

Spotlight on MISSOURI

FACILITATED IEP PROGRAM

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Facilitated Individualized Education Program (FIEP) Accomplishments (2015-2018)

When the relationship between parents and school personnel becomes strained or before the relationship has the opportunity to fray, parents and school personnel are finding that using independent facilitators can assist the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. A growing body of evidence indicates that IEP facilitation services can address conflicts, while building trust and better relationships between families and schools.

In response to this need, the Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE) convened a multistate workgroup, using a peer-to-peer intensive technical assistance approach, to help states maximize their investments in IEP facilitation. CADRE selected the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MO DESE), along with six other states (Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, New Jersey, New York, and West Virginia), to participate in the three-year workgroup initiative.

Missouri's interest in joining the workgroup was driven by the desire to learn from CADRE and other states the most effective and efficient strategies for implementing an IEP facilitation program at the state level.

This spotlight on Missouri highlights what MO DESE set out to accomplish, and what it achieved while participating in the workgroup and shortly following its conclusion.

Objectives

Missouri determined that the objectives for its participation in the workgroup were to:

- Establish a facilitated IEP (FIEP) stakeholder committee group to provide ongoing input and feedback
- Analyze preliminary stakeholder input in order to create an FIEP process tailored to the needs of Missouri
- Offer IEP facilitation training to MO DESE contracted facilitators by Spring 2015 and conduct pilot during the 2015-2016 school year
- Implement statewide IEP facilitations during the 2016-2017 school year
- Provide IEP facilitators to pilot Local Education Agencies (LEAs) by the 2015-2016 school year

90% of participants reported that they would recommend the IEP facilitation process to others.

About CADRE

CADRE is a national center that provides intensive technical assistance to state education agencies using a multistate workgroup model, creating a forum for learning together through shared knowledge, practices, and experiences. CADRE offers ongoing support, consultation, and resources to workgroup members. Activities include teleconferences, virtual and face-to-face meetings, webinars, and opportunities to engage with experts through trainings, presentations, and consultations.

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Significant Milestones and Accomplishments

Missouri met all of its objectives and continues to make significant progress in implementing an effective and efficient IEP facilitation program. Some highlights of their accomplishments include:

- Creation and implementation of a state IEP facilitation program as a dispute prevention process for families and districts
- Selection and training of IEP facilitators, including parents, former special education directors, coordinators, and college professors
- Expansion of the State Education Agency (SEA) Facilitated IEP Program from a pilot program with six (6) districts to statewide implementation
- Favorable outcomes being reported by participating IEP teams

97% of participating IEP teams reached consensus on some to all issues.

2016-2018 Results

- IEP teams reached consensus on some to all issues in 83 out of 86 facilitated IEP team meetings
- Based on 529 completed participant evaluations, 85% of participants were very satisfied with the outcome of the facilitated IEP team meetings
- Number of districts holding facilitated IEPs doubled in the second year of statewide implementation (from 29 to 61)
- Significant downward trend in both number of child complaints and total number of child complaint allegations

Essential Elements of Program Development

Missouri has identified the following as essential elements of their program improvement efforts:

- Engagement of a broad stakeholder group (e.g., parents, educators, attorneys, and administrators) on the selection and qualifications of IEP facilitators, a review of FIEP processes and procedures, and feedback on FIEP promotional materials
- Development of FIEP request forms, procedural manual, promotional flyers, and informational webinar
- Provision of initial and advanced FIEP trainings to facilitators by nationally recognized trainers
- Development of an FIEP webpage that includes general FIEP information, request forms, promotional materials, and video
- Data collection and analysis of the facilitated IEP meetings; and provision of reports to internal and external stakeholders

Future Activities and Desired Outcomes

Missouri's desired future IEP facilitation activities and outcomes include:

- Statewide expansion of the Facilitated IEP Program
- Increased use of IEP facilitation in appropriate situations over more formal dispute resolution processes (e.g., formal complaints and due process hearings)
- Improved communication and relationships between families and districts, resulting in positive student outcomes

- Enhanced utilization of facilitation at the LEA level by offering *Conflict Prevention and Resolution Through IEP Meeting Facilitation* by skilled and certified trainers



Missouri's Facilitated IEP Program

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<https://dese.mo.gov/special-education/compliance/facilitated-individualized-education-program-fiep>

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