

A Large District's Implementation of the FIEP Process: Differing Perspectives and Lessons Learned

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A Look at Broward County



- 6th Largest Public School System in the Nation
- 2nd Largest Public School System in Florida
- 1st Fully Accredited School System in Florida Since 1962
- 181 Different Languages Spoken by BCPS Students
- 236 Schools, Centers and Technical Colleges

Breakdown by Levels



Elementary	136
Middle	38
High	33
Combination	7
Centers	19
Colleges	<u>3</u>
Total	236
Charter Schools	<u>99</u>
Grand Total	335

Breakdown of Students by Level



Number of Schools

Pre-K	5,731
K-5	97,264
6-8	47,147
9-12	70,404
Centers	5,194
Charter Schools	45,365
Total	<hr/> 271,105

Ethnic Diversity of Students



- White 51.2% 138,954
- Black 40.3% 109,427
- Asian 3.8% 10,169 0.9% 2,383 0.2% 523
- Multiracial 3.6% 9,649 32.9% 89,073
67.1% 182,032

Facilitated Individual Education Planning (FIEP) Process

Facilitated IEP is a student-focused process in which a trained facilitator assists a collaborative team in the building understanding, agreement, and shared responsibility that results in a quality IEP and successful student outcomes.

What It Is and What It Isn't

What FIEP is:

- A Collaborative process
- Strengthens relationships among team members
- Helps members reach a true consensus
- Student focused

FIEP is not:

- Driven by what one member wants
- An uneven power structure of participants

Current Research Regarding FIEP Implementation

Mueller & Wagner (2017) Survey Results

- 55% of participants in K2ED training strongly agreed that they felt positive and prepared to facilitate IEP meetings with conflict
- 99% of respondents see value in the FIEP process for conflict resolution
- 70% of respondents agreed that after taking the K2ED training relationships have improved among IEP team members

Building Parent Trust in the Special Education Setting

Understanding the factors that escalate conflict crucial:

- Trust in building relationships - Trust is born in strong relationships so first encounters are critical
- Trust in interpersonal relationships – Effective communication is at the heart of building trust
- Trust in problem solving – exploring team members differences of opinion provide a sense of inclusiveness in the decision-making process

Weiner, L. (2012). *Leadership*

More Research

- Preparation, planning and collaboration are key to successful parent participation
- The IEP meeting should not be just information sharing but should include an exchange of ideas, open communication and shared decision-making
- Research has shown that parent perceptions and experiences with the IEP process and IEP team meetings are often less than ideal



Why BCPS Decided to Use the FIEP Process

- Florida was identified as a highly litigious state by the federal government
- FLDOE identified FIEP process as an effective solution for districts
- Broward County was identified as a district that may benefit from this process
- Broward was also looking for a way to increase parent participation that was appropriately documented and meaningful

Implementing FIEP Process

A large school district's plan to ensure district-wide success

FLDOE Endorsement

- Florida Department of Education strongly endorses and encourages the use of FIEP
- Roll out process
 - March 2013: FLDOE endorses FIEP
 - June 2015: FLDOE Train-the-Trainer



The 3 Year Implementation Plan SY2013/14 -2015/16

1st Year: FLDOE held training and Broward staff attended (2013)

Key2ED came and trained for 3 days for Select District Staff (March 2014)

2nd Year: Key2ED trained all ESE Specialists (Fall 2014)

Parent FIEP Awareness Training (September 2014)

Principal Training (March 2015)

Follow-up training for all (March 2015)

FLDOE Train-the-Trainer (June 2015)

The 3 Year Implementation Plan SY2013/14 -2015/16

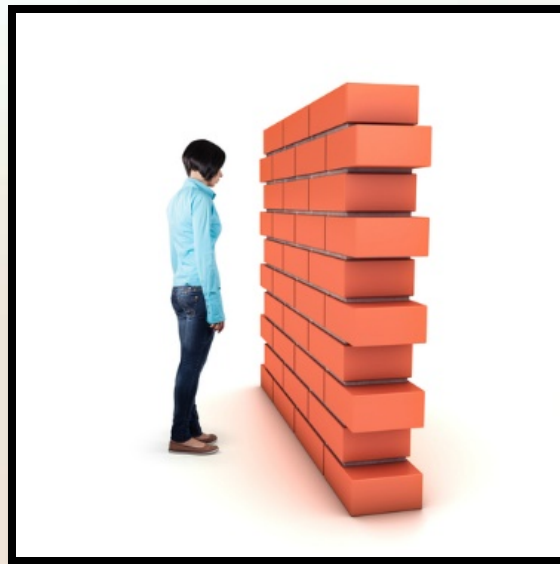
3rd Year: BCPS trainers (November 2015)

Ongoing training for staff



Some Surprising and Not So Surprising Barriers to Implementation

- Resistance from ESE specialists
- Resistance from some parents



Strategic Plan to Train All Stakeholders

Who are the Stakeholders?

- Site-based LEAs
- Site-based Administration
- District-based Cadre Directors
- Parents, Advocates and Attorneys
- General Education Teachers/ESE Service Providers



Local Education Agency Representatives

- ESE Specialist assigned to every school
 - Benefits of site-based ESE Specialists
 - Barriers of site based ESE Specialists

Training All ESE Specialists

- Initial FIEP Training required for all ESE Specialists
- Follow-up Training in implementation of FIEP in schools
- On-site Coaching and Mentoring
- FIEP Tips at Monthly ESE Specialist Meetings



Initial FIEP Training Required for All ESE Specialists

- **Mandatory Two-Day Training for all**
 - Memo from Executive Leadership Team
 - Tracked participants
 - Follow-up assignments to ensure implementation
 - Provided in-service points
- **Follow-up FIEP Half-Day Training**
 - Required for initial 6 Cohorts trained
 - Discontinued in 2015

Ongoing Training and Support in FIEP

- **FLDOE Train the Trainer for District Staff**
 - Higher level of understanding of the FIEP Process
 - Increased ability to provide ongoing trainings
- **Coaching and Mentoring in FIEP**
 - 2015-2016 Added ESE Specialist Field Coaches
 - 2016-2017 Implemented FIEP Coaching
 - ESE Specialist implementing FIEP
 - ESE Specialist Field Coach implementing FIEP

Facilitated IEP Feedback Form

Facilitator: _____

Completed by: _____

School: _____

Date: _____

	Not used (1)	Used but ineffective (2)	Used effectively (3)	Used effectively at every opportunity (4)	NA	Comments
Physical Elements						
Agenda Outcomes Ground Rules Parking Lot						
Strategies						
Check for agreement strengths and challenges take proposals positives and negatives negative poll accept/legitimize						

Total score _____

Site-based Administration

- Required Training for all school-based Administrators March 2014

Site-based Administration

- Linking FIEP to Evaluation of the ESE Specialist (LEA Rep)
 - Provided examples of what to look for
 - Provided examples of how to assess implementation

[Link to Marzano](#)

- Using Ground Rules
 - DQ6: Establishing Rules and Procedures
 - 4: Establishing Classroom Routines
 - DQ 10: Promoting a Positive Environment
 - 56: Promoting Positive Interactions about participants and parents

Link to Marzano

- Using an Agenda
 - DQ2: Helping participants interact with new knowledge:
 - 6: Identifying critical content
 - 8: Previewing new content
 - 9: Chunking content into “Digestible Bites”

Link to Marzano

- Strengths and Challenges Chart
 - DQ2: Helping participants interact with new knowledge
 - 12: Helping participants record and represent knowledge
 - DQ5: Engaging participants
 - 26: Managing response rates
 - 31: Providing opportunities for participants to talk about themselves

Cadre Directors

- Role is to supervise/support site-based administrators
- Assist in ensuring that FIEP is being used in schools

Parents, Advocates and Attorneys

- Provided two, half-day overview trainings
- All stakeholders need to be valued and heard – MUST understand the purpose of the process
- Introduction to FIEP at Parent Advisory Meeting



Perspectives from Implementers of the FIEP Process

Practically.....how can I possibly do this?

Required Elements (Initial Phase)

- Ground Rules
- Agendas
- Outcomes
- Parking Lots

Ground Rules for the IEP Meeting

- Communicate clearly and listen carefully
- Respect the views of others
- Share your views willingly
- Ask and welcome questions for clarification
- Be open to the ideas and views presented
- Honor time limits and stay on task

AGENDA
Initial Eligibility/Ineligibility

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Purpose of meeting
3. Explanation of Procedural Safeguards
4. Review evaluation information
5. Determine eligibility for Exceptional Student Education Services (ESE)


*****NOTE: If the student is determined to be ineligible, the process stops here.*****

AGENDA
Initial Individual Education Plan

1. Develop Individual Education Plan (IEP)
2. Determine implementation of the IEP in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
3. Discuss pertinent information, questions and concerns
4. Adjourn meeting


Desired Meeting Outcomes

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Broward County  Public Schools

Parking Lot

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Broward County  Public Schools

Understanding of FIEP for IEP Participants

- Created a Brainshark Training for all meeting participants regarding the process
 - Shared Responsibility
 - Agendas
 - Outcomes
 - Ground Rules

Challenges to Implementation

- Volume of Meetings
- Balancing Electronic IEP System vs FIEP Charting
- Mastering the skills through gradual implementation
- Turn-over of staff



Rewards to Implementation

- New ESE Specialists don't know how to run a meeting – learn to use FIEP process from the beginning
- Provides a consistent structure
- Shared responsibility



Feedback from Parents

- Survey data following a FIEP Meeting
- Discussions with advocates about FIEP Meetings

Coaching in the Field

- Individual assistance:
 - Initial Training
 - Follow-up Activities
 - Support when planning for an upcoming meeting



Practice, Practice, Practice...Barriers to success?

- ESE Specialist Coaches/Program Specialists were not implementers
- Schools were not using FIEP
- How can we address?
 - Coaching and Mentoring through modeling and observation
 - Target schools selected
 - Monthly IEP meetings were conducted using FIEP
 - District Staff facilitated and ESE Specialist provided feedback via rubric
 - ESE Specialist facilitated and District Staff provided feedback via rubric

Perspective from a Legal Representative

Why FIEP from a Legal Perspective?

Failure to provide parental participation is a trend in the current case law



Benefits of FIEP in a Due Process Hearing

- FIEP creates a group memory
- Assists in providing clear facts for the Administrative Law Judge
- Ensures that all steps in the process are covered by the IEP team

Broward Case #1: No Evidence of FIEP Implementation

- Parent filed claiming that an IEP meeting was held without her participation as well as a denial of FAPE
- ESE Specialist was interviewed
- Other participants were interviewed

Outcome of Case #1

- Administrative Law Judge Ruled in favor of the Petitioner (student/Parent)

Broward Case #2

- There have been 5 filings by this family/attorney
- Student is eligible under Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Extreme behavioral issues
- Student was in Kindergarten when issues emerged and issues continued until the student left the public school system the end of 2nd grade

Due Process Hearing Broward Case #1 - 2015

- Parents filed in May 2015 disagreeing with the eligibility determination and placement proposed by the IEP team in a series of IEP meetings held February, April and May 2015

Due Process Hearing

Broward Case #2 – 2016-2017

- Parents filed in January and February of 2016 with numerous claims to include the following:
 - Failure to allow parents to participate
 - Predetermination of services and placement
 - Failure to discuss IEP as a team

Outcome of Case #2 – 2016-2017

- Administrative Law Judge issued an Order in favor of the School Board

Outcomes of the FIEP Process on Broward County Public Schools

- Ensures that the required elements of the IEP process are followed
- Creates solid testimony of all participants
- Ensures clear testimony
- Reduces complaints regarding failure to allow parental participation

Perspective from a District Administrator

Cost/Benefit Analysis

Cost:

- The upfront costs for Broward were very large – training and materials
- ESE Specialists had large caseloads and the FIEP meeting takes more time until the facilitator becomes proficient



Cost/Benefit Analysis

Benefit:

- The uptick on costly due process cases may be reduced
- FIEP reduces human error, builds rapport, and overall improves parents perceptions of the IEP process and increases their meaningful participation

Moving Forward and Beyond

- Strategies for success
 - Targeted assistance to schools
 - Addition of ESE Field Coaches for mentoring
 - Ongoing PD for district staff
 - Ongoing education of parents



Thank You

QUESTIONS?



References

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