

What is IEP Team Meeting Facilitation?

Family Engagement and Dispute Resolution
Division for Special Education Services and
Supports

Learning Targets

- I can explain the facilitator's role in a Facilitated IEP (FIEP) Team Meeting.
- I can discuss the benefits of an FIEP Team Meeting.
- I can explain the process for requesting an FIEP Team Meeting.
- I can describe some ways to promote FIEP Team Meetings in my district.

A Parent's Experience with the Special Education System



What Can Educators Do?

- Communicate, communicate, communicate
- Build trust
- Listen
- Eliminate jargon
- **Structure IEP Team meetings**
- Understand perspectives
- Reduce power imbalance
- **Support family engagement**



A major system of the complex school organization that develops quality links between local school professionals and the parents and community the school is intended to serve.

Family Engagement and Dispute Resolution Unit

Providing a continuum of resources for Georgia families and school districts

Family Engagement

- Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership
- State Advisory Panel (SAP)
- Collaboration with Parent2Parent of Georgia
- Collaboration with Title I Family-School Partnership Program

Dispute Prevention

- Procedural Safeguards (Parents' Rights)
- Special Education Help Desk
- IEP Facilitation

Dispute Resolution

- Mediation
- Formal Written Complaints
- Due Process Hearings/Resolution Session Meetings

What is IEP Facilitation?



- IEP Facilitation is a “**collaborative dispute prevention** and resolution process used when members of an IEP Team agree that the presence of a third party would help **facilitate communication and problem solving.**”
- IEP Facilitation can be especially useful when there is a **history of difficult interactions** or a meeting is expected to be particularly **complex or controversial.**

What is IEP Facilitation?



- IEP Facilitation is an **optional** process, not required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- A Facilitated IEP (FIEP) Team meeting is the **same as any other IEP Team meeting**, except that a facilitator joins the meeting.

Who are the Facilitators?

Our facilitators represent a diverse group of individuals with backgrounds including:

- **parents of students with disabilities**
- **attorneys**
- **mediators**
- **former special education teachers and administrators**
- **college professors**



What is the role of the facilitator?

- The facilitator:
 - Helps IEP Team members develop **ground rules**, an **agenda**, and **expected outcomes** for the meeting.
 - **Guides discussions** by asking student-focused questions.
 - Keeps the IEP Team **on task** and the meeting **on schedule**.

What is the role of the facilitator?

- The facilitator:
 - Asks questions to **clarify points** of agreement and disagreement and helps identify **workable solutions**.
 - **Does NOT** make decisions or determine if team members are right or wrong.
 - **Does NOT** address issues unrelated to the IEP and does NOT draft the IEP.

What are some benefits of using IEP Facilitation?

- May **build and improve relationships** among IEP Team members.
- Team members may **feel better heard** when a facilitator is involved.
- Allows all members of the IEP Team the chance to **participate fully**.



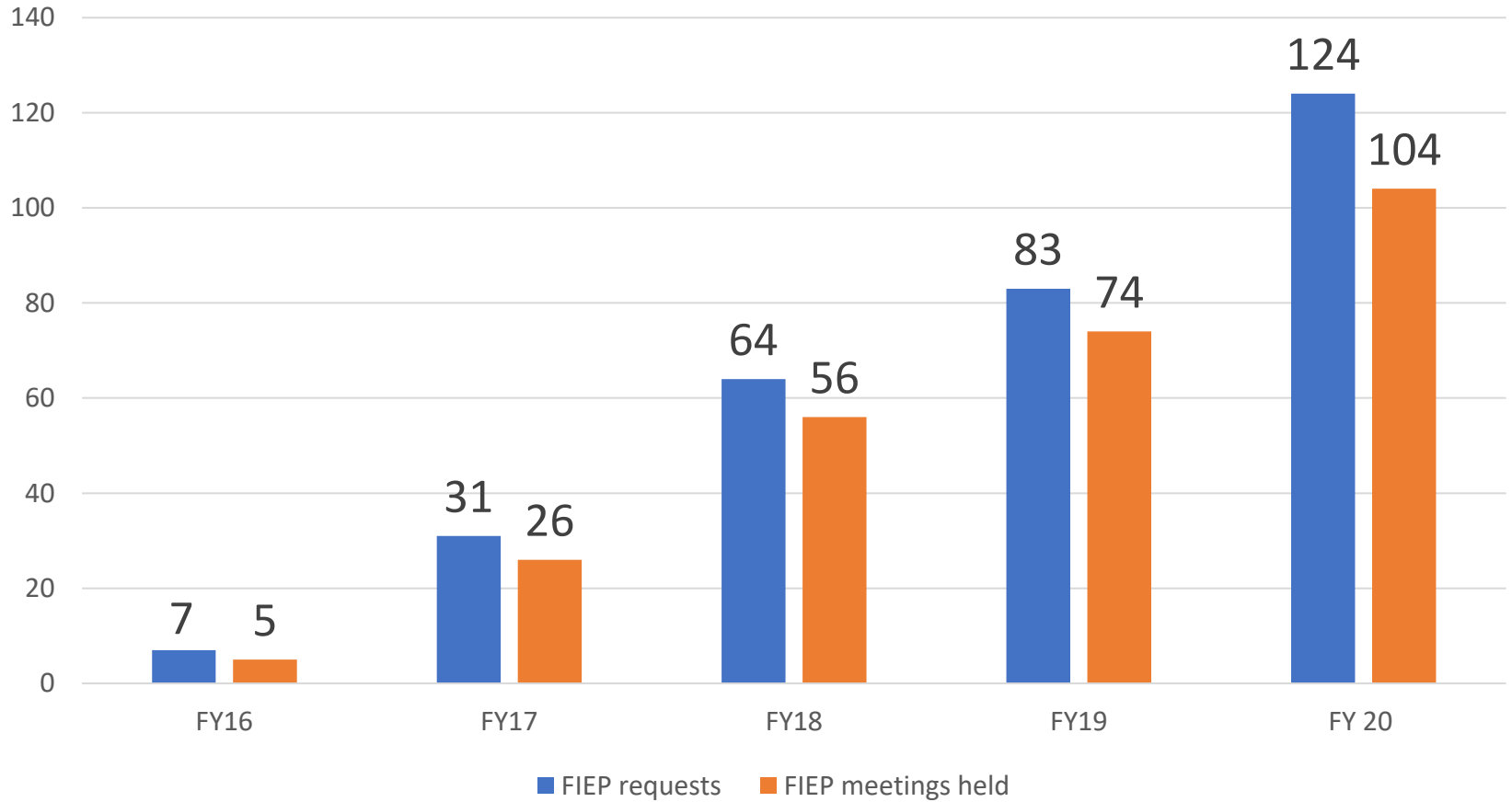
What are some benefits of using IEP Facilitation?

- The IEP Team may work together more effectively and efficiently to create an IEP that **benefits the student** and is **supported by all IEP Team members**.
- Keeps **decision-making with the IEP Team members** who know the student best.
- Helps resolve disagreements **more quickly** than other dispute resolution processes (and is **less costly** – free to parents and districts).

FIEP Team Meeting Project

- Began in March 2016 in four pilot districts (Bartow, Fulton, Greene, and Union).
- In August and October 2016, we added White and Turner.
- In May 2018, we added 17 more districts and in FY2019 we had 36 participating districts.
- **During the 2019-2020 school year and for the foreseeable future, FIEP Team meetings are available for all Georgia districts.**

FIEP Team Meeting Program



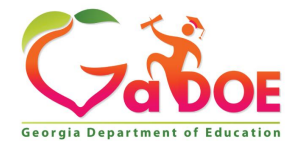
FIEP Team Meeting Program

FY 20 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)

- 124 FIEP requests
- 104 FIEP Team meetings held
- FIEP Team meetings held in 36 districts
- 514 participant surveys

FIEP Team Meeting Program

District	Requests FY20	Meetings held FY20
APS	1	1
Ben Hill	1	1
Bryan	1	1
Burke	1	1
Camden	8	6
Catoosa	1	1
Chatham	1	1
Cherokee	2	2
Clarke	1	0
Clayton	4	4
Cobb	21	16
Columbia	8	8
Coweta Charter	2	1



District	Requests FY20	Meetings Held FY20
Crisp	1	1
DeKalb	5	4
Dooly	1	1
Dougherty	1	1
Fayette	1	1
Forsyth	1	1
Fulton	16	12
Greene	3	3
Gwinnett	1	0
Habersham	1	0
Henry	4	4
Houston	6	6
Lanier	1	1
Laurens	1	1
Liberty	1	1
Lowndes	1	1

District	Requests FY20	Meetings Held FY20
McDuffie	3	2
Muscogee	1	1
Oconee	2	1
Paulding	6	6
Walton	2	2
White	1	1
Decatur City	6	6
Gainesville	2	1
Marietta City	1	1
Rome City	2	2
Trion	1	0

What does the FY2020 participant evaluation data show us?

- **91%** of participants indicated that they had an **appropriate level of input** in determining the content of the IEP.
- **93%** of participants indicated that they were an **equal partner** in determining the content of the IEP.
- **93%** of participants indicated that the IEP Facilitation provided **strategies for future IEP Team meetings**.
- **96%** of participants felt that the facilitator was **neutral and favored neither party**.

What does the FY2020 participant evaluation data show us?

- **86%** of participants indicated that the facilitator was **very helpful in facilitating discussion** to generate and consider options for resolving disputes.
- **93%** of participants indicated that the IEP facilitation **prevented the need for other dispute resolution process.**
- **86%** of participants indicated that they were **very satisfied with the outcome** of the IEP Facilitation.
- **95%** of participants indicated that they would **recommend IEP Facilitation to others.**

FIEP Process and Procedures

- Either the parent or the school district may initiate the request for a Facilitated IEP Team meeting.
- Parents or district personnel can access the FIEP Team meeting request form from the GaDOE's website.
- Complete and submit the FIEP Team meeting request form to the special education director in the district.
- Since both parties must agree, a parent and the special education director's signature must be on the FIEP Team meeting request form prior to submission to the GaDOE.

FIEP Process and Procedures

- The district will submit the signed FIEP Team meeting request form and a copy of a fully executed IEP Team meeting notice to the GaDOE at least 7-10 days prior to the meeting date.
 - *Please indicate whether the FIEP Team meeting was a request from the parent or the district.*
- The GaDOE will notify parties via email of whether their request has been approved or denied.
- If approved, the GaDOE will provide the parties with the name of the assigned facilitator and the facilitator will contact both parties before the meeting.

Examples of Facilitated IEP Team Meetings

- Annual Reviews
- Amendments
- Evaluations/Reevaluations
- Eligibility
- Initial IEPs
- Compensatory Services (COVID-19)
- Manifestation Determination Review
- Parent Concerns
- District Concerns

NOTE: Facilitators are available to facilitate face-to-face and virtual IEP Team meetings.

What to expect in an FIEP Team meeting

- At the FIEP Team meeting, parties will sign an Agreement to Facilitate form.
- The IEP Facilitator will help facilitate communication and problem solving among the parties using a visual record (chart paper) of:
 - Group norms
 - Agenda
 - Expected Outcomes
 - IEP-content (e.g. strengths & challenges, annual goals, placement, etc.)
 - Action Plan, if appropriate
- At the end of the meeting, parties will be asked to complete an evaluation form (paper or online).



Sample Agenda

- **Start Up**
 - Welcome, Purpose, Introductions/Roles, Desired Outcomes, Agenda overview, Parent rights, Decision making process, Group Norms
- **Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance**
 - Recent Evaluations, State/District Testing, **Strengths, Needs**, Parent Concerns, Impact of Disability, Consideration of Special Factors, Review of current goals and objectives, review of progress monitoring data
- **Goals and Objectives**
- **Placement/Services**
 - Transition Service Plan, Student Supports, Assessment Determination, Special education and related services, Explanation of extent, if any, not participating with peers without disabilities, Extended School Year (ESY)
- **Ending**

Ways to promote FIEPs in your district

- Make information regarding FIEPs available to **all stakeholders** (parents, administrators, and teachers/providers).
 - District and individual school websites
 - District and individual school newsletters
 - Social media
 - Parent Mentors and Parent Organizations
 - Community town hall meetings
 - School Board Meetings
 - Lunch and Learns
 - Staff meetings and professional development trainings
 - Flyers in welcome packages or with parent rights document

FIEP Resources from GaDOE at www.gadoe.org/IEP-Facilitation

- FIEP Request Form
- FIEP Parent Guide
- FIEP Promotional Flyers
- FIEP Policies Manual
- FIEP Video



Successful
IEP
Meetings

Additional information about FIEP Team meetings

- <http://www.gadoe.org/IEP-Facilitation> (GaDOE) (FIEP Request form and other documents are here)
- www.cadeworks.org (CADRE) (FIEP resources from multiple states)
- <https://vimeo.com/180313121/6545e683ec> (Illinois)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-bFi_zUuuA&feature=youtu.be (Florida)
- <http://www4.esc13.net/fiep/fiep-a-facilitated-iep-meeting> (Texas)

Questions



- For questions or additional information, please contact the following:

Special Education Help Desk

Family Engagement and Dispute Resolution Unit

Division of Special Education Services and Supports

SPEDHelpDesk@doe.k12.ga.us

404-657-9968

LaTanya Barkley Washington is the FIEP Coordinator

404-450-0945

LaTanya.Barkley@doe.k12.ga.us

Can you hit the “bullseye”?



- Can you explain the facilitator’s role in a Facilitated IEP (FIEP) Team Meeting?
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