, regularly contacting the parent/ guardian reporting absence and also to support attendance.
6. Encourage/facilitate inclusion in after school activities with transportation support if needed.

DESIGNING A SPECIFIC IEP GOAL

Specific to the student and not "generic." Not: Shawn will attend school 80% of the time.

Sample goals include present level of performance, the problem you are addressing, the direction you want the learning or behavior to go (increase/decrease) the amount of change by the end of the IEP year and the methodology needed

Shawn has been absent 23 of 95 school days. Shawn will be expected to have fewer than five days absent in the next two months

- Objective 1: With teacher praise for attendance and home-school collaboration daily, by March 1, Shawn will have three or less days absent during February
- Objective 2: With teacher praise for attendance and home-school collaboration daily, during March, Shawn will have two or less days absent during March

EXAMPLE- SPECIFIC ATTENDANCE GOAL

For a student with asthma, an IEP goal related to absenteeism might look like this:

Goal: Natasha has been absent 23 days of 105 this school year due to asthma and asthma related illness and she will decrease her absence to 10 days for the remainder of the school year (June 2013)

Objective: With teacher prompts and cues, Natasha will monitor her breathing using a physician designated system 3 times per school day

Objective: With teacher prompts and cues, Natasha will identify the need to go to the health suite for consultation with the school nurse following a pre-determined, medically based, system which may include use of her fast-acting inhaler

Objective: With teacher prompts, cues and assistance, Natasha will keep a diary of the 3 times she has measured her breathing; the times she needed to go to the health suite, and when she had to use her fast-acting inhaler.

EXAMPLES OF GUIDANCE TO IEP TEAMS/ SELECTING DOCUMENTS

- Selecting documents to review to address academic concerns in the IEP/504 Team process
 - Classroom grades
 - Formal and informal test scores
 - Written work
 - Current IEP
 - Goals/Objectives
 - Supplementary Aids and Services
 - LRE
- Selecting documents to review to address social/emotional/behavioral concerns
 - Psychological report (City Schools)
 - Psychological reports from outside agencies
 - Psychosocial History
 - Teacher Reports
 - Visits to the School Nurse
 - Discipline Records
 - Parent/guardian interviews
 - Peer reports of concerns

Developing Attendance Goals / Providing a Free Appropriate Public Education

From a U.S. department of Education Report on Chronic Absenteeism: "The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is intended to ensure all students with disabilities have access to a free, appropriate education yet chronic absenteeism is a barrier that gets in the way of achieving that goal."

--US Department of Education,
<https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/chronicabsenteeism.html#one>

Deeper look: Using the IEP process Guiding Questions to Examine Transition Services

- Is transition planning based on high quality assessment tools?
- Are transition goals linking school attendance with college and career readiness?
- Are transition goals based on student's interests and passions?
- Are transition goals affording opportunities for vocational training, internships and community-based learning?

DEVELOPING ATTENDANCE GOALS IN THE IEP PROCESS

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Tips for Developing IEP Goals and Objectives

- Using a scenario to train IEP teams
- Selecting documents to develop goals and objectives
- Examples of attendance goals and objectives

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