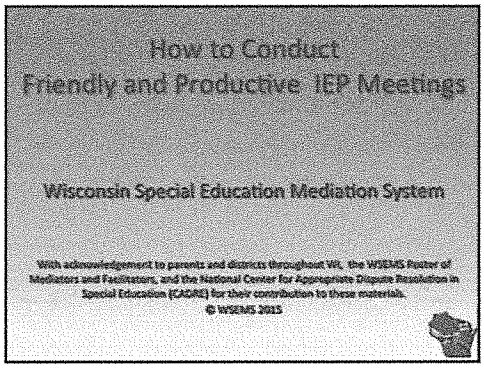
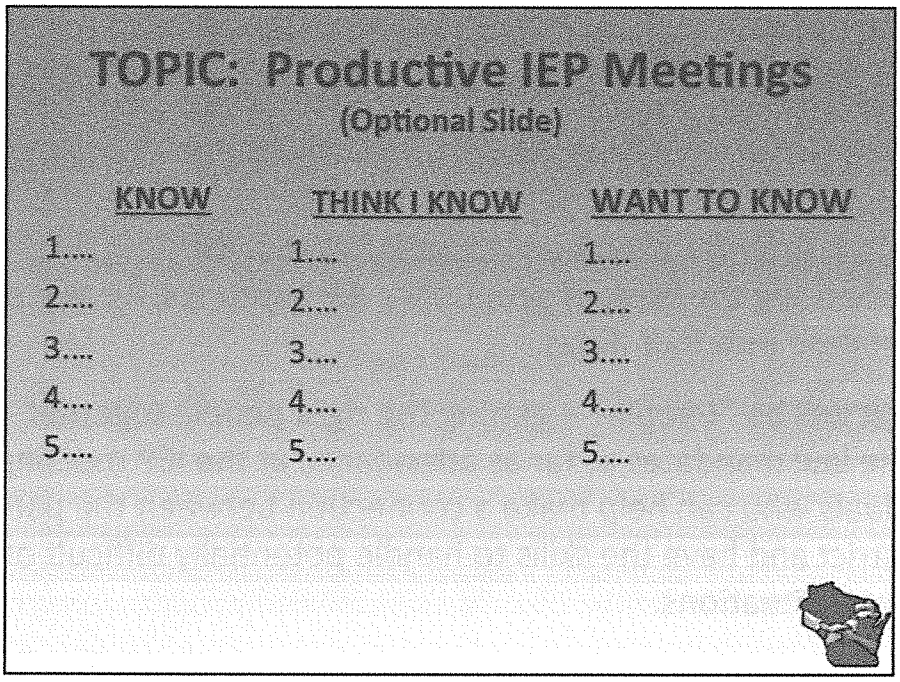
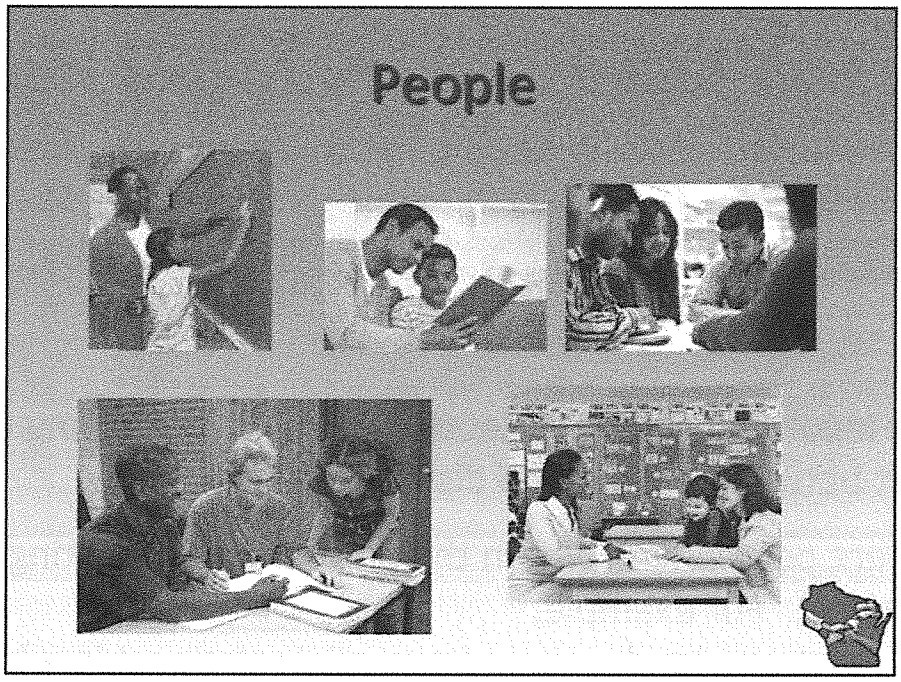


- Welcome to "How to Conduct Friendly and Productive IEP Meetings" – a presentation developed by the Wisconsin Special Education Mediation System (WSEMS) with input from parents, districts and agencies.
- The WSEMS was founded in 1996 by 3 partners: a parent (Jan Serak, WI FACETS' CEO), a special education director (Nissan Bar-Lev, CESA 7), and a mediator. The current mediation partner since 2007 is Nina Meierding. WSEMS assists in the resolution of special education disputes through facilitated IEP meetings and mediation. WSEMS has been honored as an exemplary system by the National Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education, in part because of WSEMS' unique core principle of maximizing stakeholder involvement on a continuing basis. WSEMS staff includes Jane Burns, Administrator & Intake Coordinator, & Nelsinia Ramos Wroblewski, Multicultural Outreach Coordinator.
- This PowerPoint is an example of how parents, teachers, administrators, advocates and attorneys can work together, to welcome, honor and connect in a collaborative way for the best interests of students in WI' public schools.
- Through initial surveys, pilot presentations, and a review of the PowerPoint program and accompanying notes by hundreds of individuals and groups including WSPEI, WIFACETS, and WCASS, each group has given valuable feedback and perspective. The result is a presentation that brings the ideas together and models a process where parents and districts work together for the needs of the student– just like a friendly and productive IEP meeting!
- Let's find out who is participating today with some quick introductions,
  - Or: poll the audience (as, with apps as "Kahoot" or "Poll Everywhere"). Include:
  How many are: (1) Parents (2) School Staff (3) Both (4) Other
- Also, if desired, poll to rate how your recent IEP experiences have been:
  (1) poor (2) fair (3) good (4) great (5) excellent



Take a few minutes to think about and write down a few things that you are certain that you already know, what you think you know, and what you want to know about productive IEP meetings.

(If webinar, you can ask people to type a few of their thoughts into the chat box)



The first area we are going to focus on is “People”

Participants' Comments

- *"The most help during the IEP was personnel there who could answer my questions. They knew the content of courses and could explain their significance in the big scheme of my child's education."*
- *"It was so nice to have my child's teacher there because she is the one person who I feel I can talk to."*
- *"There was no one that I could connect with – all the professionals took over."*



- As you can see, each section includes some actual comments from parents and or school staff who were surveyed about their experiences with IEP meetings

---

- PRESENTER NOTE: You can either read the slide yourself, or invite someone from the audience to read the slide. Each comment comes up separately, so you can click through quickly to have them all appear at once if you wish.

Participants' Comments

- *"In front of my child, the IEP teacher said that my child is far behind academically and that her reading is at a second grade level. The teacher said that she can't teach my daughter new skills. My 16-year-old exploded into crying and refused to come back to the meeting."*
- *"During the IEP meeting, the teacher explained to my child, in terms he understood, the progress he has made and also talked to him about goals and objectives so that he'll know what he is going to be working on during the coming year."*



Here are some more comments from survey participants.

PRESENTER NOTE: You can either read the slide yourself, or ask someone from the audience to read the slide. Each comment comes up separately, so you can click through quickly to have them all appear at once if you wish.

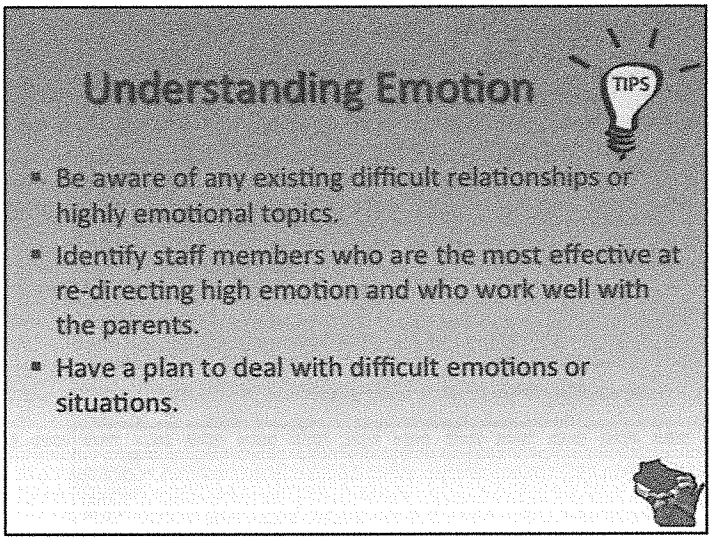
Participants' Comments

- *"Things heated up pretty quickly and no one at the meeting was really prepared to deal with it. We need more expertise in how to deal with conflict itself."*
- *"Parents need to feel safe, and heard. Sometimes when the power or aggressiveness of one parent is strong it can be very uncomfortable. All professionals need some training in dealing with difficult conversations."*
- *"I have knowledge in special education – I do not have knowledge in dealing with highly emotional or difficult situations. That knowledge would have helped me!"*

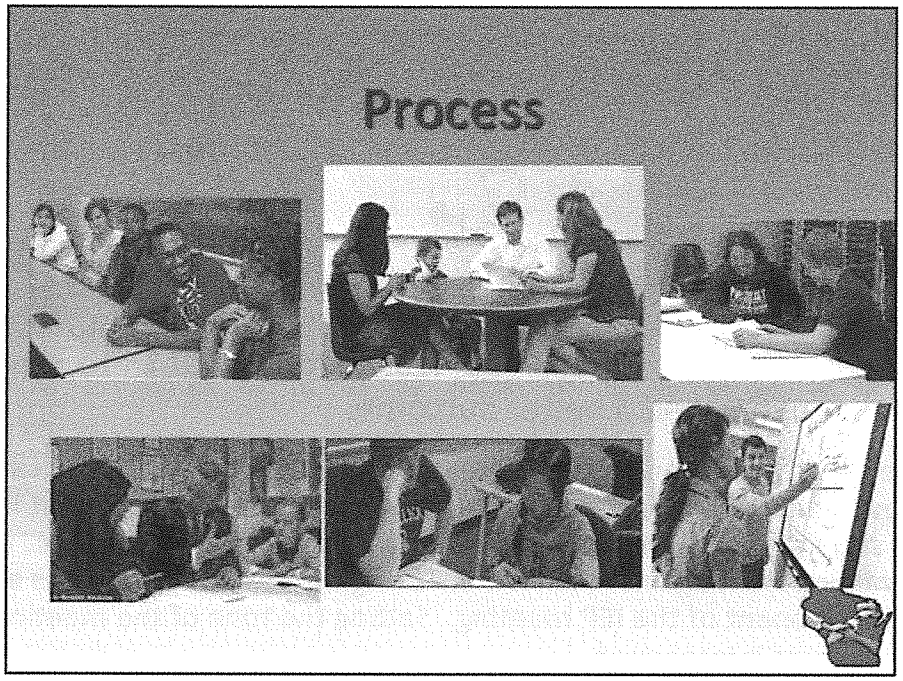


Here are more comments from parents and professionals.

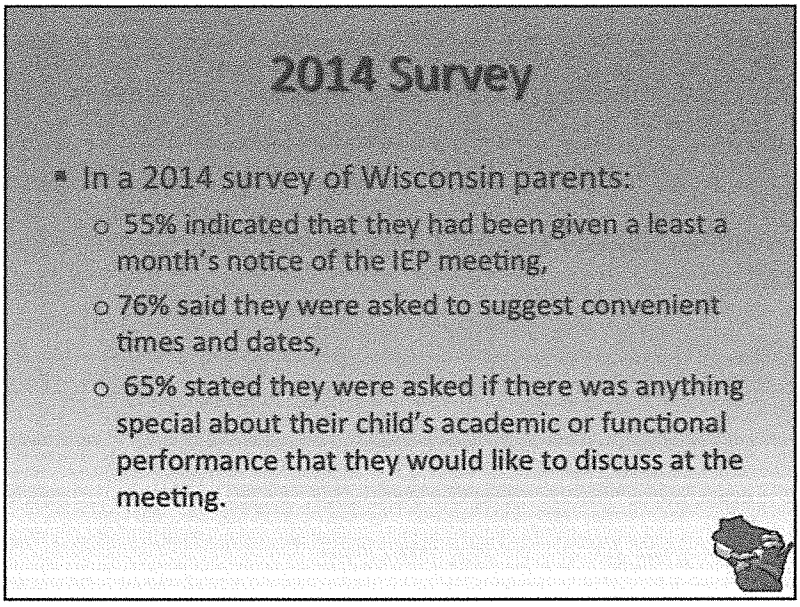
PRESENTER NOTE: You can either read the slide yourself, or ask someone from the audience to read the slide. Each comment comes up separately, so you can click through quickly to have them all appear at once if you wish.



- Be aware of any positive or negative relationships that already exist between the parent and the district, as well as any topics that seem to trigger high emotions by any member of the IEP team.
- By planning ahead and thinking about how to handle these difficult situations before they happen, particular IEP team members who are highly effective at managing either difficult conversations or emotional hot spots can be ready if needed, to bring the focus of the meeting back to the student.
- Spending time in an IEP meeting on anger or distrust issues usually means that there are issues beyond the focus of an IEP meeting which could be better dealt with in a separate meeting such as IEP facilitation or mediation.
- Sometimes you can suspend the IEP meeting in order to have a mediation to deal with the issues. If you are in a time-sensitive situation and need to complete the IEP, you can finish the IEP meeting and schedule the mediation to deal with the communication or trust issues.



The second focus area is "Process – Preparation and Meting.



In 2014, as part of the request of WSEMS to districts and parents, parents gave WSEMS valuable feedback as far as their own experiences in IEP meetings. There were over 70 responses by parents who shared the following information.

- **Over half** of the parents stated they had been given at least a month's notice of the IEP meeting which allowed them to come to the meeting more focused and prepared.
- **76%** were asked for their suggestions as to the time of day and the possible dates which gave the parents a sense of their importance as a member of the IEP team.
- and **65%** were asked if there was anything special about their child's academic or functional performance that they would like to discuss at the meeting.

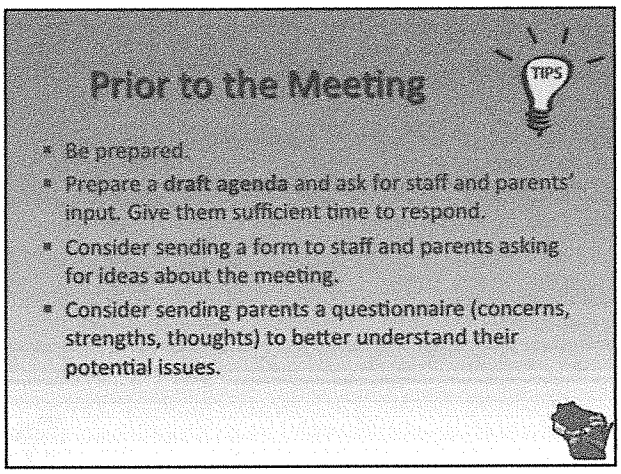
Participants' Comments Process- Preparation

- *"I always ask for a brief meeting and an IEP draft before the meeting to kind of "pre-plan." Staff is usually willing to do this, but wouldn't if I didn't ask."*
- *"We did not receive timely information as to who would be at the meeting. The district brought a therapist that we did not know about."*
- *"We received written notification that several staff that worked with our child were going to be present at the IEP. In actuality, only the lead special-education teacher was present. This was misleading in our opinion."*



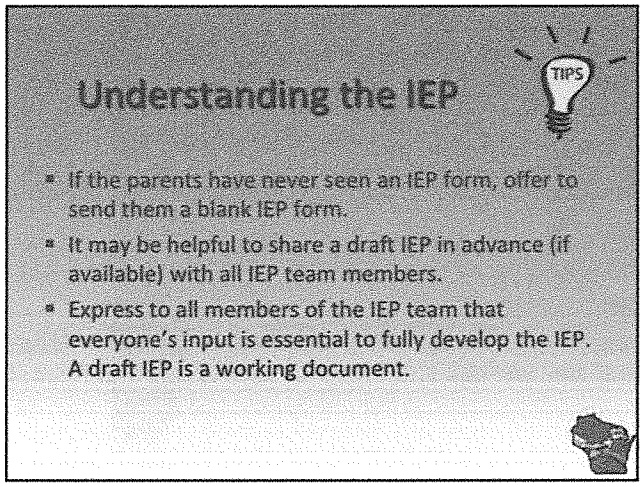
Here are some comments related to Process – preparation for the meeting.

PRESENTER NOTE: You can either read the slide yourself, or ask someone from the audience to read the slide. Each comment comes up separately, so you can click through quickly to have them all appear at once if you wish.

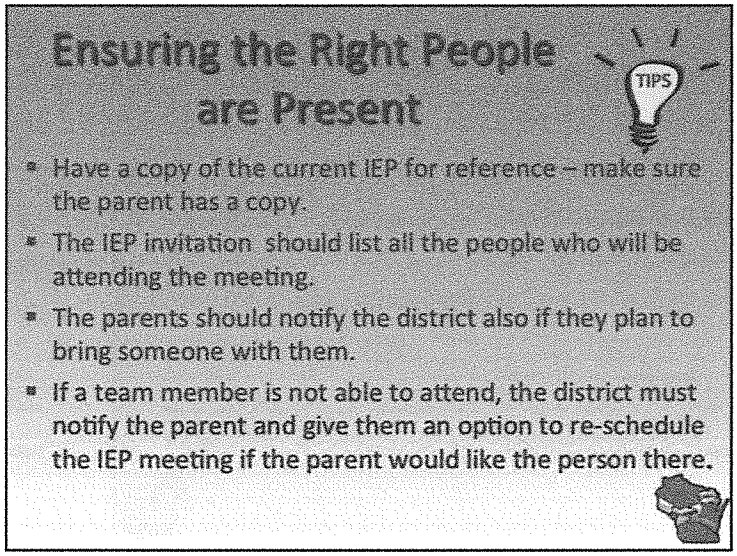


- So, what works best as far as establishing the trust and connection that leads to a productive meeting? Districts gave us many examples and techniques that have proven successful throughout the IEP process in establishing and maintaining a positive relationship with the parents.
- First, be prepared.
- Consider sending parents a questionnaire about their child (asking for concerns, strengths, thoughts) or a student profile. Ask them if they have any questions or thoughts about the IEP meeting. This will help the district understand potential issues that could arise.
- The **Positive Student Profile** form, one of your **HANDOUTS** for this presentation, is an example of how districts and parents can share information in advance about a student.

PRESENTER NOTE: If time permits, ask participants if they have used similar forms & how they helped.



- If parents are unfamiliar with the IEP form itself, send them a copy. Offering to explain the form and IEP process fully to parents before the meeting can be very helpful, including the new I-7 forms (statewide assessment) and the Post Secondary Transition Planning (PTP) on line.
- There are also some helpful DPI resources, including the *Intro to Special Education*; *Special Education in Plain Language*, publications and trainings.
- Most school districts develop the agenda and the IEP during the IEP meeting. Some districts, in addition to sharing an agenda in advance, may also develop a draft IEP. If developed, the draft should be shared with <u>all</u> IEP team members in advance. Stress that it is ONLY a draft – and a suggested starting place for discussion among all team members as to the goals and services for the student.
- To avoid the perception that the district has made up its mind as to the content of the IEP, tell all IEP team members that their input is absolutely essential to development of the IEP and that any written documents (agenda or draft IEP) are drafts for discussion.

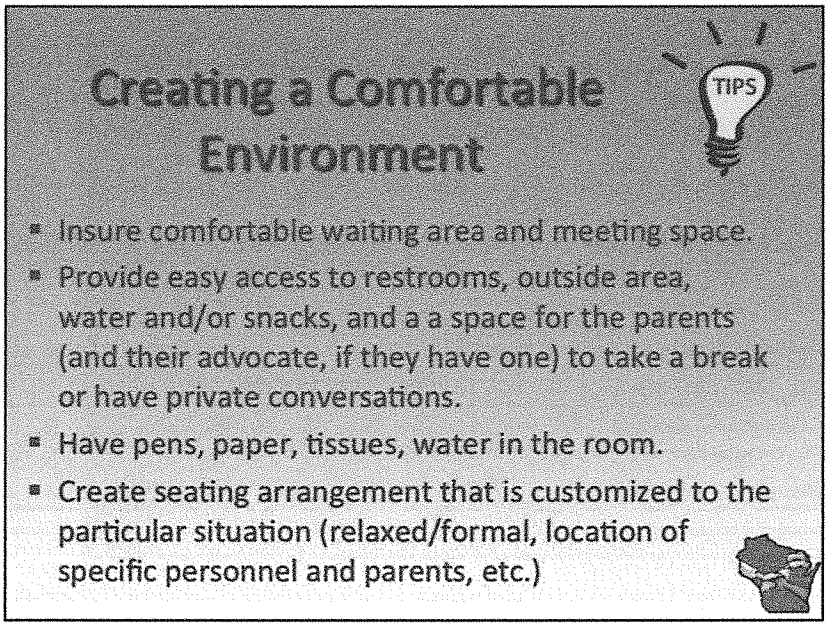


- The district must notify the parents as to who will attend and the parents should notify the district who will attend as well.

- It is very disconcerting to be counting on the attendance of a particular person – and they don't show up.

- It is also equally surprising to come to a meeting and be faced with people you did not expect to be there.

- If an essential person of the team cannot be there, the parents have the option for re-scheduling in order for the person who is currently unavailable to attend.



- Meetings can be scary or intimidating – especially if it is someone's first IEP meeting. Have a comfortable waiting area for parents and arrange the meeting space in a welcoming way.

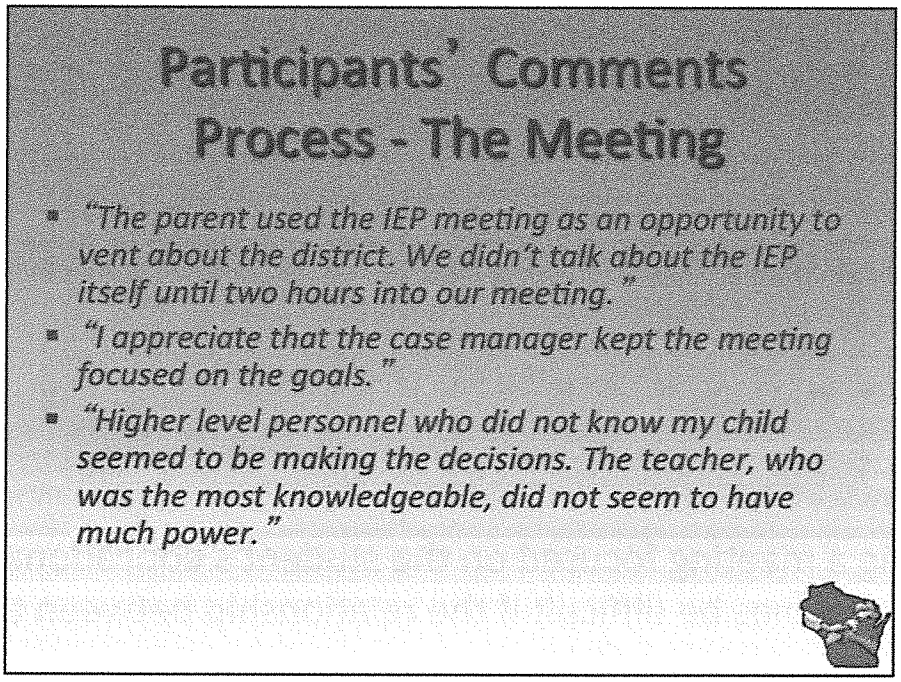
- No little student chairs that cause people's knees to be up to their chin.

- No extremely cold or hot environments.

- No noisy areas where you can't hear the person across the table. Provide easy access to restrooms (show the parent where these are prior to the meeting).

- Have water and, if possible, snacks in the room. Provide pens and paper and tissues.

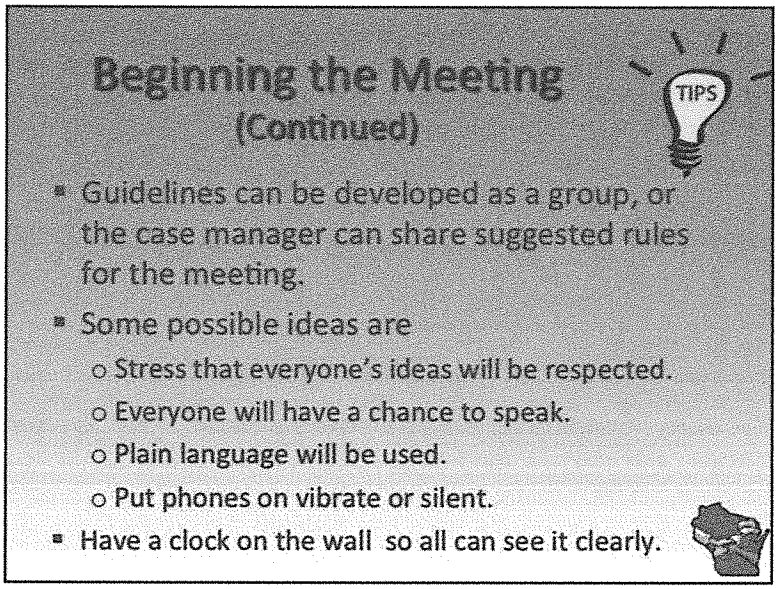
- Create a seating arrangement that is customized to the meeting – many people prefer a more relaxed environment with a large white board or pad of paper that the team members can all see. You can put the draft IEP up on a smart board or computer screen for immediate revisions/additions that all can see.



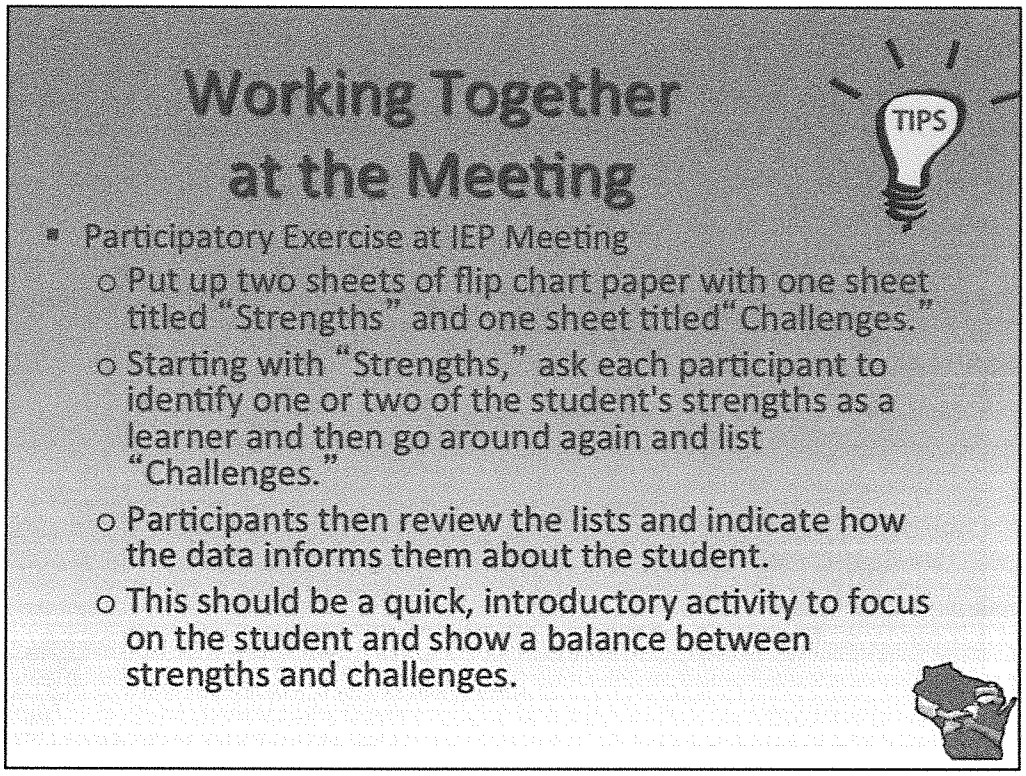
- Here are some more parent and district comments related to the Process.

PRESENTER NOTE:

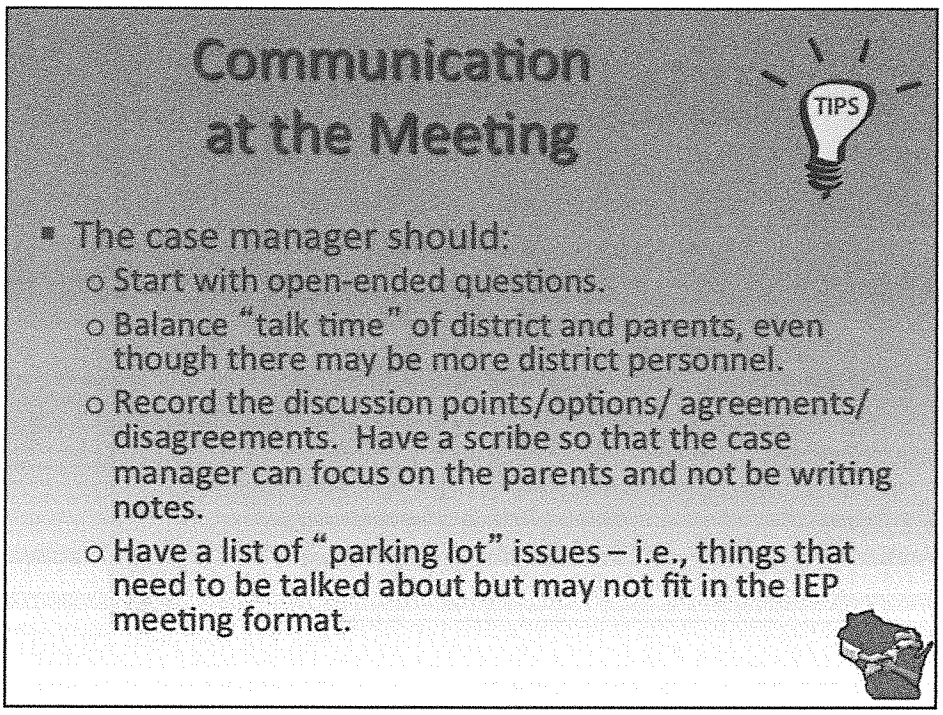
You can either read the slide yourself, or ask someone from the audience to read the slide. Each comment comes up separately, so you can click through quickly to have them all appear at once if you wish.



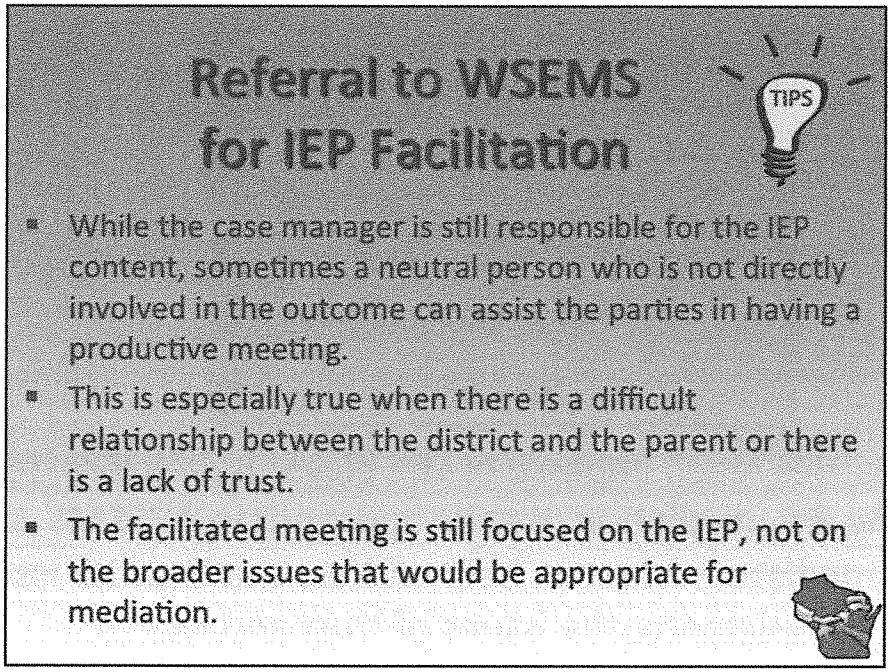
- Most people do not like to be told how to behave. On the other hand, guidelines that apply to all members of the IEP team can make a meeting more productive.
- The case manager can indicate that there are some guidelines that are routinely used in IEP meetings, state what those are, and ask if they are acceptable to everyone. Or the case manager can ask the team members to suggest guidelines themselves.
- Some popular guidelines are to listen without judgment and be respectful to all ideas, to talk one at a time, that everyone will have a chance to speak, that plain language will be used and that technical language will be explained.
- Tell the team members that in order to focus on the student, all distractions should be kept at an absolute minimum – including the use of cell phones which should be put on vibrate or silent.
- It can be very distracting to have people checking their watches or cell phones for the time. So, having a clearly visible wall clock will allow everyone to pace themselves & follow the timelines in the agenda.



- Here is an example of a possible exercise to do at the meeting that involves all members of team working together to identify both strengths and challenges of the student. (Read slide.)



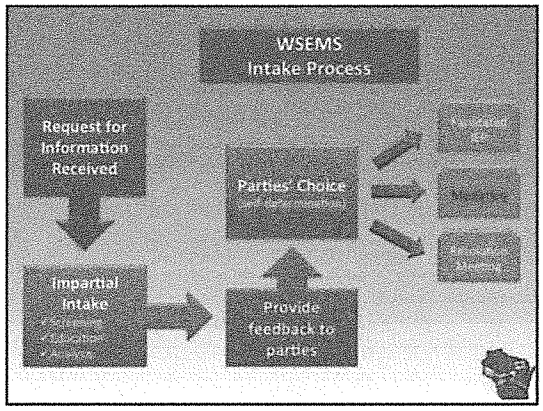
- The beginning of the meeting should be the time to ask exploratory questions - finding out the interests, issues, and particular goals for this meeting.
- All members should have the chance to talk uninterrupted, however it is good to keep the time balanced and focused on the student.
- Keep track of the points, the options, the agreements and disagreements, as well as a page that deals with non-IEP issues that are still important.
- The term "parking lot" is used to describe the process of listing issues that are either to be discussed at another meeting or in a mediation – usually broader than the goals of an IEP meeting.



- WSEMS provides neutral, trained facilitators to help in IEP meetings.
- A facilitated IEP is a free option for early conflict prevention that is not required by IDEA to be available, but is available in WI)
- While the case manager is still responsible for the IEP content, the IEP facilitator is there to help. The facilitator is not an IEP team member.
- When there is a difficult relationship between the district and a parent, or members of the IEP team do not listen well to each other, a WSEMS facilitator can assist in keeping the meeting focused on the student, establishing a more workable framework to talk about the IEP goals, help brainstorm options, and move the process forward to completion of the IEP.

PRESENTER NOTE:

- Provide the audience with the **WSEMS brochure HANDOUT** and point out the IEP Facilitation tab on the brochure.
- **HANDOUTS** also include a **Facilitated IEP Request form.**



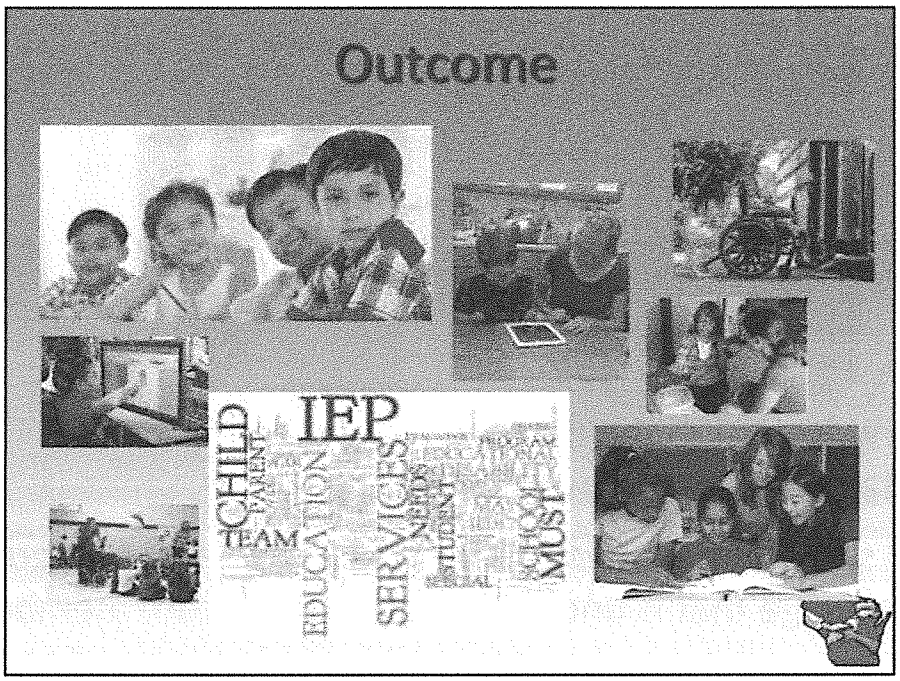
Here is a visual picture of the intake process at WSEMS.

- As you can see a request for information is received and the case is screened and analyzed by the intake coordinator with the potential users to help determine the appropriate process.
- The intake coordinator helps people understand the different choices and provides feedback to the parents and the district about how each option might meet their needs.
- The choice of which process and mediator or facilitator to use is up to the parents and the school district.

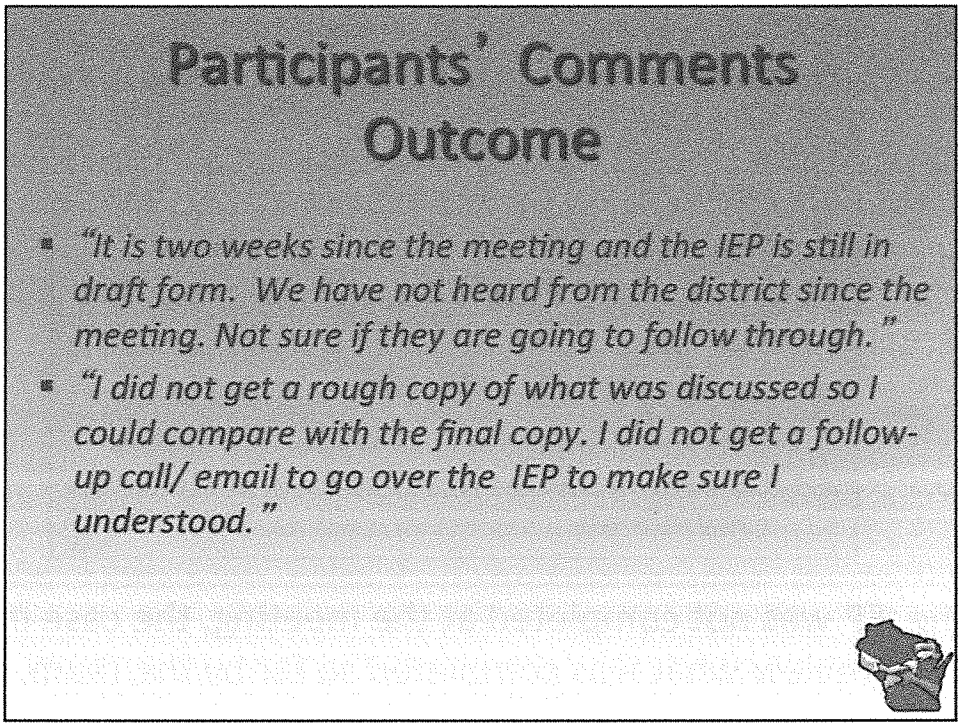
PRESENTER NOTE:

- Link to WSEMS Video on *Effective Participation in Mediation and IEP Facilitation.* (link is on the slide's Mediation box)

http://www.wsems.us/multimedia/training-videos/

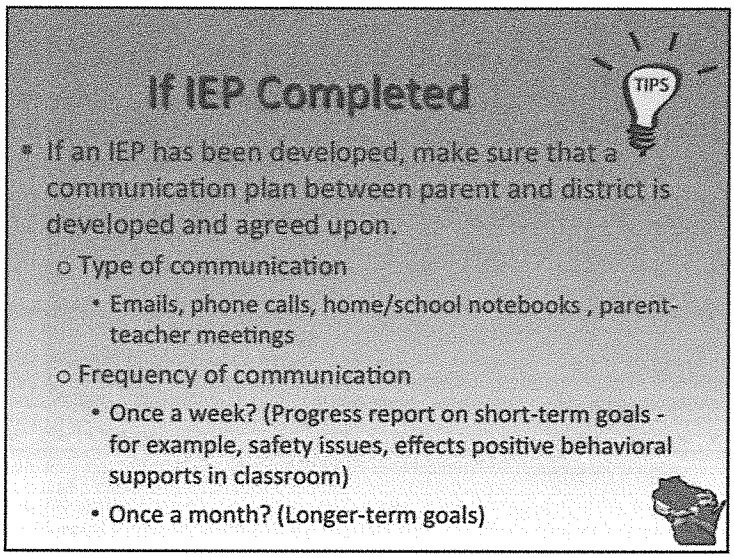


Our third focus area is Outcome.



Here are some comments about outcome.

PRESENTER NOTE: You can either read the slide yourself, or ask someone from the audience to read the slide. Each comment comes up separately, so you can click through quickly to have them all appear at once if you wish.



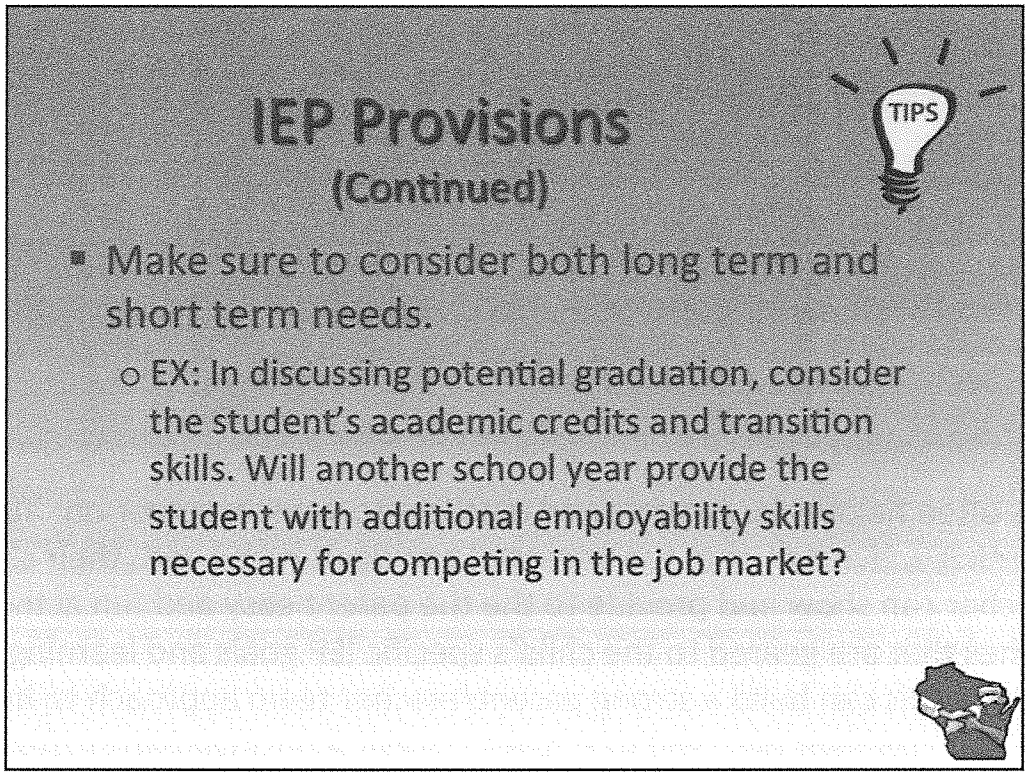
- A key part of the IEP when it is developed is to establish a concrete and specific communication plan.
- What type of communication works best in this specific situation? Do the parents have easy access to a computer in order to receive emails? If not, or it is only available at their worksite, phone calls are usually preferable. Discuss how frequently there will be communication between the parents and the district. Some goals may need more frequent follow-up.
- As you can see by the parent comments in the preceding slides, some parents received minimal follow-up after the IEP meeting.
- Remember that a positive relationship with all team members is important and that having regular and consistent communication is a key ingredient to building and maintaining that relationship.

IEP Provisions

- Make sure the IEP language is clear and specific.
  - EX: When including Positive Behavioral Supports in the IEP, describe how the supports will be implemented in the classroom.
  - EX: When describing school services as Speech and Language or Special Education Reading Instruction, be clear on the **amount, frequency and location** of these services. If these services cannot be described in daily or weekly allotment of time, make sure to describe the **circumstances** under which these services will be provided.



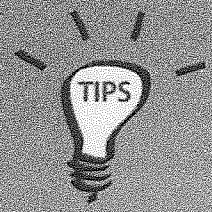
- Here are some examples of what to consider when writing the IEP.
- Read slide
- Refer to DPI Bulletin 10.07 *Describing Special Education, Related Services, Supplementary Aids and Services, and Program Modifications or Supports*



PRESENTER NOTE:

Read slide.

IEP Provisions
(Continued)

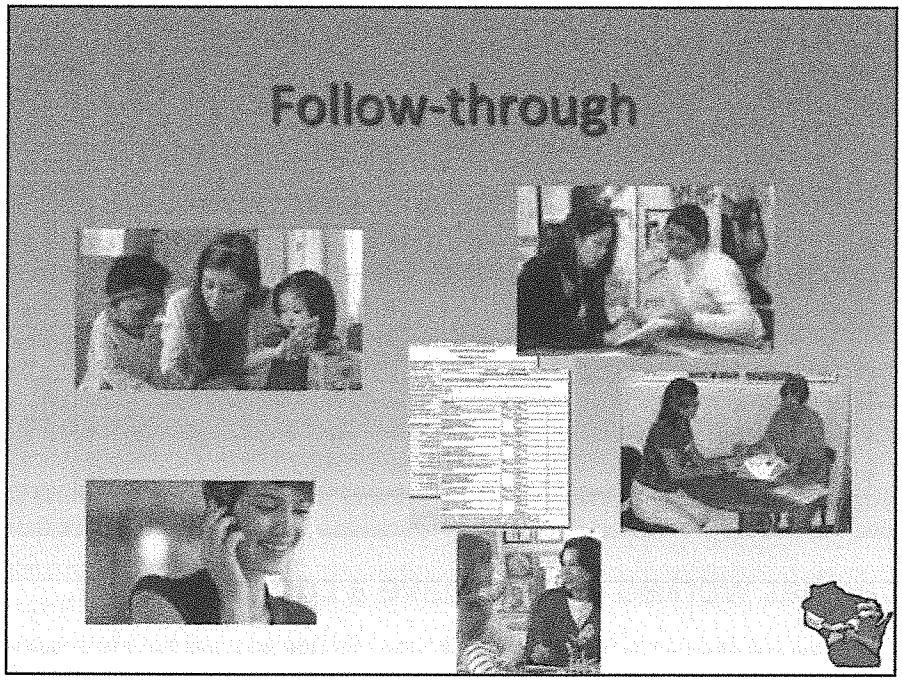


- Consider student's self-advocacy skills vs. district's commitment of resources.
  - EX: When describing services on the IEP (I-9) summary:
    - "Supplementary Aids and Services," such as calculator-use, should not be up to the student to request its use. The calculator should be available for the student's use for all activities that necessitate the use of a calculator.
    - On the other hand, an annual goal may be developed that the student should be encouraged to ask for the calculator in order to address the student's self-advocacy skills.



PRESENTER NOTE:

Read slide.



Our fourth and final focus area is “Follow-through”.

Participants' Comments Follow-through

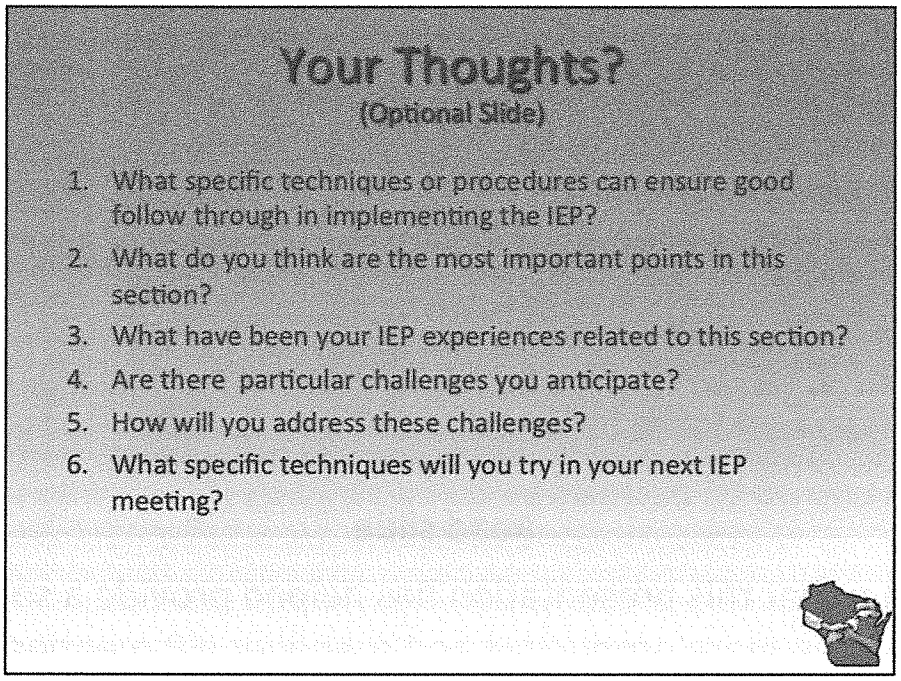
- *"Do what the team has agreed to and what is in the IEP - if you can't, then let me know. It becomes very difficult to trust the people entrusted with my child's learning when the IEP is not followed."*
- *"There was no follow-up from school staff after the meeting. Each year I have to request a copy of the IEP. I ask for a progress report on IEP goals and am told the IEP satisfies that progress report. My child's report card does not list progress notes on any IEP goals. I received one email, no text - just an attachment with a complete negative overview from the case manager and it did not address specific goals."*



Here are some comments about "Follow-through".

PRESENTER NOTE:

You can either read the slide yourself, or ask someone from the audience to read the slide. Each comment comes up separately, so you can click through quickly to have them all appear at once if you wish.



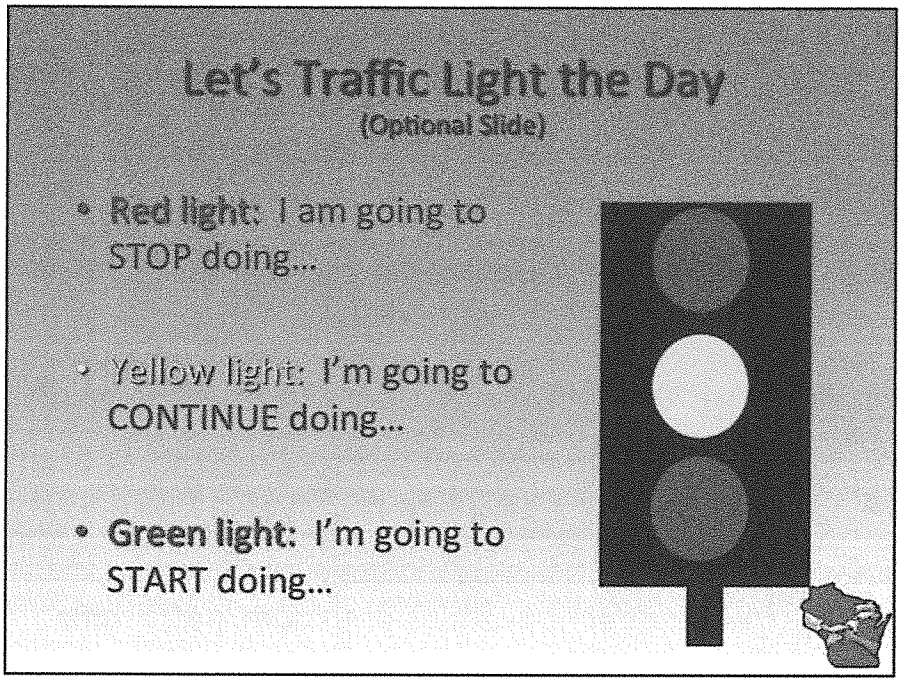
PRESENTER NOTE:

Qs 1 specifically relates to this focus area of "Follow-through." Qs 2-6 are more general.

If limited time, you can suggest that people think about these questions on their own.

If more time, you can use Q 1 and a few from the general questions, 2-6.

If webinar, you can suggest typing some answers into the chat box.



Please take a few minutes to complete each sentence….

I am going to STOP doing…

I am going to CONTINUE doing…

I am going to START doing…

PRESENTER NOTE:

If webinar, ask participants to type answers into the chat box.

If time permits, you can solicit ask a few participants to share things that they are going to Stop, Continue, or Start doing..

EVALUATION

Please complete an evaluation of this presentation

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PrdctvFrdlyIEPMtgs

