



ECKCE

# Focus

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## The Importance of the Written Notice of Meeting

The IEP process has many components, all of which involve paying very close attention to detail; the IEP is a legal document and must be written revised and followed as such. The first step in the process, however, is one that we may not spend a lot of time thinking about. After all, we know that we must hold the IEP at a mutually agreed upon time, so the notice of meeting is really just a formality after we have determined the time that will work for the parties that are involved, right?

The truth is that the notice of meeting is much more important than that and must be paid as much attention as the rest of the IEP. The federal and state regulations around the notice of meeting are very clear and mandate that the notice must be provided in writing at least 10 days prior to the meeting (K.A.R. 91-40-17(a)(2)), and if the child is 14 years old, the parents must be notified that their child is invited. The written notice of meeting contains much more than just the date, time and location of the meeting. It must also contain the purpose of the meeting, the titles or positions of the people who will be in attendance, an invitation for the parents to invite persons they believe have expertise on their child, and for TinyK kiddos, the Part C representative may be



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## Frequently (Recently) Asked Questions

### **Every month I will include questions that you have asked – others probably need the answers**

**Q:** We can see the transportation page now but how exactly are you wanting us to fill that out?

**A:** The transportation page automatically will pop up when you click that specialized transportation is required as a related service. It now must be listed, along with minutes on the anticipated services chart. When you are filling out the page, you're going to have to have some idea of how much time they are spending on the bus, both to and from school and put that time down as service minutes. Remember that this is only true if they are riding a bus that is not part of the regular education routes. This also holds true for students who are riding the bus during the day for IEP related activities, such as for vocational opportunities for transition related goals on their IEP and some community based transportation as a part of their IEP. It is primarily to make certain that the state accurately tracks how much transportation is disability related for reporting and funding purposes, so you will need to be as accurate as you can be in recording the need. However, in addition to the reporting requirements, the new transportation page also gives us the ability to be specific as to the needs of the students when they are on the bus as well as to the longevity of the need for those services. Remember that students do not

simply qualify because they have an IEP. There must be a disability-related reason that the student needs specialized transportation. One exception is early childhood, where there really is no general education alternative and the students sometimes need transportation to access their FAPE. But please be specific on these IEPs that the service is only for the time they are in preschool and list a specific end date on the anticipated services chart. I am attaching an additional transportation page guide to this newsletter that should help guide it's completion.

**Q:** Hey, we recently got our contracts and noticed that it still says that we have a 65 day leave accumulation. Didn't it go to 75?

**A:** You are correct. When we negotiated the leave limit for ultimate reimbursement if you choose that upon your completion of your contract. Because the template for this years contract did not automatically update to reflect that increase, the contracts are in error. Don't worry—the negotiated agreement trumps the number in the contract. They have been corrected to accurately reflect the number for next year, but don't hesitate to sign this years contract as the 75 day limit will certainly be honored. If you are one who has reached that limit already and would like to have your contract for this year altered to reflect the new limit please contact our office and we will accommodate your request.



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invited to ensure a smooth transition. In addition, beginning not later than the IEP during which the child will turn 14, the notice must indicate that one of the purposes of the meeting is the consideration of postsecondary goals and transition services, that the student will be invited, and that other agencies, when appropriate may be invited with parent consent. Those are the components of the notice of meeting, most of which will NOT have been a topic of the conversation or email that occurred when setting up the meeting, which makes the WRITTEN notice of meeting so critical.

So the written notice of meeting needs to go to the parents, but many of us may not have been focused on making certain that when the parents are not living together, regardless of which parent has primary custody, the school MUST notify both parents unless a court order prohibits this from happening. This applies to ALL special education notice requirements, including notice of meeting, consent for evaluation, prior written notices, etc. If the school is only aware of one parent's address, they must make a reasonable effort to locate the other parent and provide them with the notice. The school is NOT required, however, nor are they encouraged, to hold duplicate meetings to accommodate divorced parents who simply don't want to attend the same meeting.

There are obvious complications that arise when considering multiple households having similar rights. For example, one parent may actually request an evaluation for services while the other parent vehemently rejects that option. Remember that either parent can request evaluation and we only need one parent to provide consent for that evaluation. But both parents must be noticed on the consent, and should the other parent request in writing that the evaluation be ceased, we are bound by that request. Unless and until the parent wanting the evaluation requests again, in which case we will honor the request and if we receive a second request to cease the evaluation, we would give the parent who is requesting that evaluation be stopped prior written notice that we have received their request and are choosing to pursue evaluation at the request of the other parent. That parent then has procedural safeguards in place to pursue remedy through due process, but as a school district, we are representing the best interest of the child. When parents are at odds, we are on much more solid legal footing to seek eligibility for a child who may be struggling in school than to ignore that struggle. If it turns into a tennis match of consent, then revocation, then consent, then revocation, we will intervene and make certain that process is followed. Whenever you have a parent situation in which parents are not on the same page, please contact my office so that I can make certain we are satisfying the requirements of the law as well as advocating for the children we serve.

While all of these regulations may seem cumbersome and time-consuming, it is important to focus on the rights that each of our students and families enjoy under the IDEA. Protecting those rights helps to make the education that each of our children receive truly special.



## DOs & DON'Ts

Here are things to consider when focusing on becoming more procedurally compliant

**DO** always familiarize yourself with the special education process handbook that is available on the KSDE website. Many FAQs are included to help guide you.

**DO** consult with your school psychologist and director when you have questions about particular situations or regulations that you may not have encountered before.

**DON'T** cut corners with regard to meeting notices because you are so limited in the amount of time it takes to do it right. I can assure you it takes much more time to be involved in a due process.

**DON'T** get discouraged when the process starts to seem more important than the product. Keep your kids first—that will help you to stay motivated to do what is right for them.

# News and Notes Around the Interlocal

## **SEAC Meetings to Resume in September**

Our Special Education Advisory Council, or parent advocacy group, will begin meeting again in September as a way to let parents know what is going on in our organization as well as access information and resources that are essential to their participation in the educational process. The first meeting of the year is tentatively set for September 17 at a location to be determined. I'll be sending out an invite to parents in the middle of next week for you to forward on. Remember that you are always welcome, no matter what hat you may be wearing. Hope to see many of you get involved this year!

## **Crisis Prevention Intervention Training Set for December**

Well, the school year is rolling and so are some of our kiddos behaviors. With the occasional need for intervention comes the need for CPI certification to be kept current. We are offering a pair of trainings in December this year, depending on what you need. On December 6<sup>th</sup> there will be a refresher course for those needing that recertification from 9-12. If you have not had the initial training or are in need of full training because your certification has long lapsed, there will be a full training on December 13 from 9-3. Both of these trainings will be held in Eudora at the West administration building in the library. Remember that if you are working with students who may require intervention and possible ESIs, you are in need of this training to legally do so. Please sign up on the link on our ECKCE website as these trainings fill up fast.

## **Para Corner**

Please share this newsletter with your paras, just in case they did not receive it via email. If you have questions about paras as a group, don't hesitate to now contact Shelly McCart @ [smccart@eckce.com](mailto:smccart@eckce.com).

## **Paraeducator Reminders**

For all of you who are returning this fall, welcome back! For those of you who are new, welcome aboard! Regardless, I hope you had a great summer and are refreshed and eager to start another great school year helping our students with all the things they need to succeed!

Just a few reminders for paras this school year. Remember that when you are assigned to be working with children in the building, this is your focus. The use of cell phones in the classroom, unless by prior arrangement with your building principal for unique circumstances is prohibited. Please be mindful that principals will reinforce this expectation.

Your inservice logs are due now. In order for us to keep track of the inservice hours requirement, we really need you to turn those sheet tracking your hours in as you complete them. For example, everyone should have their sheets documenting the inservice on August 13 turned in to Shelly by this time. Please help us to stay on top of this requirement by submitting when you have completed hours along the way.

The time that you spend with children in classrooms is very critical to them. Please be mindful that they need consistent caring support by not utilizing your leave unless it is necessary to do so. Thanks for all you do!!