

What Is My Role on the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team?

District Representative

As one of the required members of an IEP Team, the district representative, also referred to as the administrative designee, plays a vital role in the team decision-making process. This document addresses frequently asked questions regarding required qualifications and best practice considerations related to the role of the district representative on the IEP Team.

Authority: [34 C.F.R. § 300.321](#), [71 Fed. Reg. 46673](#), [71 Fed. Reg. 46676](#), [Minn. R. 3525.2810, subp. 1\(B\)\(4\)](#); and [Minn. R. 3252.0210, subp. 2](#)

Compliance Requirements

Questions	Answers
<p>Question 1: What are the required qualifications of a district representative on the IEP Team?</p>	<p>Answer: The district representative must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be licensed to provide or supervise special education and related services. • Know about the general education curriculum. • know about the availability of resources of the district. • Have the authority to commit the district’s resources. • Not be the student’s teacher.
<p>Question 2: Can a district representative serve more than one role at the same IEP Team meeting?</p>	<p>Answer: Yes; however, the district representative cannot be the student’s teacher. The law does not restrict an IEP Team from serving in more than one role at the meeting; however, the intent of the team is to bring a variety of people with varying expertise to the table to discuss the most appropriate programming to meet the student’s needs. When deciding if a required member will serve multiple roles, confirm that the team still includes the diverse perspectives needed. See Q1 in the Best Practice Considerations below for assigning the role of district representative.</p>

Questions	Answers
<p>Question 3: If a district representative is unable to attend an IEP Team meeting, must the district follow the team member excusal process?</p>	<p>Answer: Yes. Any required IEP Team member, including the district representative, must be excused from the IEP Team meeting if unable to attend the meeting in whole or in part.</p> <p>When the meeting involves a modification to, or discussion of, the member's area of the curriculum or related services, the member may be excused from attending an IEP Team meeting, in whole or in part, if the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parent and the district consent, in writing, to the excusal. • The member submits to the parent and the IEP Team their input into the development of the IEP, and • The member's written input is submitted to the parents and the IEP Team prior to the IEP meeting. <p>The district representative serves as the authority on the district curriculum and resources. Their input into the development of the IEP is as important as any other required team member. It is important to emphasize that if a district representative is excused from attending an IEP Team meeting, the district remains responsible for implementing the student's IEP and may not use the excusal as a reason for delaying its implementation. See Q2 in the Best Practice Considerations below related to excusing a district representative from an IEP team meeting.</p>
<p>Question 4: If excused from the meeting, what written input must the district representative provide?</p>	<p>Answer: Neither federal nor state requirements specify the type of documentation or amount of information that must be provided, only requiring that written input must be provided prior to the meeting. Examples of written input that could be provided by the district representative include a student's participation on student council, a recent recognition (either academic or behavioral), graduation credits, discipline reports or attendance logs.</p>
<p>Question 5: May a staff member attending an IEP Team meeting as the district representative wait to agree to the proposed IEP until after obtaining approval from district leadership?</p>	<p>Answer: No, the individual serving as the district representative must know about available resources and be able to commit those resources during the IEP Team meeting. For example, a teacher (general or special education) typically is not authorized to make financial commitments related to the district's resources without the approval of district leadership. If this is the case, a teacher would not be an appropriate district representative. Remember that the individual filling the role of the district representative must meet all five requirements of that role.</p>

Best Practice Considerations

The push pin icon demonstrates best practice considerations, not compliance requirements. You and your team may want to “pin” these considerations to discuss; they are above and beyond required compliance.

Questions	Answers
<p>Question 1: Who should be assigned as the district representative?</p>	<p>Answer: It is up to the district to designate the specific staff member(s) who may serve as its representative at the IEP Team meeting. Typically, the designated district representative is the special education director, building principal or other administrator; however, any staff member may serve in this role provided the individual meets all the required qualifications. See Q1 above in Compliance Requirements for specific requirements.</p> <p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select staff who have knowledge of the student and can help develop an appropriate IEP, while also meeting requirements for the district representative role. Remember, the intent of the IEP Team meeting is to bring individuals together in the best interest of the student, rather than “filling a required role.” • Identify more than one person who can serve in this role (allows for flexibility in scheduling and options depending on student factors for the best fit for the role). Think outside the box – school psychologist, guidance counselor, etc. • Maintain a list of qualified district representatives to share with case managers or others who are planning IEP Team meetings. In the event a district representative cannot attend, the district has a list of other qualified individuals who can take their place. • Ensure that staff who may serve as the district representative fully understand their role on the team and have (or are given) the authority to commit district resources during the IEP Team meeting. • Anticipate student-specific factors that may come up during the meeting to help determine the most appropriate district representative. For example, does the student have significant or complex needs? Does the student potentially need special equipment, technology or 1:1 staffing supports? Are there any contentious issues that may come up with the parents?
<p>Question 2: What are some important factors to consider before excusing a district representative from an IEP Team meeting?</p>	<p>Answer: Allowing required members to be excused from attending an IEP Team meeting is intended to provide additional flexibility to parents when scheduling meetings and avoid delays when an IEP Team member cannot attend due to a conflict. Consider all relevant factors when determining whether it is appropriate for the district to consent to excusal of the district representative.</p>

Questions	Answers
	<p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District representatives have “big picture” knowledge of both general and special education curriculum and staffing, and that expertise facilitates the IEP Team discussion about appropriate programming and services. • The district representative’s role on the IEP Team also is one of objectivity, which is emphasized by the requirement that the district representative must not be the student’s teacher. • There may be student-specific factors that require extensive district resources. Some examples include a student who needs special medical equipment or technology supports and/or 1:1 staffing. An objective perspective also is important when making decisions about the appropriateness of the proposed IEP and when committing district resources. • A district representative’s presence at the team meeting also may be warranted in cases where there is a contentious relationship between parents and the district and/or prior disagreements about the IEP. • Considering the importance of this role on the IEP Team, instead of excusing the district representative from the IEP meeting, ask them to designate a qualified individual who can take their place. • The district determines who has the authority to excuse a required member from attending an IEP Team meeting and to bind the district to the excusal agreement with the parent.
<p>Question 3: How can the IEP Team prepare for times when the district representative is excused from attending the IEP Team meeting or needs to leave the meeting early?</p>	<p>Answer: There may be unusual circumstances or emergencies that arise the day of an IEP Team meeting, or even during the IEP Team meeting, that result in the need to excuse the district representative. To ensure the excusal process is followed and the team has the information they need to proceed with the meeting, some advance planning is recommended.</p> <p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share with district representatives the importance of their role and ask them to designate a qualified individual to take their place at the meeting. • Have excusal forms available before and during the meeting in case they are needed. • Remind the district representative of the need to provide written input when they are unable to attend. Provide ideas/suggestions for the type of student information to which the district representative has access. See Q5 in Compliance Requirements above for examples. • Ask the district representative to be proactive by preparing written input in advance of all meetings, in case a last-minute conflict arises. • Ask the district representative to review their written input with a team member who will be present for the entire IEP Team meeting. This review time could also be an opportunity to share relevant information with the district representative about student-specific issues that may arise during the meeting. • Offer parents the opportunity to confer with the district representative before consenting to their excusal.

Questions	Answers
<p>Question 4: How can the IEP Team facilitate the participation of a district representative, despite possible conflicts in attending IEP Team meetings?</p>	<p>Answer: Flexibility is key to ensure necessary members can participate in the IEP Team meeting. The intention of IEP Team membership is to bring together individuals with varying expertise to develop the most appropriate programming for the student to meet their needs. Each member’s role is important, and often necessary, in the development of the IEP.</p> <p>Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEP Team members may participate in person, virtually or via phone. • Offering a variety of methods for participation by the district representative may eliminate barriers to attendance such as travel time, scheduling conflicts, location or space issues, etc. • Try to plan meetings as far in advance as possible to “save space” on the district representative’s calendar before it fills up. <p>In the event a district representative cannot attend, ask them to designate a qualified individual who can take their place. See Q1 in Compliance Requirements above for specific qualifications for a district representative.</p>

Other resources

- [Training: Program Monitoring](#)
- [Assistance and Compliance Q&A](#)