

School TRANSITIONS

Expectations and Preparations



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School Transitions

- *Preschool to **Kindergarten/Elementary***
- Elementary to **Middle school**
- Middle School to **High School**
- High School to Post Secondary Transition or **Adult Transition programs**

School transitions are very exciting, but they may sometimes be unsettling for students with disabilities and their families because of the changes in services and routines. Start the process early, to ensure that your student makes the move as smoothly as possible!

Transition to Elementary: Holly Shubin & Kristin Cinco, AESD

- Early Intervention Services (IFSP) to Preschool Services (IEP)
- Preschool to Kindergarten/Elementary School



What are the expectations when a child begins preschool school?

Transition

- ↴ Assessment conducted to determine eligibility for special education and related services
- ↴ Eligibility for services is based on the presence of a **disability** rather than **delayed development**
- ↴ Focus shifts from *Individualized Family Service Plan* (IFSP) to *Individualized Education Program* (IEP)

Preschool Program

- Building key knowledge and skills (or **learning foundations**) in order to promote early learning and development
 - Language development
 - Social/emotional development
 - Large and small motor skills
- Emphasis on play and active sensory experiences to facilitate learning through discovery and hands-on interactions



What are the expectations when a child begins elementary school?

Transition

- ↳ Assessment conducted to determine whether services are still required and to assist with educational planning
- ↳ Focus shifts from **learning foundations** to **state standards**

Kindergarten/Elementary Programs

- Building key knowledge and academic skills in order to promote success in college, career, and life
 - English Language Arts
 - Mathematics
 - Next Generation Science Standards, etc.
- Emphasis on developing critical thinking, problem solving, and analytical skills





How do school districts help students with special needs handle changes?

- ↳ Parent Input
 - ↳ One Page Description
- ↳ Well developed IEPs
- ↳ Appropriate transition planning
 - ↳ Observation of proposed placement/program
 - ↳ Social stories
- ↳ Parent-School Collaboration
 - ↳ Home-school communication systems

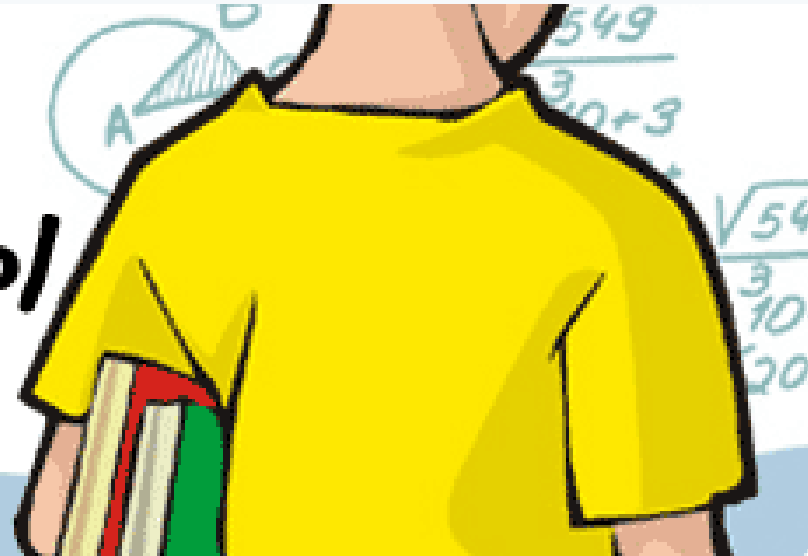


How can parents prepare for the changes that will be coming?

- ↳ Create a “One-Page Description”
- ↳ Focus on:
 - ↳ Building independence
 - ↳ IMPORTANT: Your child does NOT need to be toilet-trained to be in school!
 - ↳ Providing socialization opportunities
- ↳ Know your community resources
 - ↳ School of residence
 - ↳ What additional resources are available through your local school?
 - ↳ Parent engagement opportunities
 - ↳ Regional Center
- ↳ Throughout the IEP process
 - ↳ Keep an open line of communication in order to develop a genuinely collaborative relationship with your school and IEP team.

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Moving to Middle School



Jolene Bowman, SAUSD



Big Changes!

- A bigger campus with more teachers and students
- The need to move from one class to another throughout the day
- Longer school day, more instructional minutes
- Going to & dressing out for PE
- An increase in homework and the need for more planning and organization
- Increased focus on academics and grades
- Social pressures to be accepted and belong
- Move from the trimester system to the semester system

Big Changes!

- Increasing independence from parents and the need to express individuality
- Elective classes to start exploring interests
- Opportunities for Extracurricular activities
- Opportunities for school wide fun events: dances, games, spirit week, lunchtime activities, etc.



How do school districts help students with special needs prepare for changes?

- Middle School Fairs
- Field trips to the student's respective middle schools
- Orientation Sessions/Summer Bridge
- Classroom Discussions
- Peer Mentors, Meet and Greet Sessions
- Technology integration: virtual tours, school websites, exposure to the digital tools used in the middle school setting, how to check Aeries, etc.
- Classroom activities: transition journals and scrapbooks
- Collaboration with parents: information sessions, workshops and open houses
- Transition IEPs

What to expect at a transition IEP

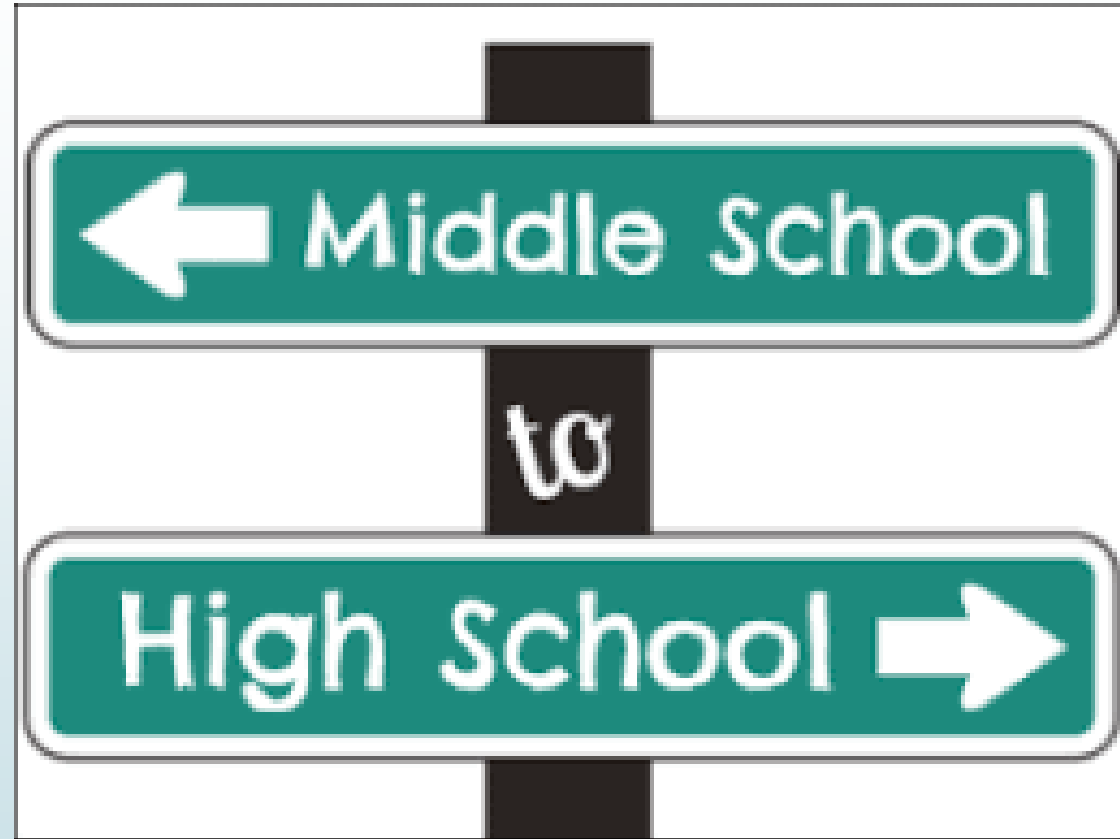
- Parent Questions and Input
- Student Progress
- Goals
- Accommodations/modifications
- Services: minutes will adjust to accommodate the longer school day and different format
- Program Overview of Receiving School (meet the receiving school team!)
- Possibly talk about electives/mainstreaming inclusion opportunities
- Special factors
- This is a great time to begin including your student in the IEP meeting!





How to prepare for your child's transition IEP

- Review current IEP before the meeting
- Bring your celebrations and questions to the transition IEP meeting. You know your child best and your input is very valuable!
- Talk to your child to start preparing them
- Ask questions about transition activities and bridge programs
- Talk about your concerns
- Build a network with the new team, establish a support system and the lines of communication for your child



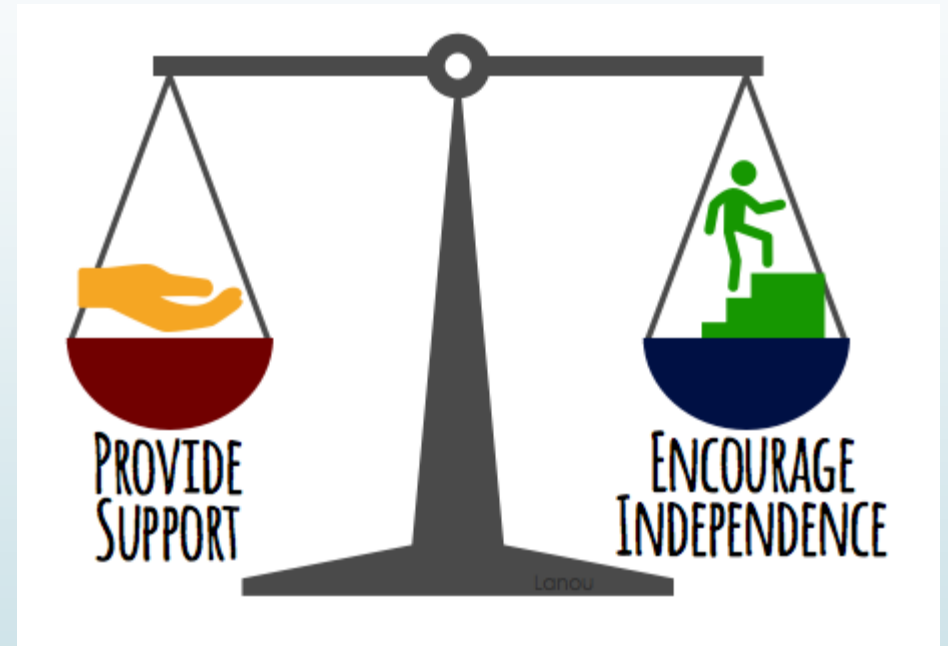
Karena Gibbs, IUSD

Middle School to High School

Karena Gibbs, IUSD

In high school, there are new situations that come with growing independence, such as:

- using self-advocacy skills
- choosing classes
- attending social, cultural, and sporting events
- increased organizational skills and homework expectations
- developing goals and planning for the future
- Understanding Diploma types and requirements for graduation



Hold a transition IEP meeting to outline transition activities



- ▶ At the transition meeting you can expect staff from the high school to attend the meeting and speak about the school/program
 - ▶ Parents and students can ask questions
 - ▶ The IEP will discuss the IEP goals/accommodations and modifications
 - ▶ The IEP team will offer FAPE and discuss special circumstances/services and special factors
 - ▶ The team will discuss electives, athletics, sports and other school activities that the student may want to participate in
 - ▶ A schedule will be created for the student based on each student's unique needs
 - ▶ The team will also discuss special transition activities that will help facilitate the transition for students from middle school to high school

How do school districts help students with special needs handle changes?

► Activities to support transition:

- Team to team articulation from middle school staff to high school staff
- Collaborative Community-Based Instruction (CBI) activities between middle and high schools
- Open House invitations to the new high school
- Opportunities to join high school campus activities (e.g., pep rallies)
- Program tours/tour campus and identify classrooms on schedule
- Parent nights or other events held by the high school for incoming families
- Registration day and meet new teachers
- Social stories
- Transition meetings





How can parents prepare for the changes that will be coming?

- ▶ Take your student to the high school campus on the weekend to become familiar with the new environment and location of classes on schedule
- ▶ Attend a high school event (sports team, play, musical etc.)
- ▶ Talk with your student about their new school, new teachers, and new friends
- ▶ Check out the school website, their social media page, and engage with the parent community at the high school
- ▶ Familiarize yourself with the bell schedule, school clubs, and extra curricular activities available at the school
- ▶ Attend transition activities provided by the school
- ▶ Understand the Individualized Transition Plan and graduation requirements

UNDERSTAND DIPLOMA TYPES

Tina Carpenter, AUHSD



**CERTIFICATE OF
COMPLETION**



DIPLOMA



ALTERNATIVE DIPLOMA



What is the California Alternative Pathway to a Diploma?

Effective January 2022, Students with exceptional needs attending a school district, county office of education, charter school, or state special school can graduate from high school through a newly defined diploma pathway by meeting the following criteria as referenced in the student's individualized education program:

LEAs must exempt students who meet the above criteria from all local coursework and other requirements that are in addition to statewide coursework requirements, as defined in *EC 51225.3*.

How is the Alternative Pathway to a Diploma Different from the Standard (A-G) Diploma?

- **Education (FAPE) provided through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, achievement of the Alternative Diploma will not terminate a student's FAPE.**
- **Students with exceptional needs who achieve an Alternative Diploma will be able to remain in school until their 22nd birthday and those who choose to do so will continue to receive services under IDEA.**

Diploma Type	Who is Eligible?	Terminates FAPE (Yes or No)	Included in Graduation rate	Coursework Requirements	Testing Requirements
Standard Diploma or Higher (A-G)	Students with or without a disability	Yes -terminates FAPE	Yes	Students complete required course credits	Eligible to participate in statewide and district assessments
Alternative Applied Studies Diploma	Students with a disability eligible for the California Alternative Assessment	No - students are still eligible for FAPE services until age 22	Yes	Students completes required course credits aligned with California Alternate Standards.	Eligible to participate in the California Alternative Assessment.
Certificate of Completion	Students with a disability unable to earn a Standard or Alternative Diploma	No - students are still eligible for FAPE services until age 22	No	Meets IEP goals	Eligible to participate in statewide assessments as indicated in the IEP.

Who is Eligible?



Must be a 9th grader by 2022 school year and later.



Must be a student with exceptional needs with a current IEP.

[AB 51225.31](#)

[Updated August 2023](#)



Eligible to take the California Alternate Assessment (CAA)

[CAA Decision Tree](#)



Complete state standards aligned courses to meet statewide coursework requirements



Common Core State Standards: Fewer, Clearer, Higher

“The goal of the Common Core State Standards is to focus on the knowledge and skills needed by all students so they can be successful in college and careers. This goal applies to all students. **Student who are receiving special education services are no exception.** They too are expected to be challenged to excel within the general education curriculum based on the Common Core State Standards.”

International Center for Leadership in Education (February 2011)

Adult Transition Program (ATP)

Post-Secondary Transition: Ray Bueche, SVUSD

Transitioning out of high school is common for all youth. All youth need to prepare for adult life roles as:

Workers



Family Members



Members of Community



Why Adult Transition Program?

- Provides a community-based learning model using the Individualized transition plan (ITP), Education, Employment, and Independent Living as a road map for post-secondary success.
- ATP is not high school. We do not have bell schedules, classes, or periods.
- Instead, we focus on what skills students can acquire in a classroom setting and apply in the community.

Education	Employment	Independent Living
Functional Reading Functional Math Functional Time Functional Writing Functional Money	Stages of Vocational Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Prevocational •Microbusiness •Non Profit Businesses •For Profit •Paid Work Experience •Job Retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal hygiene & self-care (including feeding, bathing, hand washing, oral hygiene, and illness) • Housekeeping (laundering, organizing, cleaning fixtures, etc.) • Social skills/interactions • Following step-by-step instructions • Staying on task • Self-advocating • Identifying sources for assistance and requesting assistance when necessary • Self-coping skills

Community-Based Instruction (CBI)

Community-based instruction is to have students apply and practice the concepts and skills that they learn at school in the community. CBI aims to provide students with “real-life” experiences, to provide them with a variety of meaningful learning opportunities which will help them succeed in the community and increase their independence and self-esteem.

Some examples of skills:

- Vocational and Job Training
- Community Signs and Symbols
- Travel and Mobility Training
- Money Skills and Purchasing
- Communication (Socially, as well as Needs and Wants, etc.)

Big T and Little t

- Transition services are mandated by federal law in IDEA. School districts must assess needs and develop meaningful goals for all students with an IEP by age 16.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): local educational agencies (LEAs) are responsible for **preparing students with disabilities for adult life** through a **post-school transition plan** that is **updated annually** [34 CFR §300.320(b)].

Big “T” Services

Transition services
Special Education services through Diploma or age out at 22
Community-Based Instruction (CBI)

• Little “t” Services

- Supplemental transition related services provided by programs like WorkAbility I, TPP, CEC/ROP (Career Pathways) that support students toward their post-school outcomes.
- Guided by program/grant/project parameters.



What can families do to support transition

- ↓ Attend Transition IEP meetings
- ↓ Encourage as much independence as possible
- ↓ Learn about disability-related needs and relevant support services
- ↓ Learn and practice appropriate communication & collaboration techniques for outside agencies
- ↓ Start thinking about and determining the need for financial support (SSI, Cal-Optima, DOR, RCOC, CAL ABLE)

Additional Resources...

Employment and Post Secondary Education Padlet

<https://padlet.com/CCFRC/AdultEmploymentPostSecondary>

- Community College Options
- Employment Exploration and Preparation (DOR and RCOC options)
- Day programs through RCOC

Ask the Experts ZOOM conversations:

These conversations will take place most Thursdays of each month from September 2020 through June 2021 between 11:30 AM-12:30 PM.

21	Work-Based Learning Experiences (Part 2) ✓ WorkAbility I	Ray Bueche Renee Melton	o Esperanza/SVUSD Coordinator/Administrator o Career Link Supervisor	SVUSD Esperanza Learning Center Irvine USD	2/18/21
	✓ Transition Partnership Project (TPP) ✓ Community-Based & Virtual Job Shadows	Amy Tingirides	o Transition Services Coordinator	Laguna Beach USD	
22	Using the Orange County Transition Planning Resource Directory	Janice Almaraz	o Vocational Education Consultant	Orange County Department of Education	2/25/21
23	Spirit League Sports & Additional Recreation Programs	Melissa Cory	o Director & Parent	Parent	3/4/21
24	State Council on Developmental Disabilities Services & Resources	Christine Tolbert	o Advocate	State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) Orange County	3/11/21
25	RCOC Comfort Connection/Family Resources Center	Kathleen McFarlin	o Manager Family Support & Community Outreach, Comfort Connection	RCOC	3/18/21
26	College 2 Career Program	Marta Garnez	o C2C Program Manager	North Orange Continuing Education	3/25/21
27	Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)	Arturo Cazares Linda O'Neal	o Associate Director Employment o Transition Specialist	RCOC CU TPI, SDSU & RCOC	4/15/21
28	Employment Preparation for Individuals with Autism	Tiffany Jameson Jessica Lee	o Managing Partner o Executive Director	Grit & Flow & Parent The Spectrum Works	4/22/21
29	Career Pathway Focus on Employment Preparation & Competitive Integrated Employment	Richard Rosenberg Linda O'Neal	o Transition Specialist	CU TPI, SDSU & CSULA	4/29/21
30	How and When to Use Emergency Services ... Responding to Law Enforcement & First Responders	Stuart Haskins Sandra Perez	o Executive Director o Program Director	CU TPI, SDSU & RCOC Get Safe	5/6/21
31	WorkAbility I (K-12 Programs) & WorkAbility III (Community College)	Sherry Travis Lorri Guy	o WorkAbility I Director o WorkAbility III Director	Garden Grove USD North Orange Continuing Education	5/13/21
32	Mobility Training Program	Lorri Guy	o Special Projects Manager o Disability Support Services	North Orange Continuing Education	5/20/21
33	Preparing to Live Independently with Support	Margot Johnson Leah Saitz	o Co-Director & Family o Supported & Independent Living Services Coordinator	Diagnostic Center, South & Family RCOC	5/27/21
34	Affordable Housing	Leah Saitz Jack Stanton	o Supported & Independent Living Services Coordinator o Associate Director o Supported & Independent Living Services	RCOC	6/3/21

If you have any questions regarding the Zoom Conversations, please call...
Arturo Cazares, Associate Director Employment at (714) 796-5183.





General Tips for Transitions

Alma 'Jocelyn' Escobar, RCOOC

Lourdes Albalbisi, RCOOC

- Best Mode of Communication/Who is your IEP team?
- Transition IEP Meeting
- School Observations
- Importance of a One-Page Description
- Importance of a 30-day IEP meetings
- Importance of School observations

Best mode of communication

It is important that parents obtain the **contact information** (name, title and email) of your IEP team EVERY school year.

It is highly encouraged for parents to communicate **via email** to minimize confusion and create a written record (documentation).



Remember: All communication should be professional, focus on the child and communicate with the entire team. It is best to communicate in writing or document a verbal conversation in writing so there is no confusion.

IEP team includes:

- **School Principal**
- **School Psychologist**
- **Special Education teacher(s)**
- **School Nurse (if applicable)**
- Specialist(s) providing the related services (OT, Speech, AT, Behavior team)

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Transition IEP meetings. Don't Wait Until the End of the School Year

Transition meetings, which are separate from the annual IEP meeting, are an opportunity for parents to address questions about their child's upcoming transition. These meetings are often scheduled during the last few weeks of the school year, which can be an issue if there are concerns regarding the proposed placement.

To ensure ample time to come to an agreement about placement, it's a good idea for the IEP transition meeting to take place **early in the spring semester**. This allows for collaborative discussions about the placement recommendation and school tours by parents to support a smooth transition.

Like any other IEP meeting, the request for an early IEP transition meeting should be **submitted in writing by the parent**.

Parents should ensure that a **representative from the proposed school(s)** is present to answer parent questions about the campus and its program overall, along with campus safety, school protocols and schedule.

Requesting School Observations

Parents can request a school observation (via email) to get an idea of their child's classroom, have an opportunity to meet the classroom team and witness their behaviors and interactions with others.

*You can email this request to your school principal and cc' IEP team

Sample email:

Hello Mrs./Mr. [name of school principal],
I wanted to request a school observation for my child (first, last name, DOB xx-xx-xxxx). I specifically would like the opportunity to observe him/her during his/her [i.e. academic classes, unstructured time, science class, lunch, etc.]. Please let me know when this observation can be arranged. Please feel free to reach out to me. Thank you.



Consider creating a **One Page Description...**

A **One-page description** is a document that captures all the important information about your child and how they need to be supported. This document should be emailed to your IEP team during the first week of school.

Your service coordinator can help you create your child's one-page description.

Visit <https://sheffkids.co.uk/resources/> to access free templates.

<p>MY STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- WHAT DO I DO WELL IN SCHOOL?- WHAT DO I DO WELL AT HOME OR IN MY COMMUNITY- WHAT DO OTHER PEOPLE SAY ARE MY STRENGTHS?	<p>MY INTERESTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-What do I like to do when I am not in school?-What activities or organizations do I enjoy participating in?What are my hobbies?
<p>MY NEEDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-What are the accommodations that help me?-How can others help me?-What are some things that are difficult for me?	<p>MY PREFERENCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-What works for me-What helps me be successful?-Where do I see myself in the future:<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Living?-Working?

Consider requesting a 30-day IEP meeting

A 30-day IEP meeting is a great opportunity to be able to meet your new IEP team, agree on a regular communication system, obtain progress on goals, and discuss any concerns.

[Name]
[Address]
[City], CA [Zip Code]
[Telephone Number]

[Date]

[Director/Principal's Name]
Director of Special Education [OR Principal of [School]]
[School District Name]

Re: [Student]

Dear Director/Principal [Name]:

I am the [parent/guardian] of [Student], who is currently enrolled in [Grade Level] at [School Name]. [Student] receives special education services because of [his/her/their] [disability/diagnoses].

I am requesting the [District Name] hold a 30-day IEP meeting for my [child/student] so that we can have the opportunity to be able to meet our new IEP team, agree on a regular communication system, obtain progress on goals and discuss [any/current] concerns. [OPTIONAL: Despite [his/her/their] existing IEP, [Student] has been having some problems at school. Describe any problems that your child is experiencing at school. For example, are the services offered in the IEP been effective? Are there new concerns related to their health, behavior, or disability? Does your child need new goals, different services, more assessments, or different placement?]

I understand the District must hold an IEP meeting within 30 days of my request. The following three dates work for me: [provide specific dates that you and your team are available]. Once we agree upon a date and time, please send me a Meeting Notice via email for this IEP meeting.

If you have questions please email me at [email address]. Thank you in advance for your prompt action regarding this request.

Sincerely,

[Name]



Questions?

