



# State-Sponsored IEP Facilitation

## Preventing Conflict

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# fa·cil·i·ta·tion, “fəˌsiləˈtāSH(ə)n/”

- Definition: “To make easier” or “Ease a process”
- Individualized Education Program (IEP) facilitation is a conflict prevention tool offered to districts and parents of students with disabilities to assist the IEP team in a collaborative manner and guide the decision making process.



# What is a Facilitator?



# IEP Facilitation Multistate Workgroup

- Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE) is the primary national resource for information and expertise in special education dispute resolution and has a reputation for timely delivery of useful, relevant, high quality products and services.
  - <http://www.cadeworks.org/about-us>
  - *Surveyed state educational agencies (SEAs).*
  - *Convened a multistate workgroup, using a peer-to-peer approach, to help states maximize their investments in IEP facilitation.*
    - Selected Illinois and 4 other states to participate.
    - First workgroup via teleconference - December 2011.
    - Between meetings, CADRE worked individually with each state.

# CADRE Continuum

CADRE Continuum of Dispute Resolution Processes & Practices																		
Stages of Conflict	Stage I			Stage II			Stage III			Stage IV			Stage V					
Levels of Intervention	Prevention			Disagreement			Conflict			Procedural Safeguards			Legal Review					
Assistance/ Intervention Options	Parent Engagement	Participant & Stakeholder Training	Stakeholder Council	Collaborative Rule Making	Parent to Parent Assistance	Case Manager	Telephone Intermediary	Facilitation	Mediation Models	Ombudsperson	Third-Party Opinion/Consultation	Resolution Meeting	Mediation under IDEA	Written State Complaints	Due Process Hearing	Hearing Appeal (Two-Tier Systems)	Litigation	Legislation
	Dimensions that help clarify placement of the options along the Continuum	Third-Party Assistance						Third-Party Intervention										
		Decision Making by Parties						Decision Making by Third-Party										
		Interest-Based						Rights-Based										
		Informal & Flexible						Formal & Fixed										

# Logic Model for IEP Facilitation

January 2012-June 2016

Inputs	Activities	Outputs Participation	Short	Outcomes Medium	Long
<p>IDEA State Discretionary Funding</p> <p>ISBE Management, Dispute Resolution staff and other select ISBE staff</p> <p>Other individuals with expertise &amp; experience, including advisory stakeholder committee</p> <p>Other states and external contacts</p> <p>CADRE and other national support and expertise</p>	<p>Analyze other states' data on IEP Facilitation</p> <p>Finalize initial plan with internal ISBE staff to include definitions, implementation plan, expected outcomes and survey tool, etc.</p> <p>Conduct webinars and/or in-person meetings with advisory stakeholder committee to review and provide feedback for FIEP project</p> <p>Develop outreach materials that reach a large audience including website</p> <p>Establish pilot FIEP project:            Select districts            Recruit &amp; select facilitators            Train facilitators, districts and parents            Implement FIEP project</p> <p>Evaluate pilot project and revise as necessary</p> <p>Implement statewide FIEP system</p>	<p>Assigned state staff</p> <p>CADRE</p> <p>Advisory stakeholder committee</p> <p>Facilitators</p> <p>Selected district staff</p> <p>Parents</p>	<p>Analysis of other states' data provided a starting point in developing the FIEP plan</p> <p>Stakeholder input assisted in finalizing the details of the FIEP implementation project</p> <p>Website, that includes outreach materials, has increased amount of hits on the site</p> <p>Facilitators, district staff and parents report satisfaction with trainings</p> <p>Agreements established with selected districts for FIEP project participation</p> <p>IEP facilitators were requested in pilot districts</p> <p>Participants report satisfaction with FIEP process</p>	<p>FIEP project was expanded based upon other interested school districts and parents resulting in additional district agreements</p> <p>IEP facilitators reported expanded skill set based on technical assistance and training</p> <p>Participants report continued satisfaction with the FIEP process and IEPs</p>	<p>Statewide FIEP model implemented</p> <p>Improved IEP facilitation skills for district staff, parents, etc.</p> <p>Increased use of IEP facilitation in lieu of more formal dispute resolution processes</p> <p>Increased communication between parents and districts</p>



# External Stakeholder Committee

## **Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs)**

- Debbie Einhorn, Family Matters
- Michelle Phillips, Family Resource Center on Disabilities

## **Parent and Educator Partnership (PEP)**

- Judy Ruffulo and Sarah Phillips

## **Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC) - Susy Woods**

## **Illinois Federation of Teachers - David Hernandez**

## **Illinois Education Association – Ceci Maloney**

## **Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education (IAASE)**

- Michael Padavic

## **Illinois School Psychologists Association (ISPA) – Dr. Madi Phillips**

## **Illinois Principals Association (IPA) – Brian Schwartz**

# Promotional flyer



Illinois State Board of Education

## Facilitated IEP System

Promoting productive child-centered IEP meetings that are conducted in a respectful and collaborative manner.

DRAFT  
Pilot Phase



### Facilitated IEP System Overview

#### Facilitated IEP Process

Facilitated IEP is a process that helps foster effective communication between parents and districts as they develop a mutually acceptable IEP. This process may be used as a preventative measure in which a trained facilitator promotes whole team participation, acknowledging and addressing differing opinions in a respectful and impartial manner. Facilitated IEP enhances partnerships between school districts and parents in order to effectively plan services to meet the student needs.

#### Why Facilitated IEP?

Some Illinois school districts and families experience conflicts in which their disputes are too often resolved through extremely costly and adversarial ways. Successful facilitated IEP meetings not only save time and money but also have the potential to improve the relational dynamics and reduce the negative emotional impact on all team members caused by conflict resolution procedures (e.g., complaints, due process hearings).

#### How does FIEP compare to Mediation?

#### Facilitator's Role

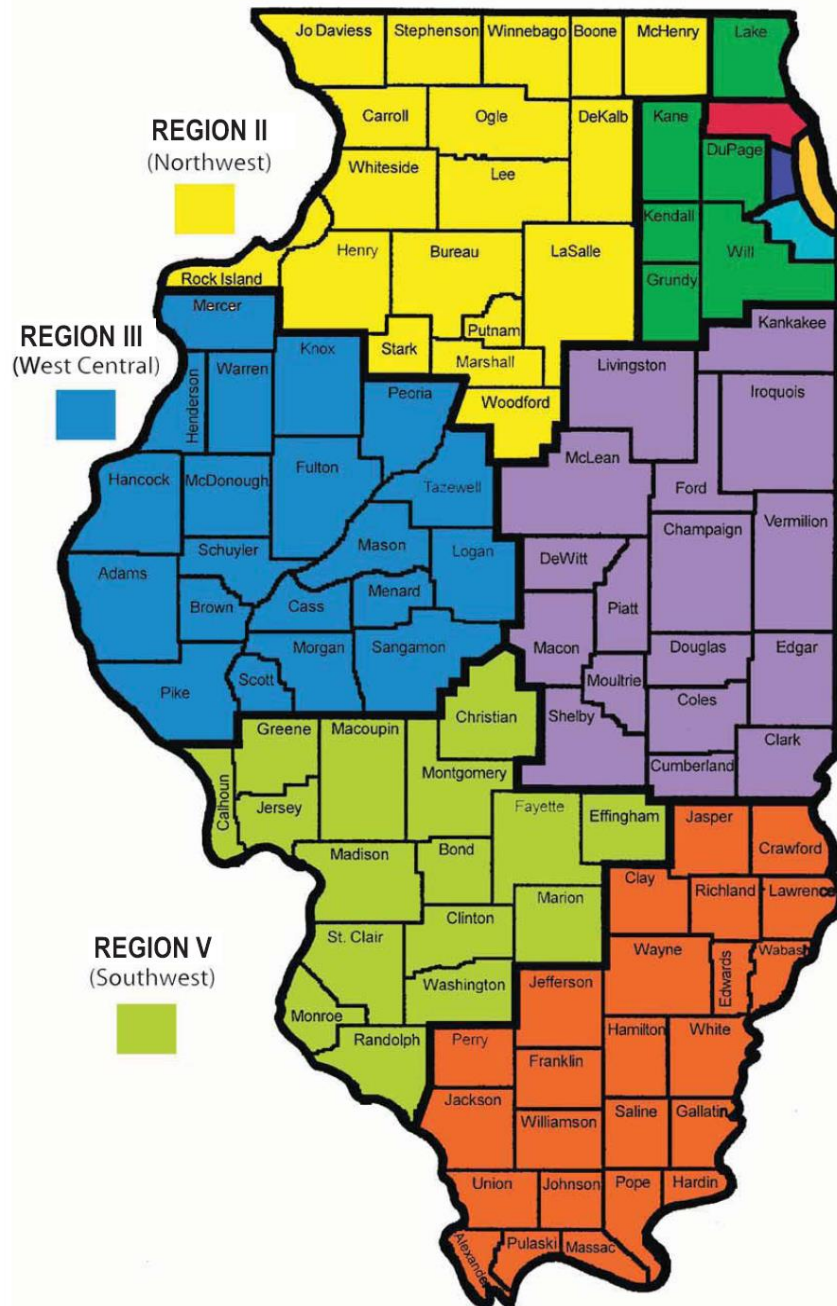
A facilitator focuses on the process of the meeting and supporting all parties' full participation. The facilitator is impartial and not a member of the IEP team or an advocate for any person on the team. The facilitator does not impose a decision on the group. The facilitator models effective communication, keeps team members on task, clarifies points of agreement and disagreement, and provides team members opportunities to consider alternative solutions.

#### ISBE's FIEP System





ISBE is committed to maximizing district level capacity to develop child-centered IEPs and minimize state level interventions which result from ineffective IEP meetings. Goals and anticipated outcomes of ISBE's IEP Facilitation System includes:

- A Statewide FIEP model will be utilized across the state.
- District personnel and parents will be able to communicate effectively during the development of the IEP.
- The use of IEP facilitation will increase in lieu of more formal dispute resolution processes.






### Cook County

-  REGION I-A (Chicago)
-  REGION I-B-B (West Cook)
-  REGION I-B-C (South Cook)
-  REGION I-B-D (North Cook)
-  REGION I-C (Northeast)

REGION IV (East Central) 

REGION VI (Southeast) 

# What is IEP Facilitation?

## **Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Facilitation**

- A collaborative team; and
- Decision making managed through the use of facilitation skills.

## **This process of facilitation for IEP meetings enables the team to:**

- Build and improve strong relationships;
- Reach consensus;
- Focus the IEP content and process on the needs of the student; and
- Exercise effective communication and reflective listening.

# Why IEP Facilitation?

- Implement a statewide IEP facilitation system to provide a model, for district staff and parents, to improve facilitation skills and positive communication to ultimately develop and finalize an IEP.



- To increase collaboration and decrease adversarial attitudes; resulting in a decrease for the need of conflict resolution venues.
- Promoting positive communication, mutual understanding and respect.
- Determining commonalities and developing solutions for IEP consensus.

# The Role of the Facilitator

- Prepared
  - *Contacts both parties prior to the IEP meeting*
  - *Reviews data*
  - *Creates an Agenda & Group Norms*
- Neutral
  - *Remains objective and does not make decisions for group*
  - *Not a member of the IEP Team nor advocate for anyone*
  - *Keeps team members on task and student-focused*
- Respectful
  - *Speak in a normal tone of voice, and listen attentively.*
- Problem solver
  - *Clarifies points of agreement and disagreement*
  - *Provides team members opportunities to consider alternative options*

# Our 1st IEP Facilitators





# The Roles of IEP Meeting Participants

- **Parent:** Be the child's voice
- **Special Education Teacher:** Provide data
- **General Education Teacher:** Discuss curriculum
- **LEA Representative:** Commit local resources
- **Related Service Providers:** Share data
- **Other Team Members:** Assist in decision-making

# Pre-Meeting Preparation

- ❑ Contact parent and district representative individually by telephone.
- ❑ The phone calls are aimed at explaining roles, what to expect at the IEP meeting and how to prepare.
- ❑ The facilitator may request the district email a copy of the current IEP or draft IEP, if needed.
- ❑ The facilitator develops the agenda, outcomes and group norms and may send this information to both parties via e-mail, if needed.
- ❑ Chart paper, markers, painter's tape and name cards.

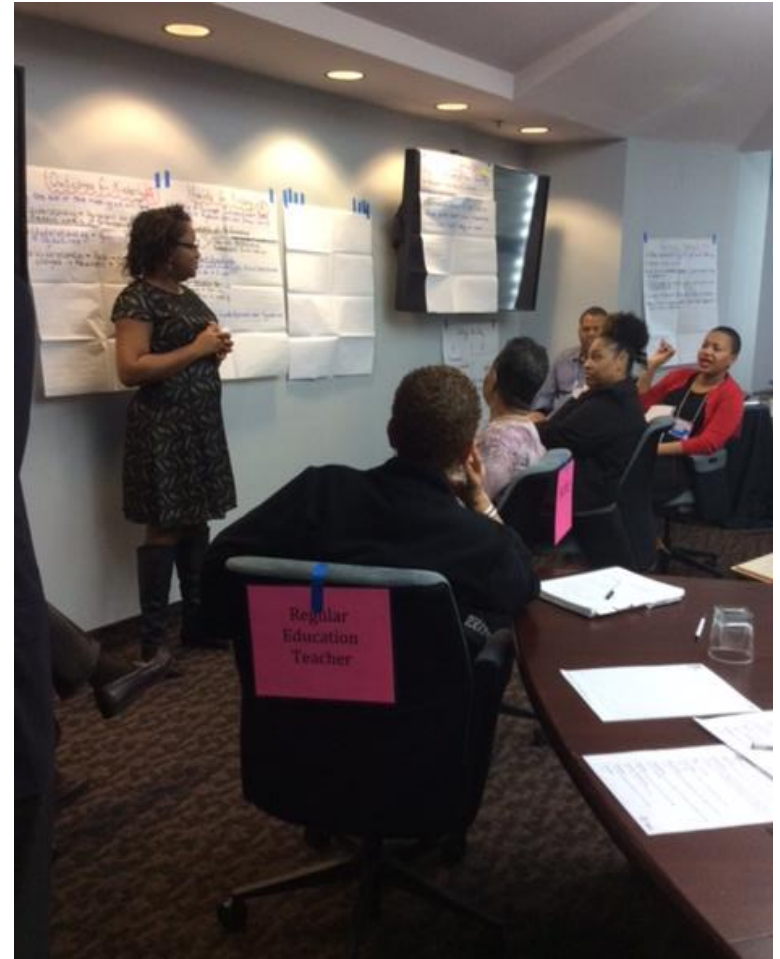
# On-site Meeting

- Brings materials to IEP meeting site.
- May make adjustments to room arrangement.
- Welcomes and assists IEP members, as needed, in explaining their roles.
- Facilitates meeting using visual charting.
- Facilitators are neutral, district remains responsible for discussing issues and writing IEP.
- Charts are destroyed upon completion of the IEP meeting.
- Plus/Deltas – what worked, what didn't.

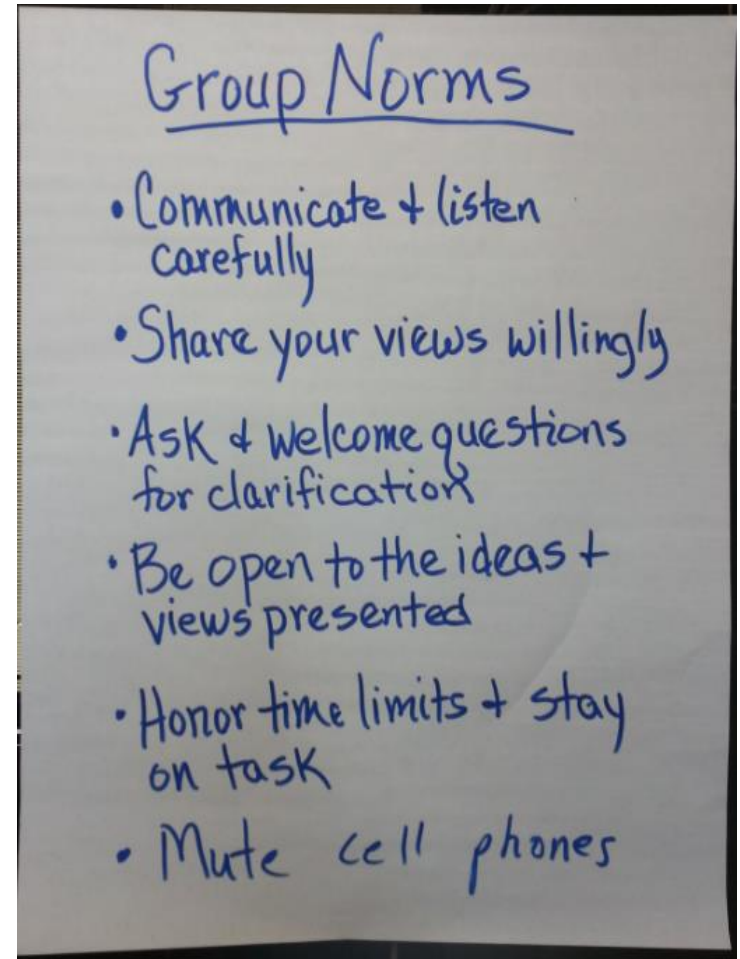
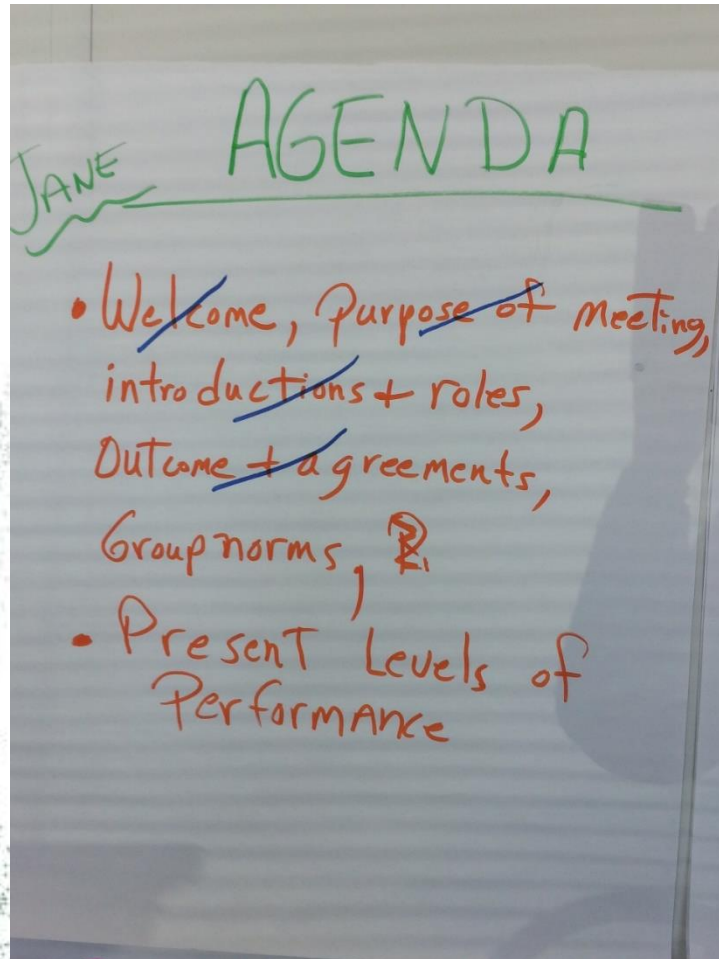


# Visual Tools in IEP Facilitation

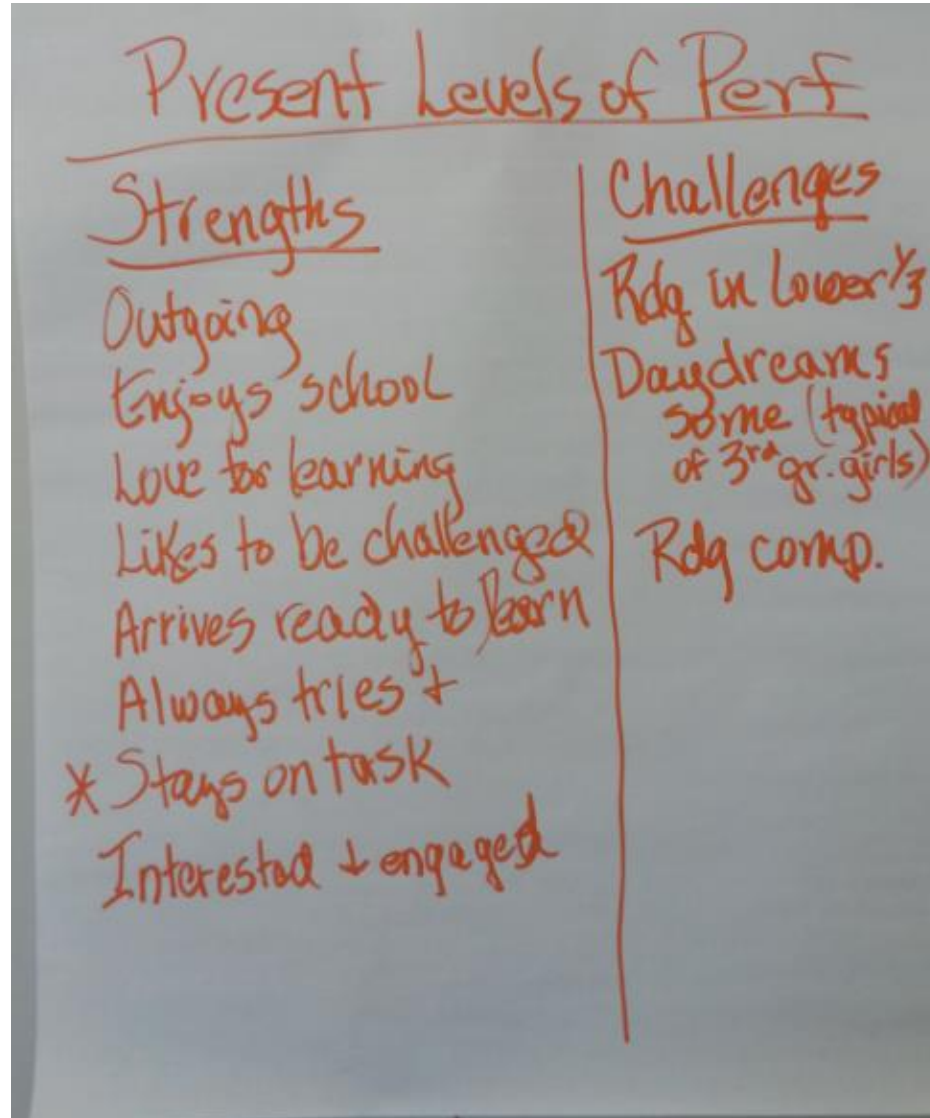
- Agenda
- Group Norms
- Outcomes
- Group Memory
- Parking Lot



# Guiding the Process



# Strengths and Challenges:

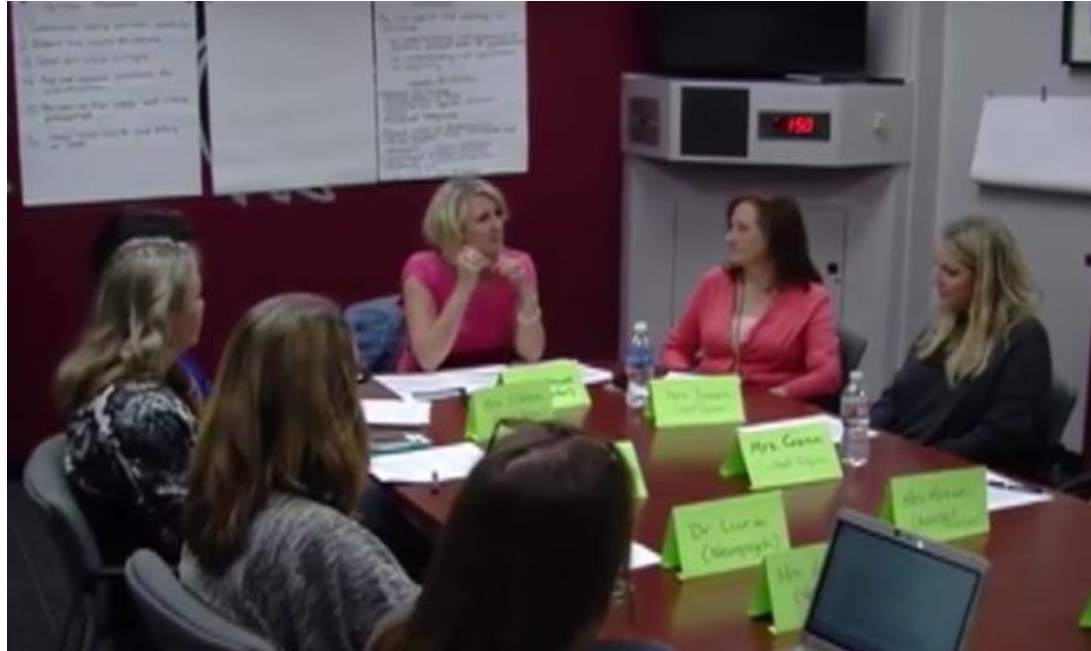


# Brainstorming Goals & Objectives

## Goals + Objectives

- Reading fluency + comprehension
- Site word lists
- Be able to function a more similarly to ~~typical~~ 3rd grade
- Understanding + use of vocab words in different contexts

# Conflict Escalation Indicators



- Nonverbal Cues
- Verbal Cues
- Para Verbal Cues

## Keep the Meeting Flowing and Positive

- *Stay on-task and on time*
- *Watch for and close any side bar conversations*
- *Pay attention to group behaviors*
- *Deal with unproductive behavior*
- *Stimulate productive inquiry*



# Recording Decisions



# The Benefits of IEP Facilitation are:

- The process is student-focused;
- The neutral facilitator guides the process;
- IEP Team members feel more prepared;
- All team members are expected to have a voice;
- Creates collaborative communication;
- Shared decision-making with all team members;
- Consensus of the IEP team; and
- Contentious meetings result in positive outcomes.





# Participant Feedback

“Before we started the IEP meeting, I expected the meeting to take at least three hours. We were done in an hour! Between the facilitator guiding the process and charting the team’s decisions, the parent felt her input was valuable and she was heard. She was so positive when we did the meeting process plus/deltas!” – *Staff feedback*



# Participant Feedback

“We had some items put in the parking lot for others to complete later which I thought was a great idea.” – *Parent feedback*

“I received a call from the facilitator to introduce myself and provide information regarding my concerns with the district and my daughters needs. I appreciated the preparation for the meeting.” – *Parent feedback*

“I wish I would have done it sooner. It relieves some of the stress and I could focus more with the visual guidance from the facilitator.” – *Parent feedback*



# Participant Feedback



“Setting the goals for the meeting, keeping us focused, plus reflective listening are the best part of having the facilitator!” – *Staff feedback*

“Her presence gave the parent a sense of support and calm.” – *Staff feedback*

“I was extremely thankful for the facilitator helping give this parent a voice.” – *Staff feedback*

# Questions? Comments?

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IEP Facilitation System:

<https://www.isbe.net/Pages/IEP-Facilitation-System.aspx>

IEP Facilitation Request form:

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/34-16-iep-facilitation-request.pdf>

## **IEP facilitators:**

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