Special Education Program
Evaluation Toolkit

INDIANA DEPARTMENT *of* **EDUCATION**

Using the Special Education Program Evaluation Toolkit

The Indiana Department of Education's (IDOE's) *Special Education Program Evaluation Toolkit* is designed to support local educational agencies (LEAs) as they evaluate the effectiveness of their special education programs. For a more comprehensive evaluation, IDOE recommends that programs be evaluated as a corporation, enabling analysis of student achievement and progress from preschool access to graduation and beyond. If a corporation-wide evaluation is not conducted, the toolkit is also appropriate for school-based program evaluations.

LEAs are encouraged to appoint one member of the evaluation team as the evaluation coordinator. The evaluation coordinator may delegate certain tasks, but will be responsible for meeting coordination, data collection, and oversight of the evaluation timeline. The evaluation coordinator is encouraged to review all provided training materials provided by IDOE and connect evaluation team members with resources according to their roles and needs.

The evaluation process will vary in length and scope according to local context, but IDOE recommends that LEAs plan to complete the first six steps of the evaluation over a period of *at least eight weeks* to allow adequate time to collect data, solicit stakeholder input, research evidence-based strategies, and develop a comprehensive plan of action. The final two steps of the evaluation will be conducted over the course of *the school year* on an ongoing basis. IDOE recommends that LEAs conduct a comprehensive program evaluation once every three years, with annual interim evaluations of success. A suggested timeline for program evaluation is provided below:

Evaluation Task	Estimated Time Needed
Step 1: Assembling the Evaluation Team	Two weeks
Step 2: Gathering Data & Reviewing the Federal Program Evaluation Toolkit	Four weeks
Step 3: Defining the Current State	Half- or full-day in-person meeting*
Step 4: Identifying Needs	Half- or full-day in-person meeting*
Step 5: Setting Goals	Half- or full-day in-person meeting*
Step 6: Developing a Plan of Action	Half- or full-day in-person meeting*
Step 7: Implementing the Plan of Action	Determined by evaluation team
Step 8: Evaluating Success	Six to nine months after implementation; and annually thereafter

*LEAs should allow for sufficient time for reflection, additional stakeholder review, and supplemental data analysis and research between Steps 3 and 6. For example, teams may conduct Steps 3 and 4 in a single, full-day meeting, then conduct Steps 5 and 6 in a second follow-up meeting a few weeks later. Sample agendas are included in Appendix A.

Special Education Programs: Why Evaluate?

Board of Education of Hendrick Hudson Central School District, Westchester City v. Rowley was the U.S. Supreme Court's first interpretation of what was then known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, now the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The holdings in this case have become the standard of analysis for every subsequent special education case arising in the federal and state courts. Consequently, a working knowledge of the fundamental analysis developed by the Supreme Court justices is important when evaluating any special education matter. This 1982 case was decisive in shaping today's understanding of the term "educational benefit." Ultimately after lower-court decisions and appeals, the U.S. Supreme Court concluded that IDEA does not require that states maximize the potential of students with disabilities. The intent of IDEA was more to open the door of public education to handicapped children rather than to guarantee any particular level of education once inside. Free appropriate public education (FAPE) and least restrictive environment (LRE) become our guideposts, decided and analyzed individually, to ensure the child is receiving a basic floor of opportunity.

FAPE means special education and related services that:

- Are provided at public expense
- Meet the standards of the state
- Include preschool, elementary or secondary school, and education through 22nd birthday; and
- Is provided in conformity with the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

FAPE (*Rowley*) Standard

The Supreme Court established two criteria in determining FAPE:

1. Have the procedures been adequately complied with (compliance)?
2. Is the IEP reasonably calculated to enable the child to receive educational benefit?

- Core entitlements for students with disabilities include the right to FAPE, education held in the LRE, and having an IEP designed to provide educational benefit.

Importance of Educational Benefit and the Rowley Standard

Implicit in the congressional purpose of providing access to a "free appropriate public education" is the requirement that the provided education be sufficient to confer some educational benefit upon the disabled child. Special educators should take special notice of the Rowley case, as it acts as the blueprint for all cases to follow. The two Rowley questions emphasize procedural compliance and the benefits of the IEP. The focus of the decision on what is "appropriate" for special education students should be emphasized as societal ideals of inclusion evolve.

IDEA of 2004 Grants Further Conceptual Refinements

In 2004, IDEA expanded on provisions concerning:

- High expectations for all children;
- Ensuring access to the general education curriculum and standards in the general classroom, to the maximum extent possible;
- Preparing children with disabilities to lead productive and independent adult lives; and

- Providing effective transition services to promote successful post-school employment or education.

While we know and understand the above concepts, it is critical to analyze what steps are taken over time for individual children to truly measure educational benefit. This cannot be accomplished by a single IEP meeting, but staff should examine what assessment results indicate regarding the student's needs, if the IEP was implemented, and if the student accomplished progress or gained educational benefit. Successful analysis considers years of data or the span of time between triennials.

Step 1: Assembling the Evaluation Team

To effectively evaluate the special education program, key stakeholders must lead and contribute to the process. While each local context may vary, the following guidance addresses ideal team composition for corporation-wide and/or school-wide program evaluation. Note the team size and determine if having assigned roles will help move the work forward most effectively and meaningfully. An example corporation and school team organizer is included in Appendix A.

Corporation-Wide Evaluation Teams	School-Wide Evaluation Teams
Team Members: These staff members should commit to fully engaging in the evaluation process as a collaborative and results-focused committee. ● Corporation Special Education Director ● Corporation Special Education Assistant Directors (if applicable) ● Teachers of Record (at least one primary, one upper elementary, one middle, and one high school) ● Building-Level Principals (at least one elementary and one secondary) ● Elementary and Secondary Instructional Coaches (at least one from each level) ● Content Area Teachers (for elementary, at least one primary and one upper elementary; for secondary, at least two teachers from different content areas) ● Corporation Curriculum Director ● Corporation Family Engagement Director (if applicable)	**Team Members:** These staff members should commit to fully engaging in the evaluation process as a collaborative and results-focused committee. ● Corporation Special Education Director and/or Assistant Directors ● Principal/Assistant Principal ● Instructional Coach ● All Teachers of Record ● Content Area Teachers (for elementary, at least one primary and one upper elementary; for secondary, at least two teachers from different content areas) ● Family Engagement Staff (if applicable)

Contributing Staff: These staff members will contribute feedback and data for the evaluation process, and, depending on local context, may or may not be members of the evaluation team. ● Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent ● English Learner Director ● Assessment/Data Director ● Finance Director	**Contributing Staff:** These staff members will contribute feedback and data for the evaluation process, and, depending on local context, may or may not be members of the evaluation team. ● School Counselor ● Assessment/Data Coordinator ● Special Education Support Staff ● English Learner Teacher

Further Consideration: Consider how the team could engage community stakeholders in this work. For instance, when might it be appropriate to include parents or other community partners in the work? In some communities, it might be best to involve stakeholders from the very beginning. In other locations, it might be best to include stakeholders later in the process during goal setting or plan review.

Step 2(a): Gathering Data

Evaluation of the special education program should be rooted in the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. To accurately assess the current and desired state of the program, data should include local and state data for both students with disabilities and the overall student population, as well as other overlapping student populations (e.g., free and reduced lunch, English Learners). Comprehensive evaluation of the special education program will address each of the evaluation areas below. Where available, data should be collected at both the school and corporation level for teams conducting either a corporation-wide or school-wide program evaluation. When possible, data should be gathered for analysis for at **least the past three years**. Appendix C contains a chart of common places, such as Data Exchange, to find the following data points as well as individuals to contact who may have access to the information.

Special Education Student Population
● Total number of students with disabilities by school and grade level.
● Description of how students are identified and placed.
● Students by identified disabilities.
● Average age and/or grade students are identified.

Equitable Representation:
● Number and percentage of students with disabilities and overall student population enrolled at elementary, middle, and high school. Where possible, gather data by language/ethnicity, as well.
● Number and percentage of students with disabilities and overall student population retained at least one year.
● Number and percentage of students with disabilities and overall student population identified for high ability programming.
● Number and percentage of students with disabilities and overall student population identified as English Learners.
● Number and percentage of students with disabilities and overall student population enrolled in school/corporation pre-K programs, where applicable.

- Number and percentage of students with disabilities and overall student population enrolled in Advanced Placement (or equivalent) courses.
- Number and percentage of students with disabilities and overall student population taking the ACT/SAT or other college entrance exam.
- Attendance data for students with disabilities and overall student population.
- Behavior referrals, suspensions, and expulsions for students with disabilities and overall student population.
- Educator demographics: language and ethnicity data for school and corporation faculty and staff.

Academic Achievement:
- Proficiency and growth data for all current students with disabilities* and the overall student population on ILEARN/IAM, IREAD-3, and WIDA ACCESS.
- Grade-level performance and growth data for all current students with disabilities and the overall student population on local formative assessments (e.g., NWEA, etc.).
- Four-year graduation rate for students with disabilities and the overall student population.
- If available, students with disabilities' rate of enrollment in postsecondary educational institutions compared to overall student population.

Elementary/Secondary Programming:
- Master building schedule and special education services schedule.
- Curriculum map for all grades.
- Master list of students with disabilities and special education staff by building.
- Copy of school/corporation annual determination results and any corrective action plans.
- Feedback regarding program implementation, service delivery, or access to programs.

Professional Learning and Teacher Capacity:
- Master list of all staff who work with students with disabilities (general education, special education, and other staff members who have students with disabilities in their classrooms).
- List of all staff in school/corporation with Indiana special education license. Licensure information for all special education program teachers and staff.
- Teacher and staff evaluation records for all special education program staff.
- School and corporation professional development (PD) calendar/plan for previous three years, including sign-in sheets or other staff attendance data.
- Special education staff PD calendar/plan for previous three years.
- Schedules for staff development and collaboration time (e.g., professional learning communities).
- Comments from staff regarding professional learning (e.g., feedback surveys).

Family Engagement:
- Family/parent survey results, where applicable (i.e., specific to special education or otherwise).

- Master schedule of all parent/family engagement activities, both formal and informal (e.g., meet-the-teacher night, parent-teacher conferences). This should include both special education-specific and general family engagement activities.
- Attendance documentation (e.g., sign-in sheets, event feedback forms) from special education-specific and general family engagement activities.
- Any corporation or school policy that pertains to students with disabilities and their families.
- Access to a copy of Article 7.

Resource Allocation:
- State and federal grant allocations and application budgets for previous three years (including Title I, IDEA Part B, Medicaid, and other relevant funding streams).
- Report of actual expended amounts for three years of IDEA Part B and Medicaid funding.
- Data regarding per-pupil spending for students with disabilities and general education students.

Step 2(b): Reviewing the Federal Program Evaluation Toolkit

The U.S. Department of Education provides additional resources including the Tools and Resources for Evaluating the Effectiveness of a District's English Learner (EL) Program , Evaluation Matters, and Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Program Evaluation Toolkit. Completion and/or use of these resources is not required, but may help steer data analysis, deepen questions, and target areas of improvement.

Step 3: Defining the Current State

After gathering quantitative and qualitative data for each evaluation area, the entire program evaluation team will conduct an in-depth analysis of the school- and corporation-level data to identify current gaps and clearly define the state of the program in each area. Depending on the size of the evaluation team and the amount of time available for this step of the evaluation, the team may either analyze each program area jointly or divide the different areas for analysis by smaller groups of evaluation team members. In either case, the entire team should have the opportunity to review and consent to the defined current states drafted in this phase of the evaluation.

The definition of the current state for each program area should be three to five sentences long and should cite specific data to define any observed achievement or opportunity gaps, as well as identified areas of strength. See Appendix A for an exemplar document for Step 3 and Appendix B for Driving Questions.

Evaluation Area	Current State
Equitable Representation	
Academic Achievement	
Elementary/Secondary Programming	

Professional Learning and Teacher Capacity	
Family Engagement	
Resource Allocation	

Step 4: Identifying Needs

After the evaluation team has analyzed data to define the current state for each of the evaluation areas, the team will identify the specific program needs in each area. As in Step 3, the team may either develop need statements for each area jointly or assign the different areas to smaller groups of evaluation team members. In either case, the entire team should have the opportunity to review and consent to the need statements drafted in this step of the evaluation process

Need statements should be rooted in data and clearly aligned to the gaps identified during Step 3 of the program evaluation. Need statements should typically be one to two sentences in length, although teams may identify two to three need statements for each evaluation area. See Appendix A for an exemplar document for Step 4 and Appendix B for Driving Questions.

Evaluation Area	Need Statement
Equitable Representation	
Academic Achievement	
Elementary/Secondary Programming	
Professional Learning and Teacher Capacity	
Family Engagement	
Resource Allocation	

After developing need statements for each evaluation area, the evaluation team is encouraged to share the drafted need statements with a broader group of stakeholders (corporation leadership, classroom teachers, special education support staff, families of students with disabilities) for review and revision before continuing to Step 5 of the program evaluation. The team should also identify any additional data needed after this step of the evaluation process.

Step 5: Setting Goals

After defining the needs of the special education program in each of the evaluation areas, the evaluation team will convene to set goals for program improvement. Although needs were identified in all program evaluation areas in Step 4, evaluation teams are encouraged to select one to three program evaluation areas for goal setting.

The evaluation team will revisit data and evaluation team input from Steps 2 through 4 to determine which evaluation areas will be prioritized for program improvement. The team will then develop specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (SMART) goals to address the priority evaluation areas. At least one SMART goal should be developed for each priority evaluation area for a total of three to five SMART goals. The team should also define attainment of each SMART goal, including what data will be collected to measure progress toward attainment.

Priority Evaluation Area 1
SMART Goal 1:
How will we know we have attained SMART Goal 1?
SMART Goal 2 (Optional):
How will we know we have attained SMART Goal 2?
SMART Goal 3 (Optional):
How will we know we have attained SMART Goal 3?

Priority Evaluation Area 2
SMART Goal 1:
How will we know we have attained SMART Goal 1?
SMART Goal 2 (Optional):
How will we know we have attained SMART Goal 2?
SMART Goal 3 (Optional):
How will we know we have attained SMART Goal 3?

Priority Evaluation Area 3
SMART Goal 1:
How will we know we have attained SMART Goal 1?
SMART Goal 2 (Optional):
How will we know we have attained SMART Goal 2?
SMART Goal 3 (Optional):
How will we know we have attained SMART Goal 3?

Step 6: Developing a Plan of Action

After developing SMART goals to address priority evaluation areas, the evaluation team will select two to four evidence-based strategies to address each SMART goal. Strategies may include professional learning initiatives, language-based instructional programs, instructional strategies, or other program-wide practices to be implemented.

When developing the plan of action, the evaluation team should provide a brief rationale for each selected strategy outlining the evidence base for the selected practice. The evaluation team should also consider all needed resources, including funding, staff time, and supplemental external materials. The evaluation team should also determine who will be responsible for carrying out or overseeing each strategy and when implementation of the strategy is projected to begin. Next, the evaluation team will define how achievement of the SMART goals will be evaluated.

SMART Goal 1:			Priority Evaluation Area:	
Strategy	**Rationale**	**Resources Needed**	**Staff Responsible**	**Target Start Date**
Strategy 1:				
Strategy 2:				
Strategy 3 (Optional):				
Strategy 4 (Optional):				
How will the achievement of SMART Goal 1 be evaluated?				

SMART Goal 2:			Priority Evaluation Area:	
Strategy	**Rationale**	**Resources Needed**	**Staff Responsible**	**Target Start Date**
Strategy 1:				
Strategy 2:				
Strategy 3 (Optional):				
Strategy 4 (Optional):				
How will the achievement of SMART Goal 2 be evaluated?				

SMART Goal 3:			Priority Evaluation Area:	
Strategy	**Rationale**	**Resources Needed**	**Staff Responsible**	**Target Start Date**
Strategy 1:				
Strategy 2:				
Strategy 3 (Optional):				
Strategy 4 (Optional):				
How will the achievement of SMART Goal 3 be evaluated?				

SMART Goal 4 (Optional):			Priority Evaluation Area:	
Strategy	**Rationale**	**Resources Needed**	**Staff Responsible**	**Target Start Date**
Strategy 1:				
Strategy 2:				
Strategy 3 (Optional):				
Strategy 4 (Optional):				
How will the achievement of SMART Goal 4 be evaluated?				

SMART Goal 5 (Optional):			Priority Evaluation Area:	
Strategy	**Rationale**	**Resources Needed**	**Staff Responsible**	**Target Start Date**
Strategy 1:				
Strategy 2:				
Strategy 3 (Optional):				
Strategy 4 (Optional):				
How will the achievement of SMART Goal 5 be evaluated?				

Step 7: Implementing the Plan of Action

After developing the plan of action, the evaluation team and evaluation coordinator are responsible for implementing the plan, along with any other designated staff members who will enact evidence-based strategies selected in Step 6. The following questions should be used to guide initial implementation, revisited at six weeks, and at each implementation meeting thereafter.

How will the evaluation results and plan of action be communicated with administrators, teachers, families, and other key stakeholder groups? When will this information be shared?

What additional steps must be taken to enact selected strategies (e.g., secure approval from school board, request amendment for budgeted grant funds, procure curricular materials)?

What additional training is needed to enact selected evidence-based strategies effectively? Who will provide this training? When will the training be provided?

What additional data need to be collected to track progress toward SMART goals and effectiveness of selected strategies? How will these data be collected? Who will be responsible for tracking this data?

When will the evaluation team meet next? Who will lead the next check-in meeting? Who will be expected to attend?

Note: IDOE recommends that the evaluation team meets after the first six weeks of implementation to address any concerns or barriers to full implementation and at least once every three months for the duration of the first school year of implementation.

Step 8: Evaluating Success

Evaluation is an ongoing process and is most impactful when it occurs regularly and proactively. IDOE recommends that LEAs conduct a comprehensive evaluation of their special education programs once every three years. Step 7 concludes the comprehensive program evaluation process, but Step 8 maximizes impact by continually assessing progress and adapting the plan of action to program needs. The evaluation team should meet once after the first six weeks of implementation to address any barriers to full implementation and at least once every three months during the first school year of implementation.

After the initial implementation period, the evaluation team should meet at least once annually to formally analyze data and assess progress toward SMART goals as an interim program evaluation. The interim evaluation template provided below is intended to guide evaluation teams as they seek to continuously improve their special education programs. When revising the plan of action, evaluation teams are encouraged to preserve the fidelity of the comprehensive evaluation findings and ensure that any changes align to the priority focus areas and work toward the SMART goals defined during the comprehensive program evaluation.

Interim Evaluation Date:	
Evaluation Team Members Present:	

SMART Goal 1:

What progress has been made toward attainment of SMART Goal 1? Cite specific quantitative and qualitative data demonstrating progress.

Review evidence-based strategies selected to address SMART Goal 1 in Step 6 of the comprehensive evaluation. Are all strategies being implemented with fidelity? Do any strategies need to be revised? Do additional strategies need to be implemented to meet SMART Goal 1?

SMART Goal 2:

What progress has been made toward attainment of SMART Goal 2? Cite specific quantitative and qualitative data demonstrating progress.

Review evidence-based strategies selected to address SMART Goal 2 in Step 6 of the comprehensive evaluation. Are all strategies being implemented with fidelity? Do any strategies need to be revised? Do additional strategies need to be implemented to meet SMART Goal 2?

SMART Goal 3:
What progress has been made toward attainment of SMART Goal 3? Cite specific quantitative and qualitative data demonstrating progress.
Review evidence-based strategies selected to address SMART Goal 3 in Step 6 of the comprehensive evaluation. Are all strategies being implemented with fidelity? Do any strategies need to be revised? Do additional strategies need to be implemented to meet SMART Goal 3?

SMART Goal 4 (Optional):
What progress has been made toward attainment of SMART Goal 4? Cite specific quantitative and qualitative data demonstrating progress.
Review evidence-based strategies selected to address SMART Goal 4 in Step 6 of the comprehensive evaluation. Are all strategies being implemented with fidelity? Do any strategies need to be revised? Do additional strategies need to be implemented to meet SMART Goal 4?

SMART Goal 5 (Optional):
What progress has been made toward attainment of SMART Goal 5? Cite specific quantitative and qualitative data demonstrating progress.
Review evidence-based strategies selected to address SMART Goal 5 in Step 6 of the comprehensive evaluation. Are all strategies being implemented with fidelity? Do any strategies need to be revised? Do additional strategies need to be implemented to meet SMART Goal 5?

What additional resources are needed to enact all selected strategies with fidelity and ensure all SMART Goals are met?

What additional data need to be collected to track progress more effectively?

When will the evaluation team meet next? Who will lead the next check-in meeting? Who will be expected to attend?

Appendix A - Exemplar Documents

Sample Agenda - In-Person Meeting for Steps 3 and 4

Time	Task
8:00 - 8:05 a.m.	Welcome and Intros
8:05 - 8:20 a.m.	Agenda and Intro to Special Education Program Evaluation Process
8:20 - 8:30 a.m.	Review of Steps 1-2; Introduce Step 3
8:30 - 8:35 a.m.	Split into Review Teams and Assign Areas
8:35 - 8:55 a.m.	Review Data Protocol and Practice Phase 1: Predict
8:55 - 9:20 a.m.	Phase 2: Go Visual
9:20 - 9:50 a.m.	Phase 3: Observe
9:50 - 10:00 a.m.	Break
10:00 - 10:20 a.m.	Discuss with One Other Evaluation Area Group and Provide Feedback
10:20 - 10:40 a.m.	Groups Draft Current State Statements
10:40 - 11:15 a.m.	Groups Present Data and Current State Statements
11:15 - 11:30 a.m.	Return to Groups and Revise Current State Statements
11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.	Lunch
12:45 - 1:00 p.m.	Finalize Step 3: Current States (Review with Large Group)
1:00 - 1:30 p.m.	Begin Step 4: Identifying Needs Phase 4:Infer/Question
1:30 - 2:00 p.m.	Draft Need Statements
2:00 - 2:15 p.m.	Needs Gallery Walk
2:15 - 2:30 p.m.	Revise Need Statements
2:30 - 2:45 p.m.	Review and Finalize Need Statements
2:45 - 3:00 p.m.	Next Steps (Preview Step 5), Conclusion Survey, Dismiss

Sample Agenda - In-Person Meeting for Steps 5, 6, and 7

Time	Task
8:00 - 8:05 a.m.	Welcome and Intro
8:05 - 8:10 a.m.	Overview of Special Education Program Evaluation Process
8:10 - 8:30 a.m.	Review of Steps 1-4
8:30 - 8:45 a.m.	Review of Teacher Input
8:45 - 9:00 a.m.	Any Needed Changes to Steps 3 and 4?
9:00 - 9:10 a.m.	Select and Finalize Priority Evaluation Areas
9:10 - 9:15 a.m.	Introduce goal setting: SMART goal teaching.
9:15 - 10:05 a.m.	Draft SMART Goals
10:05 - 10:15 a.m.	BREAK
10:15 - 10:50 a.m.	Gallery Walk Review of SMART Goals
10:50 - 11:00 a.m.	Return to groups and revise goals
11:00 - 11:15 a.m.	Review and Finalize Step 5
11:15 - 11:30 a.m.	Intro Step 6: Plan of Action and Supporting Resources
11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.	Lunch
12:45 - 1:30 p.m.	Develop Plan of Action
1:30 - 2:00 p.m.	Review and give feedback on Plan of Action
2:00 - 2:15 p.m.	Finalize Plan of Action
2:15- 2:45 p.m.	Whole Group: Step 7 Planning
2:45 - 3:00 p.m.	Next Steps, Feedback Survey, Dismiss

Special Education Program Evaluation Corporation Team Organizer

Title	Name	Attendance
Corporation Special Ed Director		
Building-Level Principal		
Building-Level Principal		
Building-Level Principal		
Building-Level Principal		
Teacher of Record		
Teacher of Record		
Teacher of Record		
Teacher of Record		
Elementary Instructional Coach		
Secondary Instructional Coach		
Content Area Teacher		
Content Area Teacher		
Content Area Teacher		
Content Area Teacher		
Curriculum Director		
Title I Director		
Corporation Family Engagement Director		
Superintendent*		
English Learner Director*		
Assessment/Data Director*		
Finance Director*		

*Contributing Staff: These staff members will contribute feedback and data for the evaluation process, and, depending on local context, may or may not be members of the evaluation team.

Special Education Program Evaluation School Team Organizer

Title	Name	Attendance
Corporation Special Education Director		
Principal		
Assistant Principal		
Instructional Coach		
Teacher of Record		
Teacher of Record		
Teacher of Record		
Content Area Teacher		
Content Area Teacher		
Title I Teacher		
Family Engagement Staff		
School Counselor*		
Assessment/Data Coordinator*		
English Learner Teacher*		
Special Ed Support Staff*		
Special Ed Support Staff*		

*Contributing Staff: These staff members will contribute feedback and data for the evaluation process, and, depending on local context, may or may not be members of the evaluation team.

Exemplar - Step 3: Defining the Current State

Considerations:

- Current state statements for each area are three to five sentences long (maximum).
- Current state statements objectively record current realities, citing data when possible.

Equitable Representation
In ABC Schools, 14.9% students are identified for special education, compared to 15.5%% at the state level. Of these students, 65% are boys, 24% are English Learners, and 43% are identified with SLD. Compared to state-level chronic absenteeism for students with disabilities (15.5%), ABC Schools' rate for students with disabilities is higher (24.8%). Only 19% of ABC Schools students are white, while over 80% of certified staff are white. 61 languages are spoken by ABC Schools' students, with 72% speaking Spanish.

Academic Achievement
Compared to the state (87%) and district (86%) average, the number of students with disabilities graduating within four years is lower (71%). The number of students with disabilities meeting their growth target is 18.5% in ELA and 12% in math, compared to the overall district percentages 38.2% in ELA and 34.3% in math.

Elementary and Secondary Programming
All students receiving special education support receive a wide range of services across all grades, and programming and placement varies by building. Services include both push-in and pull-out supports. At the elementary level, students are pulled out for special education services during student intervention periods.

Professional Learning and Teacher Capacity
While special education teachers in the corporation attend four to five training events a year, less than 10% of other teachers reported receiving any training in special education strategies or interpreting IEPs for their students when surveyed.

Family Engagement
On average 27% of families miss Annual Case Review meetings and require follow-up contacts. Families of students with disabilities do not regularly attend school or district sponsored activities (literacy nights, conferences, etc).

Resource Allocation

Communication between corporation and building level administrators during grant planning rarely occurs, and funds are largely uncoordinated across programs.

Exemplar - Step 4: Identifying Needs

Considerations:

- Need statements are rooted in data and clearly aligned to any gaps identified in Step 3: Defining the Current State.
- Need statements are one to two sentences long.
- Data teams may include one to three need statements for each evaluation area.

Equitable Representation
We need to more accurately identify students who have disabilities in order to reduce disproportionality in special education identification.

Academic Achievement
We need to identify multiple ways to measure student growth (mental wellness, academic achievement, language development), including making instruction accessible to all students.
We need to increase individual student growth for students with disabilities in ELA and mathematics proficiency scores, particularly on grades 6-8 ILEARN assessments.

Elementary and Secondary Programming
We need to ensure that all students at all grade levels (elementary, middle, high) receive direct special education services, and that additional support is available to students with disabilities who exhibit a need for more intensive programming. We need to better define and communicate our special education programming structure.
We need to track data (corporation formative assessments, ILEARN, IAM, etc.) at each level (elementary, middle, high) for a more detailed analysis of student achievement across different schools within our corporation.

Professional Learning and Teacher Capacity
We need a shared understanding of the role of the special education teachers, classroom teachers, instructional support staff, counselors, social workers, and administrators in providing services and carrying out the special education program.
We need to collect quantitative and qualitative data on professional development and teacher capacity to better monitor our progress and identify needs.

Family Engagement
We need to identify and respond to barriers families might be facing to access their school and community (research community resources and coordinate efforts).
We need a systematic method to collect data and evidence of family engagement (including

clear ownership of data collection).
Resource Allocation
We need to coordinate efforts with grant funding to benefit all students. We need to identify financial needs and increase communication between schools and corporation level.

Exemplar - Step 5: Setting Goals

After reviewing teacher feedback on Steps 3 and 4, the evaluation team will develop SMART goals to address the priority evaluation areas. At least one SMART goal should be developed for each priority evaluation area for a total of three to five SMART goals. The team should also define attainment of each SMART goal, including what data will be collected to measure progress toward attainment.

Priority Evaluation Area 1: Elementary/Secondary Programming
SMART Goal 1: Every student with a disability at ABC Schools will receive services aligned to their individual education needs and provided or directly overseen by a certified special education teacher. **How will we know we have attained SMART Goal 1?** We will create and track a master list of students with disabilities and service schedules in the corporation, and will review annually to ensure equity of services across all schools.
SMART Goal 2: Every certified staff member will demonstrate knowledge of the special education program at ABC Schools and will be able to communicate how and why students receive services (and how to advocate for students who need more or different support, as needed). **How will we know we have attained SMART Goal 2?** ● Quarterly checks for understanding ● Teacher interviews and surveys

Priority Evaluation Area 2: Professional Learning and Teacher Capacity

SMART Goal 1:
Each school will build capacity and develop understandings of creating accessible lessons for all certified teachers based on evidence of student and staff needs.

How will we know we have attained SMART Goal 1?
- Special education team will lead and share building-level progress during corporation special education collaboration meetings
- Special education teachers will develop a building-level cohort made up of classroom teachers, instructional support staff, and administrators who will work within the structure of a Professional Learning Community.
- Staff surveys

Priority Evaluation Area 3: Equitable Representation

SMART Goal 1:
The rate of special education identification will be within 3% of the state/national rate by 2026.

How will we know we have attained SMART Goal 1?
- Review of disproportionality data
- Special education teacher, EL teacher, and school psychologist data analysis and review
- Review of clarified procedures for identification students with disabilities at the corporation level

Exemplar - Step 6: Developing a Plan of Action

After developing SMART Goals to address identified high priority areas of need, the evaluation team will select two to four evidence-based strategies to address each SMART goal. Strategies may include professional learning initiatives, language-based instructional programs, instructional strategies, or other program-wide practices to be implemented.

When developing the plan of action, the evaluation team should provide a brief rationale for each selected strategy outlining the evidence base for the selected practice. The evaluation team should also consider all needed resources, including funding, staff time, and supplemental external materials. The evaluation team should also determine who will be the lead responsible for carrying out or overseeing each strategy and when implementation of the strategy is projected to begin and be completed. Next, the evaluation team will define how achievement of the SMART goal will be evaluated.

SMART Goal 1: All special education students at ABC Schools will receive services aligned to their individual needs and provided or directly overseen by a certified special education teacher.			Priority Evaluation Area: Elementary/Secondary Programming		
Strategy	**Rationale**	**Resources Needed**	**Staff Responsible**	**Target Start Date**	**Target Completion Date**
Strategy 1: Develop a framework for special education instructional programming with a sample recommended service schedule for elementary, middle, and high school students with disabilities.	This is necessary to ensure ABC Schools programming is fully accessible to all students. Differentiated services and supports will rely on regular analysis of identified needs and academic proficiency growth and national research on special education program models.	-Program and service model definitions -Special education teacher schedules -Master list of students with disabilities	Special education teachers Building-level and corporation-level administrators	October 2019	January 2020

| **Strategy 2:** Develop clearly-defined process for students with disabilities representation, identification, and support within the ABC Schools multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). | The evidence base for MTSS as a support for all students is extensive, and our work will rely on special education and MTSS expertise in the development of our framework. | -ABC Schools MTSS and special education framework | Special education collaborative team, administrators, counselors, and teachers | January 2019 | March 2020 |

How will the achievement of SMART Goal 1 be evaluated?
We will create and track a master list of students with disabilities and service schedules in the corporation, and will review annually with the special education team and building-level administrators to ensure equity of services across all schools.
We will use annual and interim assessment data to assess program effectiveness and make revisions to the program as needed.

SMART Goal 2: Every certified staff member will demonstrate knowledge of the special education program at ABC Schools and will be able to communicate how and why students receive services.			Priority Evaluation Area: Elementary/Secondary Programming		
Strategy	**Rationale**	**Resources Needed**	**Staff Responsible**	**Target Start Date**	**Target Completion Date**
Strategy 1: Clearly define special education programming and structure at ABC Schools, including roles and responsibilities of special education teachers, classroom teachers, and other stakeholders at all grade levels and in all contexts (including special education, related arts, etc.).	This step is an important foundational safeguard to ensure that all educators at ABC Schools understand federal requirements for students with disabilities and their role in meeting them. Additionally, this ensures	-ABC Schools special education guidebook -Indiana Article 7 -Framework from Goal #1 Strategy #1	Special education team and building-level administrators	January 2020	March 2020

	equity across buildings within our corporation.				
Strategy 2: Communicate and provide training to certified staff through various modes and resources (video explanation, in-person meeting options, website, email, highlighted in program newsletter, etc.).	Various modes of communication will ensure comprehension and retention of information for all learning styles represented.	-Special education guidebook -Communication tools (e.g., learning management system)	Special education director, curriculum director, administrators	March 2020	Throughout 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years

How will the achievement of SMART Goal 2 be evaluated?
Quarterly checks for understanding conducted at building-level.
Teacher interviews and surveys administered annually (twice annually during first year of implementation).

SMART Goal 3: Each school will build capacity and develop understandings of creating accessible lessons for all certified teachers based on evidence of student and staff needs.			Priority Evaluation Area: Professional Learning and Teacher Capacity		
Strategy	**Rationale**	**Resources Needed**	**Staff Responsible**	**Target Start Date**	**Target Completion Date**

Strategy 1: Special education collaborative teacher will establish a building-level special education cohort made up of classroom teachers, instructional support staff, and administrators who will work within the structure of a PLC.	Collaboration builds collective efficacy across the building; guiding responsive decision-making and flexibility & building staff capacity.	Dedicated PLC time for special education cohort Year-long PLC meeting schedule & staff in-service schedule	Building-level administrators, instructional coaches, special education teachers, special education cohort members	January 2020	Ongoing
Strategy 2: The special education building-level cohort will collect and analyze evidence of student learning, including academic, social emotional, family, and culture, to develop a plan for special education collaboration meetings and training for all staff.	Collaboration builds collective efficacy across the building and supports students holistically.	Survey or assessment to determine student and staff needs	Building-level special education cohort members	January 2020	Ongoing, but with initial collection and analysis completed by May 2020

How will the achievement of SMART Goal 3 be evaluated?
The special education team will lead and share building-level progress during corporation special education collaboration meetings. Building-level cohorts made up of classroom teachers, instructional support staff, and administrators will share progress annually and convene with other building-level special education cohorts across corporations.
Staff surveys.

Exemplar - Step 7: Implementing the Plan of Action

After developing the plan of action, the evaluation team and evaluation coordinator are responsible for implementing the plan, along with any other designated staff members who will enact evidence-based strategies selected in Step 6. The following questions should be used to guide initial implementation and revisited at each implementation meeting thereafter.

How will the evaluation results and plan of action be communicated with administrators, teachers, families, and other key stakeholder groups? When will this information be shared?

Share with the corporation administration at the next cabinet meeting.
Share with the forum after cabinet approval.
Share at board meetings (June or July) and make any new staffing or fiscal requests needed.
Share this with all staff, specifically those tied to the work we've done already.
Share with families at annual EL family night. Develop one to three pages of easily understood and translated resources to explain the work completed and to be done.

What additional steps must be taken in order to enact selected strategies (e.g. secure approval from school board, request amendment for budgeted grant funds, procure curricular materials)?

School board must approve a contract proposed with a technical assistance partner for special education training pieces. Building-level administrator approval is needed for all strategies requiring staff time in and out of the workday.

What additional training is needed in order to enact selected evidence-based strategies effectively? Who will provide this training? When will the training be provided?

Special education teachers not yet certified need to enroll in coursework to begin an approved educator preparation program. The corporation leadership team will explore opportunities for a university partnership to offer this option beginning next semester. Various goals and strategies in our action plan address specific training needs and planning to move us forward in implementation

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What additional data need to be collected to track progress toward SMART goals and effectiveness of selected strategies? How will these data be collected? Who will be responsible for tracking this data?

The special education director will work with our assessment coordinator to develop and review a staff survey to be used for the tracking of several of our goals. Building-level administrators will be responsible for administering the survey and tracking completion. Additionally, student surveys will be conducted at the building-level for middle and high school students.

When will the evaluation team meet next? Who will lead the next check-in meeting? Who will be expected to attend?

Note: IDOE recommends that the evaluation team meets after the first six weeks of implementation to address any concerns or barriers to full implementation and at least once every three months for the duration of the first school year of implementation.

Mid-September 2022--full evaluation team will attend, and the special education director will lead.
December 2022--full evaluation team will attend, and the special education director will lead.
March 2023--full evaluation team will attend, and the special education director will lead.

Appendix B - Driving Questions & Goal Review

Driving Questions

Consider these questions throughout the program evaluation process:

1. How effective are the following processes?

    a. Identification/screening
    b. Student assessment, including annual ILEARN/IAM assessments
    c. Provision of qualified staff and resources
    d. Provision of special education programs and services to *all* students with disabilities
    e. Monitoring practices for students with disabilities

2. Does it identify the student's needs?

3. Data needs to be taken continuously until the goal is met, has data been collected throughout this process? If so, how and how often?

4. Do classroom teachers have the resources, skills and knowledge to address the needs of the students with disabilities in their classroom?

5. Does the corporation/school provide adequate PD and follow-up training in order to prepare special education program teachers and administrators to implement the special education program effectively?

6. Are administrators who evaluate special education program staff adequately trained to meaningfully evaluate whether special education teachers are appropriately employing their training in the classroom?

7. Does the school use mainly paraprofessionals to serve students with disabilities or teachers who are qualified to deliver special education services?

8. Is the language progress of intermediate and advanced English learner students with disabilities stagnating? If so, what support are these English learners receiving in addition to continued English language development instruction targeted to their language needs?

9. Are students with disabilities learning grade-level core content in addition to the target goals laid out in their IEP?

10. Depending upon the corporation/school's special education program model(s) and goals, are students with disabilities making sufficient academic progress in the core content areas so that they may meaningfully participate within a reasonable period of time?

11. Are middle and high school students with disabilities receiving meaningful access to courses needed to graduate on time?

12. How do the percentages of students with disabilities and general education students compare in English learner, advanced courses, and extracurricular activities? Does such access differ by disability type or language background? If there is disproportionate participation, what are the barriers to participation? Are the barriers based on physical needs or special education status?

13. Is each identified area of concern evaluated to determine why it arose and how it is interfering with program objectives?

14. Were adequate resources allocated to the area of concern?

15. Has a description of the changes been developed (e.g What procedural and program modifications will be undertaken? Who is expected to be responsible for what? When will the changes be implemented?)

16. Has a description of the rationale and objective(s) been developed (What are the changes expected to accomplish? How will success be measured?)?

17. Have all stakeholders (i.e., responsible and interested parties) been notified of any program changes?

18. Has necessary training been identified? Have appropriate steps been put in place so that responsible persons understand expectations and are prepared to implement the changes as planned?

SMART Goal Overview

SMART stands for:

Specific: The goal must be clear and well defined. Vague or generalized goals are unhelpful because they don't provide sufficient direction.

Measurable: Include in the goal precise amounts, dates, etc. in specific detail so as to measure the degree of success.

Attainable: Is it possible to achieve the goal? The goal should be neither too easy nor too hard. Set a realistic yet challenging goal.

Relevant: Goals should be relevant to the identified needs. By keeping goals aligned with this, you'll develop the focus you need to see program improvement.

Time-Bound: Goals must have a deadline. When working on a deadline, the sense of urgency increases and achievement is more quickly attained.

Appendix C - Data Gathering

This chart is a compiled list of data points that can help assist with the collection of data for Step 2. Locations are not a comprehensive list as corporations or schools may utilize additional data warehouses.

Data Point	How/Where to Collect
Total number of students with disabilities by grade level	Data Exchange Local student information system (SIS)
Description of how students are identified and placed	Corporation/school handbook Corporation website Local documentation
Students by identified disability	Local SIS Data Exchange
Average age and/or grade students are identified	Tracked locally
Number and percentage of students with disabilities and overall student population enrolled at elementary, middle, and high school.	Data Exchange Local SIS
Number and percentage of students with disabilities and overall student population retained at least one year.	Tracked locally
Number and percentage of students with disabilities and overall student population identified for high ability programming.	Data Exchange Local SIS
Number and percentage of students with disabilities and overall student population identified as English Learners.	Data Exchange Local SIS
Number and percentage of students with disabilities and overall student population enrolled in school/corporation Pre-K programs, where applicable.	Data Exchange Local SIS
Number and percentage of students with disabilities and overall student population enrolled in Advanced Placement (or equivalent) courses.	Data Exchange Local SIS
Number and percentage of students with disabilities and overall student population taking the ACT/SAT or other college entrance exam.	Tracked locally
Attendance data for students with disabilities and overall student population.	Data ExchangeI Local SIS

Behavior referrals, suspensions, and expulsions for students with disabilities and overall student population.	Local SIS
Educator demographics: language and ethnicity data for school and corporation faculty and staff	Data Exchange Local SIS
Proficiency and growth data for all current students with disabilities, and the overall student population on ILEARN/IAM/ISTEP, IREAD-3, WIDA ACCESS.	Data Exchange Local SIS
Grade-level performance and growth data for all current students with disabilities, and the overall student population on local formative assessments (e.g., NWEA,, etc.).	Local SIS
Four-year graduation rate for students with disabilities, and the overall student population.	Local SIS
If available, students with disabilities' rate of enrollment in postsecondary educational institutions compared to the general student population.	Locally tracked
Master building schedule and special education services schedule.	Local data
Curriculum map for all grades.	Local data
Master list of students with disabilities and special education staff by building.	Local Data
Copy of school/corporation annual determination results and any corrective action plans.	Special Education Director
Feedback regarding program implementation, service delivery, or access to programs.	Stakeholders surveys
Master list of all staff who work with students with disabilities (general education, special education, and other staff members who have students with disabilities in their classrooms).	Local data
Teacher and staff evaluation records for all special education program staff.	Local data
List of all staff in school/corporation with Indiana special education license. Licensure information for all Special education program teachers and staff.	Local data
Special education staff PD calendar/plan for previous three years. Schedules for staff development and collaboration time (e.g., professional learning communities).	Local data

Comments from staff regarding professional learning (e.g., feedback surveys).	Staff surveys
School and corporation PD calendar/plan for previous three years, including sign-in sheets or other staff attendance data.	Local data
Family/parent survey results where applicable (Special Education-specific or otherwise).	Surveys
Master schedule of all parent/family engagement activities, both formal and informal (e.g., meet-the-teacher night, parent-teacher conferences). This should include both special education-specific and general family engagement activities.	Local data
Attendance documentation (e.g., sign-in sheets, event feedback forms) from special education-specific and general family engagement activities.	Local data
Any corporation or school policy that pertains to students with disabilities and their families.	Corporation website Handbook
Article 7	Indiana Code
Behavioral goals	Locally tracked
SMART Goals	Locally tracked