Don 't Just Take a Seat... Take the Lead!

What Every Agency Representative Needs to Know

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What participants will leave ready to do

Agency responsibility

Explain the agency representative's responsibilities.

Meeting facilitation

Lead meetings that support meaningful participation.

Educational decisions

Connect student data to defensible IEP decisions.

Teacher development

Coach teachers and verify implementation.



DISCUSSION + PRACTICE: “That meeting…”

Think of a meeting that became difficult.

- What happened before the tension increased?
- What did leadership do that helped or hurt?
- Name one practice you want to change.

WHO'S ON FIRST?

Based on these requirements:



Who may serve as the Agency Representative?

Who may NOT serve as Agency Representative?

What does IDEA say about the Agency Rep?



- ✓ **Qualified to provide or supervise specially designed instruction.**
- ✓ **Knowledgeable about the general education curriculum.**
- ✓ **Knowledgeable about the public agency's available resources.**

Interpretation: Have the authority to allocate resources

AUTHORITY MUST SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION

Understand the district's resource commitments

- Be able to ensure that IEP services will occur.
- Resolve authority questions before the meeting.
- Plan a prompt response to unexpected needs.



Lead Confidently: Pre-determination



- Pre-determination
  - Avoid the “meeting before the meeting” to discuss the services or supports included in the IEP.
    - Open mind – not a blank mind
      - *Doyle v. Arlington County School Board, 806 F. Supp. 1253 (E. D. VA 1992)*
    - Preparing a draft IEP is acceptable
      - *Letter to Helmuth, 16 EHLR 503 (OSEP 1990)*
  - Parents must have the opportunity to have meaningful participation (more than just the opportunity to attend)
    - The district’s obligation is to consider all parental input

Lead Confidently: IEP Committee

IEP Team Members

- ✓ Parents
- ✓ Regular Education Teacher
- ✓ Special Education Teacher
- ✓ Agency Representative
- ✓ Person to interpret evaluation results
- ✓ Other Individuals with knowledge or expertise
- ✓ Child with a disability, when appropriate



Lead Confidently: Discipline

- Discipline *(See Policy and Procedural Manual, Volume IV)*
  - Avoid undocumented/unofficial removals
    - Sending home for the rest of the day
    - Time out in the office
  - Follow the IEP and Behavior Plan (*if applicable*)
    - Update the IEP to address all needs
  - Be aware of patterns of removals
  - Be proactive when conducting FBAs & Behavior Plans
  - Conduct timely Manifestation Determination Reviews
- When in doubt, call your Sped Director

Leading Before *and* After the Meeting

Team readiness

- Facilitate member attendance at IEP meetings
- Ensure team members are prepared

Meeting Participation

- Ask about parent priorities and participation needs
- Ensure all team members participate appropriately

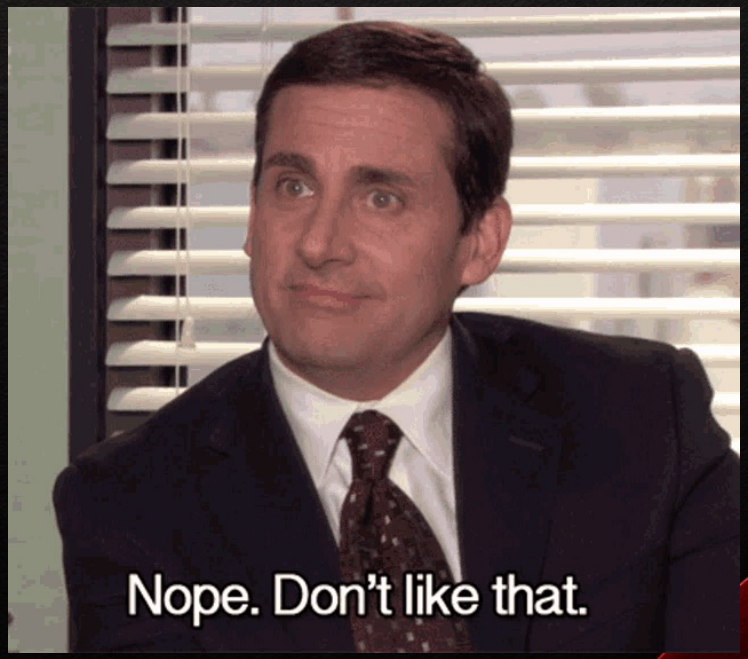
Evidence

- Document, document, document
- Not all documentation is from the sped teacher

Implementation

- Services / Related Services
- Supports provided in the general education classroom
- Staff capacity

Agency Representative as the Instructional Leader



What ISN'T it?

- ✓ Management
- ✓ MICRO-management
- ✓ Taking over the principal's job

Agency Representative as the Instructional Leader



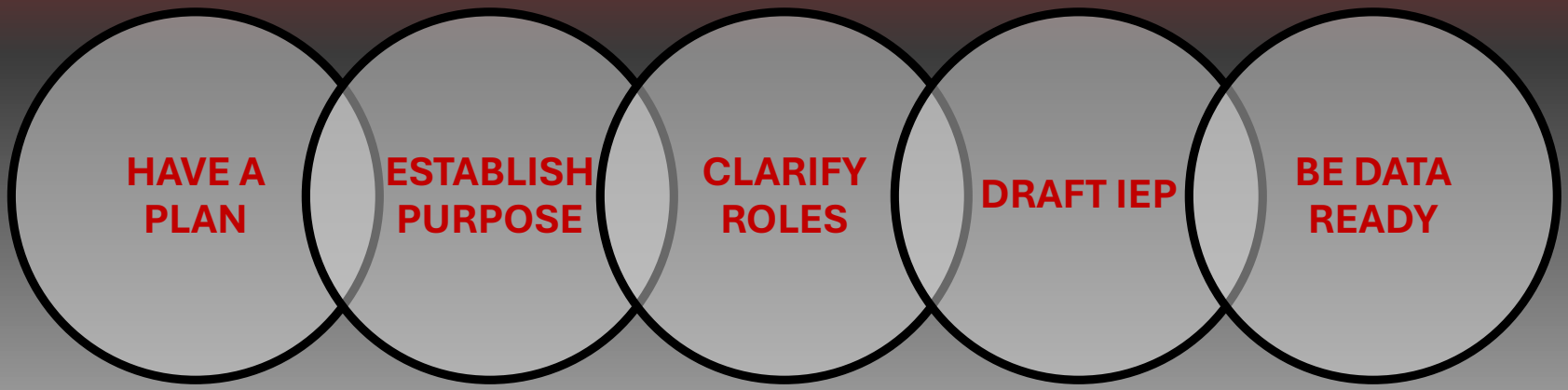
LOGISTICS

- Master Scheduling
- Resource Allocation
- Collect Data
- Protect Instructional Time

INSTRUCTION

- Focus on Learning
- Support Instruction (Sped/PLC PGS)
- Support General Education Teachers
- Ensure accommodation implementation

Agency Rep: IEP Meetings 101



Agency Rep: Communication Tips



CLEAR IS KIND

- Avoid overuse of acronyms
- Use parent friendly language
- Restate the purpose, if needed

STUDENT CENTERED

- Keep the student the center of the conversation
- Use data, observations, and records to refocus the discussion

USE EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY

- Keep the temperature cool
- Know the availability of district resources
- Follow up, when appropriate
- Be firm but kind.

Agency Rep: Communication Tips

What do I do when the tension rises?



Pace and Tone

- ✓ Don't interrupt
- ✓ Slow your pace
- ✓ Use a steady voice
- ✓ Keep volume neutral

Acknowledgement

- ✓ Name the concern
- ✓ Do not assign blame
- ✓ Seek to understand

Evidence

- ✓ Ask a question to move the discussion toward evidence
- ✓ Refocus the conversation toward data and evidence

Reset

- ✓ Offer a brief break to cool take a breath
- ✓ Table the discussion
- ✓ Reschedule the meeting

Agency Rep: Communication Tips

Keeping the discussion productive…



What NOT to say

- ✓ Never / always
- ✓ We don't do that here…
- ✓ We don't have…
- ✓ Avoid assigning blame
- ✓ "You signed it…"

What to say…

- ✓ Describe behavior in objective and observable terms
- ✓ Lead the discussion toward actionable items
- ✓ Keep focused on the task or topic
- ✓ Provide praise when appropriate

Agency Rep:
Lead through Knowledge

You can't lead if you don't know where you're going.....

Agency Rep: Be the Expert

What is Specially Designed Instruction?



- Individualized instruction that addresses a student's unique needs resulting from their disability.
- Adapts instructional content, teaching methods, or delivery based on what the student needs to learn.
- Ensures access to the general curriculum so the student can work toward the educational standards that apply to all students.
- Provided at no cost to parents as part of special education under IDEA.

Agency Rep: Be the Expert

Accommodations and Modifications



- **Accommodations** change *HOW* a student learns or demonstrates learning. They provide access without changing the learning expectation.
  - ❖ *Examples: extended time, accessible formats, or responding orally instead of in writing.*
- **Modifications** change *WHAT* a student is expected to learn or demonstrate. They alter the complexity, scope, or level of the learning expectation.
  - ❖ *Examples: identifying a story's main character while classmates analyze character development, or working on single-digit addition while classmates solve multiplication problems.*

Agency Rep: Be the Expert

Accommodations and Modifications



- Instructional adaptations are not necessarily accommodations.
- Instructional Accommodations are *not the same* as assessment accommodations.
- Most “modifications” are actually accommodations.
- Without in-depth knowledge of the content standards, teachers will not know if an adaptation is an accommodation, modification, or neither…

Agency Rep: Be the Expert

Accommodations and Modifications



TRY IT OUT!

Use of a Timer

Oral Spelling Tests

Copy of Notes / Guided Notes

Preferential Seating

Adjust text difficulty during instruction

Extended Time

Reduced Items on Tests

Use of Fact Sheets during Instruction

Agency Rep: Be the Expert

What is the role of the special education teacher?



The Sped Teacher IS:

- ✓ SDI Provider
- ✓ IEP Team Leader
- ✓ Support in the Gen Ed Classroom
- ✓ An SDI Expert

The Sped Teacher IS NOT:

- ✓ Content Expert
- ✓ An assistant to the Gen Ed Teacher
- ✓ Less qualified than content teachers
- ✓ A substitute for teacher absences

Agency Rep: Be the Expert

What is the Least Restrictive Environment?



- Placement rests on the student's IEP and receives annual consideration
- Consider education with nondisabled peers and supplementary aids
- Examine potential harmful effects and service quality

Agency Rep: Be the Expert

When behavior interferes with learning..



- Use positive behavioral interventions and supports
- Review patterns, context, and the student's access to instruction
- Ensure existing supports are implemented consistently
- Use data to decide what further assessment or revision is needed
- Keep strong documentation

Agency Rep: Be the Expert

Let's test our behavioral knowledge…



- What happens to student who gets suspended, but the behavior plan or IEP is not implemented?
- Can a student with a disability be expelled?
- A student can be suspended for more than 10 days?
- What is an undocumented removal?

Agency Rep: Be the Expert



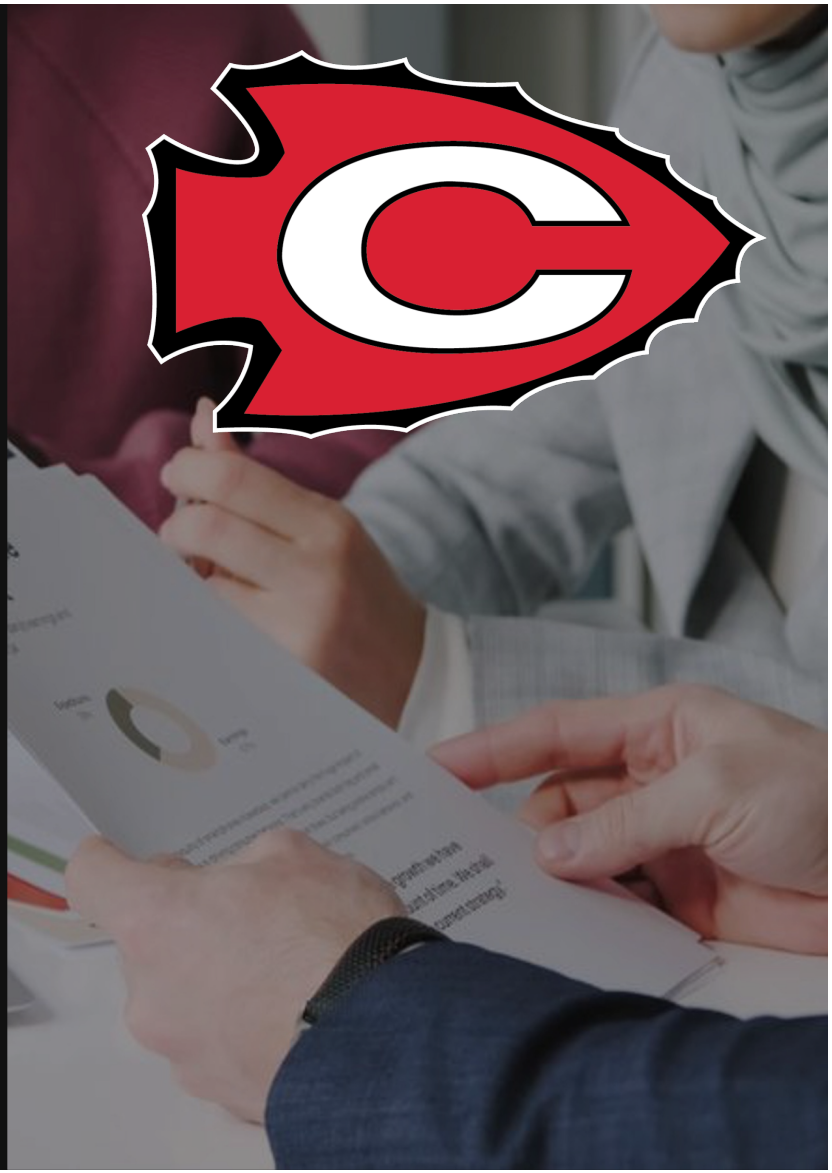
Other useful things to know…

- Anyone who is responsible for implementing any portion of the IEP must have a copy of the *entire* IEP.
- The Prior Written Notice is the most powerful documentation piece we have.
- The Meeting Invitation must be sent prior to the meeting rather than giving it at the meeting. The meeting invitation notifies the parent who will attend and gives the opportunity for meaningful participation.
- Don't pull your sped teachers and related service providers to fill gaps in testing, vacancies, etc.... This can cause a provision of FAPE issue.

REFLECTION

- What responsibility needs greater clarity in your setting?
- What do you need more information about?
- What areas of weakness can you identify in your current practice?
- What is an area of strength you have?

Questions?



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