The New MA IEP Form in Action

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Our IEP Fan Club

Meet the team:

- Jordynn Nowak
  - Special education teacher for 6+ years in Massachusetts, Gen. Ed. experience in PA and NY
  - Extensive experience case managing and overseeing IEP process
    - Focus on both individual students and school-wide systems

- Stephanie Provenzano
  - Special education teacher and case manager for 10 years in both public and private school settings
  - Interest in promoting independence in students who experience communication and behavior-related challenges

- Not with us today, but helped build content and manage Perkins' transition to the new form: Michele Hosmer and Laura Maloney

Disclaimer: *It's new for us all! Our goal is to share our experience with and approaches to the new form.*

Within parameters set by DESE, districts and schools will interpret best practices for their respective settings.

Outcomes of our time together

- Rationale behind DESE's IEP Improvement Project

- Highlight key changes between the current and new forms

- Discuss where teams have been documenting vision-related needs and services
  - How we're incorporating evaluation data

- Scenarios / examples navigating content in the new form

How did we get here?

In MA, the current IEP form was introduced in 2000.

DESE embarked on multi-year IEP Improvement Project in response to stakeholder requests.

> "To **improve outcomes** for all students with disabilities by providing guidance, technical assistance, and tools on **equitable processes** to school and district professionals, families, and students so that all students with disabilities have **meaningful access** to the curriculum frameworks and life of the school" (

The new IEP form was "released" by DESE in April 2023.

Schools/district have the choice to implement the new form Fall 2023 or Fall 2024. In September 2023, Perkins began using the form for all new IEP development.

Goals of the New IEP Form

- Student voice is up front and drives the focus of the document

- Making sure all disability-related needs are addressed

- Provide clearer idea of student graduation pathway and completion document type

- Incorporate transition planning throughout the document

- Clearer progression and presentation of information through the document

- Help families better understand the information in the IEP document

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Summary of Bigger Changes

Similar aspects of the IEP have been grouped together / reordered to emphasize connections

The document begins with student vision section, and includes prompts differentiated by age

Former student profile/Key Evaluation Results and PLEP A+B sections → Present Levels of Academic Achievement & Functional Performance (PLAAFP) tables

Accommodations and modifications are organized by type and the specific settings in which they apply

Transition planning questions and sections are now part of the document; *no more TPF*

Disability-specific questions appear throughout the document (if related disability category is selected)

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(Abridged) New Form Walk Through

Where can I document my student's progress, needs, and required services?

Student Vision

- This section sets the tone of the new IEP document and meeting; Student voice is right at the beginning, and reminds us who this document is for.

- Prompts Differentiated by age
  - Ages 3-13 (This year I want to learn… By the time I finish elementary/middle school, I want to…)
  - 13+ / Transition-aged
    - Be mindful that prompts combine Student Vision and required Postsecondary Goals

- Presumes participation for students of all ages

- Intent: create more of an invitation for student attendance and participation in their IEP meeting

Student Vision

Student's *Vision/Postsecondary Goals (required for ages 14–22, may be completed earlier if appropriate)*	
While I am in high school, I want to:	Work in vehicle maintenance and on transportation. I want to continue working at the Watertown Library and Perk Cafe. In order to get help with independent living skills, cooking, showering, and toileting, I want to live on campus. Living on campus also allows me to socialize more with my friends and it gives me three extra hours a day to work on these independent living skills.
After I finish high school, my education or training plans are:	To train for working at a car or transportation company as a dispatcher or service person. I also might want to work in customer service for an airline company.
After I finish high school, my employment plans are:	To work for a car or transportation company as a dispatcher or service person. I also might want to work in customer service for an airline company.
After I finish high school, my independent living plans are:	To live in a city with friends. Living in a city allows me to have better access to public transportation and jobs.

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Example of Student Visions Between Form Versions

"Old" Form

The team envisions that Eric will make progress towards increased independence in all areas of his education to prepare him for a happy full life in adulthood. We see Eric engaged with peers, his school community and his larger community outside of school. Eric enjoys music, sensory input and connection with people.

New Form

While I am in high school, I want to: Listen to and play music.

After I finish high school, my education or training plans are: to work a job that involves music.

After I finish high school, my employment plans are: to work a job with other people in quiet environment.

After I finish high school, my independent living plans are: to live with friends.

Team's response to student vision

- "Yes, here's how" effect to the student vision

- Inviting team members to respond and build on student's vision, not create their own vision for the student.

Vision Statement excerpts:
A) **After I finish high school, my employment plans are:**
"When I leave school, I want to work …" [independently] **[as part of a team]**

B) **After I finish high school, my independent living plans are:**
To live near my family in my own apartment. I will take the bus to visit family and friends, get to work, and run errands.

Team Response excerpts:
A) In order to support Ashley's employment goals, Ashley will be included in vocational tasks that involve collaboration with peers in both the classroom and vocational settings. Ashley will be included in group craft and packaging activities for a class fundraiser in June.

B) In order to access the bus system in his community, Kevin needs to work with his Orientation & Mobility instructor on planning routes using public transportation.

General Structure of PLAAFPs

Present Levels of Academic Achievement & Functional Performance

- There are 4 PLAAFP tables:
  - Academic
  - Behavioral/Social/Emotional
  - Communication
  - Additional Areas (such as activities of daily living, health, hearing, motor, sensory, and vision)

- Each PLAAFP is divided into 3 columns:
  - Current Performance
  - Strengths, interest areas, and preferences
  - Impact of student's disability [in this area]

- Some sections have "special factor" questions in checkbox format (ex: AAC use, Braille use, O&M instruction)

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (Additional Areas)

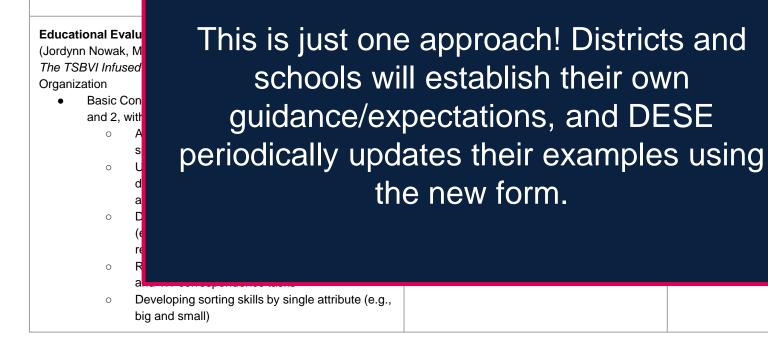| Additional Areas, as Applicable (such as activities of daily living, health, hearing, motor, sensory, and vision). Briefly describe current performance and any applicable documentation. Please note that parent(s) are only asked to share health information voluntarily.	Strengths, interest areas, and preferences	Impact of student's disability on involvement and progress in the general education curriculum or appropriate preschool activities
Tyler has a constant alternating (primarily right) exotropia and horizontal nystagmus and constricted left field. He has difficulty with color perception and poor contrast. Tyler's most recent assessment at [clinic/provider info] shows that his corrected near grating acuity with both eyes open was 20/130. Based on Tyler's most recent Learning Media Assessment (LMA, November 2021), his primary learning and literacy channel is his auditory skills. His secondary channel is his tactile skills. He uses his vision as a supporting modality. … He also met his three orientation and mobility objectives related to finding the east and west side of the main school building, and using tangible symbols and braille signage to execute routes within the main school building.	Based on results from his last LMA, Tyler is an auditory verbal learner who shows a relative strength in social engagement. He demonstrates a strong interest in reading braille.	Tyler's disabilities impact access and participation in all areas of curriculum and in the life of the school. Areas of need that impact activities of daily living and access to and participation in learning environments are Braille Literacy, Communication, Self-Determination, Motor, Independent Living Skills, and Technology Skills. ● Areas of need that impact Braille Literacy Skills are decoding, encoding, and reading comprehension. ● Areas of need that impact Motor are orientation and mobility skills, strengthening, and range of motion. ● Areas of the need that impact Technology Skills are digital document navigation and editing, and drafting emails.

Integrating Evaluation Data

Impacts of form changes

- Historically, our evaluators provided paragraph summaries for the *Student Strengths & Key Evaluation Results* section

- In the new form,
  - No longer has that larger, open textbox/field
  - Columns-format not conducive to dense text

- DESE input in new form training:
  - **Reduce jargon**, increase readability for all stakeholders
  - Concise, focus on **impact** to access, instruction, and progress
  - Be thoughtful about data/scores that are included without context of full report or evaluator explanation

Example (Partial) Educational Eval. Summary

C...		...act

Educational Evalu... (Jordynn Nowak, M... *The TSBVI Infused* Organization
- Basic Con... and 2, with...
  - A... s...
  - U... d... a...
  - D... (e... re...
  - R... and ... correspondence tasks
  - Developing sorting skills by single attribute (e.g., big and small)

... and application of ...onal concepts ...rrespondence and

... and application of ...ntifying, sorting)

This is just one approach! Districts and schools will establish their own guidance/expectations, and DESE periodically updates their examples using the new form.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing

☐ The student is deaf or hard of hearing, and their language and communication needs will be addressed in the following section(s) of the IEP:

☐ Accommodations/Modifications ☐ Goals/Objectives	☐ Services Delivery Grid ☐ Additional Information

Blind or Visually Impaired (including Cortical Visual Impairment)

☐ Braille is needed and will be addressed in the following section(s) of the IEP:

☐ Accommodations/Modifications ☐ Goals/Objectives	☐ Services Delivery Grid ☐ Additional Information

☐ Screen readers or other assistive technology are needed and will be addressed in the following section(s) of the IEP:

☐ Accommodations/Modifications ☐ Goals/Objectives	☐ Services Delivery Grid ☐ Additional Information

☐ Orientation and mobility services are needed and will be addressed in the following section(s) of the IEP:

☐ Accommodations/Modifications ☐ Goals/Objectives	☐ Services Delivery Grid ☐ Additional Information

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Postsecondary Transition Planning

- *(what we like to call)* The Fifth PLAAFP table
  - Current performance
  - Strengths, interests, preferences
  - Impacts

> As they relate to Transition Planning: Education/Training, Employment, Indep. Living

- Projected graduation details (date and completion document)

- Planning Course of Study
  - Requirements to receive identified completion doc.
  - Planned course of study
  - Current status towards meeting requirements

- Community and agency linkages

- Important logistics: Transfer of Rights, Educational Decision Making, 688 Referral

Accommodations and Modifications

- State- and district-wide assessment considerations now appear immediately after Accommodations & modifications – draws closer tie between Accoms., Mods., and assessment decisions

- New organization in table format:
  - **Accommodations** are divided into Presentation, Response, Timing/Scheduling, and Setting/Environment
  - **Modifications** are divided into Content, Instruction, and Student Output
  - Additional sorting by Setting (Classroom, Non-academic, Extracurricular, Community/Workplace)

New Accommodations Table

Setting	Presentation	Response	Timing/ Scheduling	Setting/ Environment
Classroom	-Access to screen reader -Present materials within 1 foot, allowing Andrew to bring materials closer as needed	-Braille notetaker	-Alternate visually demanding tasks with less/non-visually demanding tasks	-Sit facing non complex backgrounds -Keep floor surfaces clear
Nonacademic settings	-Use color coding to support visual recognition of personal belongings (e.g. red spoon handle)			-Describe people and information, i.e foods on dining table
Extracurricular activities	-Present one visual item at a time		- Increased time to visually, tactually, and auditorily explore materials	
Community/ Workplace	-Braille labels (e.g., equipment, storage systems)	-Computer or tablet with speech-to-text software	- Frequent breaks	-Access to sunglasses and brimmed cap when traveling outdoors

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Goals and Objectives

[Baseline data here]				
Annual Goal/Target What skill(s) will the student be expected to attain by the end of this IEP's timeframe?	**Criteria** What measurement will be used to determine whether the goal has been achieved?	**Method** How will progress be measured?	**Schedule** How frequently will progress be measured?	**Person(s) Responsible** Who will monitor progress?
Given the necessary support and adaptations, Xavier will improve his reading accuracy and literacy skills,	to demonstrate ability beyond the current baseline, as measured by the following objectives:	Teacher observations and data collection (e.g, Jerry Johns Reading Inventory, informal grade-level reading assessments)	Data collected on the schedule in each objective, progress reported quarterly	Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments

Short-term objectives and/or benchmarks (intermediate steps between the baseline and the measurable annual goal)

1.1: Given a preview of challenging vocabulary and the opportunity to re-read once, Xavier will read uncontracted braille passages of 100 words or more at a third grade reading level or higher with at least 90% accuracy in 3 out of 5 measured opportunities across the term.

1.2: Given braille-letter flashcards of 15 alphabetic word signs, Xavier will correctly identify (verbally name) at least 11 out of 15 word signs, in 8 out of 10 opportunities, as measured across the term.

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Service Delivery Grid

- Additional column for "Location" in which services will be delivered

Goal Number(s)	Type of Service	Provided by List job title	Location	Frequency/Duration __ × __ minutes per ___ - day cycle	Start Date	End Date
**A. Consultation (Indirect Services to School Personnel and Parents)**						
1-2	Assistive Technology	Assistive Technology Specialist	Email, phone call, virtual or in-person meetings	1 x 30 minutes per 30-day cycle	11/30/23	11/29/24
**C. Special Education and Related Services in Other Settings (Direct Service)**						
1	Braille	Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments	Classroom / therapy space	2 x 50 minutes per 5-day cycle	11/30/23	11/29/24
4	Orientation & Mobility	Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist	School building, on- and off-campus routes	1 x 90 minutes per 5-day cycle	11/30/23	11/29/24

Key Sections to Monitor

- While **all** team members have crucial information to contribute *across sections*, (so far) we've found vision-related needs and services are captured most directly through:

  - Team Response to Student's Vision
  - Present Levels of Academic Achievement & Functional Performance
    - Checkbox questions re: sensory impairments
  - Postsecondary Transition Planning
    - Support and access needs, agency/community linkages
  - Accommodations & Modifications
  - Goals
  - Service Delivery

What would I document if…

- A team interprets that my service only contributes to the Additional Areas PLAAFP (not Academic, Social/Behavioral/Emotional, or Communication)?
  - The PLAAFPs are not intended to be divided by discipline or service. We've found that while a significant amount of vision-related info is captured under Additional Areas, there have also been important vision-related current performance, strengths/preferences, and impacts in other PLAAFP areas. A few examples: Learning Media in Academic PLAAFP, emotional responses to progressive loss of vision under Social/Behavioral/Emotional, visual field and positioning preferences for accessing AAC device under Communication.

- I'm working with a student working on pre-braille skills?
  - We have been checking the relevant boxes for "Braille is needed" and then describing the student's current performance with pre-braille skills in the Academic and/or Additional Areas PLAAFPs.

What would I document if…

- I work with a student who only requires consult (no direct service) from an Assistive Technology Specialist?
  - Similar to previous point, we've been checking the relevant boxes after the Student Profile and the Additional Areas PLAAFP, and including context for the consult in several areas. This could look like:
    - Current Performance information about student's assistive technology skills and what the AT Specialist monitors in the Additional Areas (or other) PLAAFP(s)
    - Inclusion of AT-related Accommodations
    - Service Delivery box checked in connection to consult service
    - Information about technology ownership, loans, and maintenance in Additional Information (e.g., Student uses a personal iPad with VoiceOver. Student uses a braille notetaker that is a loaner from the school. As part of their consultation, the AT Specialist collaborates with the student, family, and larger team to recommend and set-up school-related applications for the student's iPad).

Wrapping Up

Don't panic! The whole state is new to this form, and approaches will continue evolving for quite some time.

Knowing the intentions behind these changes make it easier to apply relevant information to the new and rearranged sections.

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References & Resources

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