

Facilitated IEP (FIEP) Programs at a Glance

2016-2017

Demographics/Context						FIEP Program			
State	Geography/ Demographics	Child Count	Mediation Requests	Written State Complaints Filed	Due Process Complaints Filed	# of Districts Participating or Statewide	# of Facilitators	# of Facilitation Requests	# of Facilitations Held
Georgia	Primarily urban with some rural areas	209,994 (ages 3-21) of 1,764,346 total students	115	125	132	19 (Year 2)	17	31	26
Missouri	Primarily rural with a large number of metropolitan or micropolitan centers	115,863 of 884,029 total students	24	53	61	Statewide	7	39	35
New Jersey	Primarily suburban, urban and some rural areas	232,404 (ages 3-21) of 1,372,982 total students (2015-16)	898 (2015-16)	286 (2015-16)	1234 (2015-16)	4	5	10	10
West Virginia	Primarily rural (Appalachia)	44,286 of 273,170 total students	22	25	25	Statewide (Year 2)	20	20	13

This document highlights four of the seven states that participated in CADRE's second Intensive FIEP Workgroup which began in the fall of 2014. All states (AR, FL, GA, MO, NJ, NY, and WV) made significant progress in their FIEP program development and implementation.

Georgia

In Georgia, IEP team meeting facilitation is a collaborative dispute prevention and resolution process to be used when members of an IEP team agree that the presence of a third party would help facilitate communication and problem solving. Georgia expanded its pilot program from 4 to 19 school districts, including 2 metro districts in early 2017. Georgia has 17 trained facilitators who have conducted a total of 30 facilitated IEP team meetings since the inception of the IEP Facilitation project in March 2016. Out of the 31 facilitated IEP team meetings held, 30 meetings resulted in the IEP teams reaching consensus on some to all issues. Based on the 156 completed participant evaluations, 85% of participants were very satisfied with the outcome of the facilitated IEP team meetings, and 80% of participants indicated that the IEP facilitation process prevented the need for other means of resolving disputes related to the IEP (e.g., mediation, formal written complaint, due process hearing). The overwhelming majority of all participants (98%) reported that they would recommend the IEP facilitation process to others.

Missouri

Missouri uses IEP facilitation as one of the informal options to prevent disagreements within the IEP process. When the relationship between parents and school personnel becomes strained or better yet, before the relationship has the opportunity to fray, parents and school personnel use neutral facilitators to assist the IEP team process. Skilled and trained facilitators use advanced communication techniques and innovative strategies to assist the IEP team to reach a consensus that focuses on the needs of the student. Following a successful pilot during the 2015-2016 school year with 6 districts and 4 facilitators, full statewide implementation was enacted in the 2016-2017 school year, utilizing 7 facilitators in 29 different school districts, holding 35 FIEPs. 97% of the facilitated IEPs reached a partial or full agreement. Internal and external stakeholder input proved invaluable as guidance and support through all phases of implementation was provided. The second year of state wide implementation will focus on expansion of marketing strategies and utilizing a data based evaluation tool to assure consistency of the FIEP process.

New Jersey

New Jersey promotes IEP facilitation as a proactive measure to prevent the need for more formal dispute resolution options (i.e., mediation, due process hearing, complaint investigation) resulting from ineffective IEP meetings. Trained, contracted, neutral facilitators assist in the IEP meeting process, employing communication techniques, and problem-solving strategies to assist the IEP team to reach consensus, focusing on the needs of the student. Following a successful, although underutilized pilot during the 2016-2017 school year, with only 10 Facilitated IEP (FIEP) meetings held, statewide implementation has been enacted for the 2017-2018 school year.

West Virginia

In West Virginia, the facilitated IEP team meeting is a voluntary early dispute prevention option, utilizing an impartial facilitator to guide the IEP process and assist team members in communicating effectively and remaining student-focused. Facilitation helps the team build and improve relationships that will enable completion of tasks, clarify points of agreement and disagreement, encourage new options for problems, reduce stress, establish roles and responsibilities for follow-up actions, and ultimately provide opportunities to resolve conflicts before they develop into more serious disputes. Statewide implementation of IEP facilitation began at the opening of the 2015-2016 school year. Use of the process has increased since the conclusion of the second year of implementation. Continuous improvement of the FIEP program will hopefully lead to widespread use of the process and a decrease in other more contentious dispute resolution cases that have negative impacts on all parties.