SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT LEADS | Strategies That Work

Enhancing Inclusive Practices Through Effective IEPs:

Coaching and Placement Tracking



THE CHALLENGE

Access to high quality IEPs and the least restrictive environment is key to success for students with disabilities. In 2022, 60% of students with disabilities in Cloverdale USD spent most of their day outside the general education setting, meaning most were served in separate environments. This was due in part to inconsistent identification of student needs and services and variability in how Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) minutes were calculated on IEPs. Additionally, some administrators were uncertain about their role in IEP meetings, which limited their ability to effectively support inclusive practices across schools.



"Our staff in Cloverdale took to heart the 'needs drive goals drive services' approach, and they've been refining the details of how they write IEPs."

Nicole Leveille
Director of Special Education and Student Services, Cloverdale Unified School District

THE SOLUTION

As part of SIL's Innovating for Student Excellence (ISE) NIC, Cloverdale Unified joined other districts, SELPAs, and County Offices of Education across California to collaborate on improving outcomes for students with disabilities. As part of this work the district implemented a set of integrated strategies to improve IEP processes and expand access to general education:



Case Carrier Individual Check-In Agenda: Conduct structured IEP check ins with teachers to check for accuracy, alignment to student needs, and quality of goals and services within IEPs

IEP Review Process: Established regular reviews of IEPs to ensure goals, services, and placement decisions aligned with student needs.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Minute Calculator: Developed and shared a spreadsheet to help teachers accurately calculate students' LRE percentages on IEPs, reducing errors and improving placement data.

Administrator Note-Taking Template: Provided site administrators with a structured note-taking tool for IEP meetings to increase accountability and focus on student outcomes.

THE IMPACT

Implementing strategies focused on improving the IEP process resulted in:

- More accurate LRE data informed better placement decisions and increased student access to general education settings.
- Teachers gained confidence in accurately documenting IEPs and supporting inclusion.
- Administrators became more engaged partners in IEP meetings, resulting in stronger alignment between district goals and site-level implementation.

The improvement in IEP quality supported increased access to general education and the percentage of students with IEPs spending **80% or more of the day in general education increased by 24%**.



COACHING AND PLACEMENT TRACKING

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

1 Review IEPs Regularly Using a 1:1 Teacher Coaching Process

Conduct structured IEP check ins with teachers to check for accuracy, alignment to student needs, and quality of goals and services within IEPs.

a. Assign a Lead Reviewer

Designate one person (administrator, program specialist, or coach) to review IEP drafts and lead individual check-in meetings with case carriers.

b. Share Agenda Template

Before each check-in, the lead reviewer sends the Case Carrier Individual Check-In Agenda to the teacher at least 48 hours in advance. This allows the teacher to add discussion topics or concerns.

c. Conduct 1:1 Feedback Sessions Using the Agenda

During each IEP draft review, use the agenda to guide a structured conversation. Focus on strengths, clarify needed corrections, and discuss alignment to student needs and general education access.

d. Use the Exit Form to Capture Teacher Reflection

After each session, the teacher completes the IEP Review Exit Form. The form guides reflection on feedback received during the meeting and outlines immediate next steps to support accountability and growth.

e. Track Trends and Refine the Process

Collect data from the agendas and exit forms monthly. Look for patterns in common challenges, time spent per IEP, and areas where teachers need more support. Adjust coaching or training plans based on findings.

2 Train Teachers and Staff on Using an LRE Calculator

Provide teachers with the LRE Calculator to ensure accurate calculation of student LRE minutes.

3 Equip Administrators for Effective IEP Meeting Documentation

Introduce the IEP meeting note-taking template and train site administrators on their role in attending and supporting IEP meetings.

4 Monitor Progress

Collect data on LRE percentages, administrator participation in IEP meetings, and IEP compliance. Use findings to adjust training and supports.

Created in partnership with Cloverdale Unified School District
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