

Key points:

- **Seek consent to access private school information on student**
- **Involve private school staff in developing IEP goals**
- **Document feedback, lack of feedback**

Consider input of private school staff in IEP process

To develop an IEP that is based on the unique needs of a student with a disability in a private placement, you must involve the private school staff as much as you reasonably can.

"It's about getting all the information that you can about a student," said Hannah King, a school attorney at [Drummond Woodsum Attorneys at Law](#). "If his private school has that information, then the public school has to make sure that the private school is involved in the process."

Use this checklist to properly involve private school staff in IEP development:

Seek access to records, classrooms. Seek parental consent to access records from the student's private school and to speak with private educators and service providers before the IEP meeting, King said. Visit the program if possible to see how private providers are delivering instruction and services as well as how the student is responding.

Create draft documents. The student's case manager should touch base with everybody, including private school teachers and service providers, to ensure everyone has draft goals to propose at the upcoming meeting, King said. "It's not predetermination," she said. "It's what I consider good preparation for the IEP meeting."

Facilitate participation. If no private school staff members are able to participate in person, offer to include them by phone or video conference, assigning a public-school team member to take contemporaneous notes during the meeting, King said.

At the same time, don't relinquish the reins of the meeting to private school staff, King said. "They should be active participants and contribute information, but the public school should be responsible for running that meeting," she said. "It has the obligation to ensure FAPE."

Discuss proposed goals. Ensure that whoever leads the IEP meeting engages participants from the private school as well as the public school in discussions about present levels of performance and goals, King said. "I would ask [private educators], 'Does this present level make sense? Is this similar to the work you're doing?'" she said. "They have to be a part of the process."

Document private school staff contributions. Build an ongoing relationship with private school team members and take note when they disagree with other team members' proposals, King said. "Everybody wants to feel validated," she said. "[Emphasize that you] understand they're the people on the ground and are important parts of the team."

Note in the prior written notice that you give parents after an IEP meeting what the private teachers and providers did and didn't offer, such as records or feedback on proposed goals, King said. "You can't force people to engage, but you can document if they don't provide feedback," she said. "That has to be captured somewhere."

See also:

- [Work with private schools to locate students with disabilities](#) (Dec. 7)
- [Address 3 types of communicators in IEP meetings](#) (June 23)
- [Review ways to involve private school representatives in development of student's IEP](#) (July 25, 2016)

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