3 Case Studies and a School Culture Change, Not 4 Weddings and a Funeral: Illustrating the Power of Facilitation to Build and Maintain Parent-School Relationships

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JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT STRUGGLING WITH ACADEMICS

IEP Meeting held during the Spring of 7th grade (2017) Wm. S. Hart District

- Parent unhappy with placement offer

Fall 2017 IEP using the Facilitation Process

- Parent brings advocate
- Team unable to reach consensus

2nd Fall IEP using traditional IEP process - Team unable to reach consensus

Spring 2018 IEP using Facilitation Process.....
Keys For Success

- Provide parents with a copy of any assessment reports prior to the meeting, and if possible, contact parents to review results and answer questions.
- Make sure that all attendees are aware of any “hot” issues prior to the meeting.
- Provide information to all attendees about issues that parent might have about non-IEP discussions, such as school elective schedules or transportation pick up times, and provide strategies to help get the discussion back on track.
- Frame points of disagreement with, “I’m concerned about…”
- Re-think your comfort level with the way you have always run an IEP.
CASE STUDY - PALMDALE HIGH SCHOOL
Antelope Valley Union High School District
Transition IEP

Student X: Incoming 9th grader to Palmdale High School.

Mr. and Mrs. X: New parents to Palmdale High School. Brings with them a history of negative IEP meetings at middle school level. Very distrustful. Verbally aggressive. Easily Excitable and Volatile. Very unhappy with current situation in ESS English 9 class.

“So, you think you’re going to run this meeting??” - Mrs. X
KEEP CALM AND TRUST THE PROCESS

- COLLABORATION MEETINGS
- CHECK YOUR ATTITUDE
- DON’T SKIP THE MEETING NORMS

- REFER TO THE MEETING NORMS
- SMALL AGREEMENTS LEAD TO BIG PROGRESS
- BE FLEXIBLE

Who are we?

- 60 Miles northeast of Los Angeles
- 15,000+ Students
- Preschool through 8th Grade
- 86% of families live in poverty
- Highest concentration students in foster care in all of California (as of 2017)
CASE STUDY:

- Kindergarten student transferring from out of district
- Per IEP, identified as a student with Autism
- Services, per IEP:
  - Pull-out Resource
  - Pull-out Speech and Language Services
30-Day IEP

- Student’s academic skills above his peers
- No social skills deficits noted
- No pragmatic, speech, or language deficits noted
- School staff had no educational concerns
- Recommendation for collaborative services proposed
Parent DISAGREED with Proposed Services and filed for Due Process
What happened next....

- Mediation
  - Full psycho-educational evaluation

- During the mediation process, another pending settlement agreement from previous district was disclosed
**Keys for FIEP Success:**

- Planning meeting with school team: Psych, Speech Path, General Ed Teacher, RSP Teacher, Admin, and IEP Facilitators

- Assessment reports provided to parent prior to meeting
Keys for FIEP Success:

- Follow the Agenda
  - Posted
  - Guidelines
  - Desired Outcomes

- Define Roles

- Build Agreements
KEYS FOR FIEP SUCCESS:

- Strengths and Challenges
  - Assessment Results
  - Teacher Observations
  - Parent Observations
  - Everyone Participates
IEP Meeting Outcomes:

- IEP agreed upon and signed
- Positive feedback from school team
- Positive feedback from both attorneys
Teacher’s Comments Regarding: Facilitated I.E.P.’s

- Facilitated ones are better. In the past they went on forever.
- More organized. Every I.E.P. now has an agenda that a facilitator is ensuring is followed and ensures everything is covered.
- Everyone’s voice is guaranteed to be heard.
- Parents have felt that this format has helped them be more involved in the process and creates positive relationships between school and parents.
- They now stay on topic and finish in a timely manner. This is a good thing :)!
- Increased focus of the group, less sidebar discussion and a streamlined approach to discussion.
Castaic Middle School - Bob Brauneisen, Principal

Castaic Middle School is located in the northwest corner of Los Angeles County within the Santa Clarita Valley

- 578 Students in 7th and 8th grades
- 42.4% White
- 42% Hispanic
- 6.2% English Learners
- 26.8% Socioeconomically Disadvantaged
- 11.1% Students with Disabilities
Pre-Facilitated I.E.P. Culture

- Lack of individual purpose, focus
- Final destination is known, but everyone is taking a different path (with multiple agendas) to get there
- Minimal teacher buy in to attend, with Zombie-like participation
- Hijacking of meetings by participants (i.e. parent stories, Parent-Teacher Conference, reading reports . . .)
- Long drawn out meetings “I’d like to chew my arm off to get out of the I.E.P.”
Key Components of Facilitated I.E.P

- **Preparation**
  - Prepare for the unexpected, good flow of information
  - Clear Expectations of all participants - PPT with Staff every year
- **Front Loading**
  - Initial and Tri: case manager shares test results 3-5 days prior to I.E.P
  - Case manager meets with parent(s) 15 minutes prior to the start of the I.E.P. to go over bookkeeping items as well as to answer any questions
- **Constant Routine**
  - Create your routine and fine tune it as the process evolves. Routine slightly different between an annual, tri-annual and initial.
Castaic Middle School I.E.P. Meeting Room

3 old goals
1. Math - met
1. ELA - met
1. Prevoc - met

3 new goals
1. Math
1. ELA
1. Prevoc

Strengths:
- Self-advocating
- LS
- Sports: football/basketball
- Memory (when paying attention)
- Not behavior problem
- Permanence

Challenges:
- Attention
- Multi-step directions
- Pacing
- Slow writing
- Comprehension
Post-Facilitated I.E.P Culture

- Customer Centered
- Streamlined - Shorter-focused meetings
- Respectful of participants time
- Teacher willingness to attend I.E.P. meetings
- Meaningful participant input focused on positives first
- Purposeful and Transparent (with less issues)
- Quality Assurance - Regardless of case manager or style of presentation, all pertinent points are met