IEP Goal Writing: Using Data Effectively

# Purpose

The rule changes that will take place in July 2022 include changes to the content of the Individualized Education programming for students, including changes to goal writing. These rule changes affect section 2363.7, Content of Individual Education Program (IEP) (34 CFR §300.320), with specific revision to sections (b)(1) and (b)(2). The rule states that measurable annual goals related to the child's present levels of academic and functional performance shall use pertinent data to inform the development of appropriate goals and objectives and be written as measurable short-term objectives or benchmarks with projected dates for accomplishment, including a description of the evaluation procedures, including the specific data that will be used to assess goals progress.

The changes for goal writing include using pertinent data to inform the development of appropriate goals and objectives. Assessing goal progress shall also include the specific data for measurement. It is the expectation that individual student data will inform the development of writing goals and objectives and will be used to monitor progress on goals.

It is the responsibility of the district to improve students' academic outcomes, monitor progress, and train administrators and teachers on how to write appropriate IEPs that meet the expanded definition of Free and Appropriate public education. As a result of Endrew F. (2017), each child's educational program must be “appropriately ambitious in light of their circumstances, and every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives. Individualized education program goals shall be ambitious, regardless of the nature of the student's disability. Every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives. A district must offer an Individualized Education Program that is reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances.”

# Using Data Effectively

The Present levels of educational and functional performance should provide a concise overview of student’s current skills and serve as the basis of the student’s program for the upcoming year. Within the IEP educators describe the student’s present levels of educational performance including the student’s functional performance, abilities, acquired skills and strengths relative to standards and/or grade level expectations. Educators briefly highlight how the disability affects the student’s involvement and progress in the general curriculum or, for preschool children, participation in age-appropriate activities.

Within the IEP, the present levels of educational/functional performance for certain areas may include standardized test results, current classroom level of educational performance, current classroom level of functional performance, grade expectations for educational/functional performance.

Sources of data that can provide educators information for an IEP include but are not limited to:

* Special Education Assessments
* IEP Progress Monitoring
* Other Assessments
* Observations
* Student Input
* Parent and Family Input
* Educator and Related Services Provider Input
* Grade Level Expectations
* Behavioral Data
* State Assessments

# Resources

The IRIS Center is a national center dedicated to improving education outcomes for all children, especially those with disabilities birth through age twenty-one, through the use of effective evidence-based practices and interventions. Monitoring Progress Towards Meeting IEP Goals document information brief outlines a systematic approach to monitoring a student’s progress. It describes how to select a progress monitoring measure, collect and graph the data, and analyze that data to make informed decisions.

[Essential Elements of Comprehensive Data Literacy](https://ncsi-library.wested.org/resources/735) by The National Center Systemic Improvement. Developing a solid foundational knowledge of data literacy is integral to building role-specific knowledge and building capacity of educators to use and apply these skills appropriately. However, the definition of data literacy is inconsistent and often too narrowly applied within the field of education. National experts and technical assistance service providers from multiple centers embarked on a journey to more comprehensively and consistently define the essential elements of data literacy in education.

The National Center on Intensive Intervention, at the American Institutes for Research provides resources, [training materials](https://intensiveintervention.org/training/dbi-training-materials), and tools on [Data-Based Individualization](https://intensiveintervention.org/data-based-individualization). The [Using Academic Progress Monitoring for Individualized Instructional Planning](https://intensiveintervention.org/resource/using-academic-progress-monitoring-individualized-instructional-planning) discusses various approaches to progress monitoring, focusing on the value and implications of using progress monitoring to track the growth of students with intensive academic needs. The webinar provides a step by step walk through of the process for using progress monitoring data to make instructional decisions for individual students and provides student level examples.

The webinar: [Strategies for Setting Data-Driven Behavioral Individualized Education Program Goals](https://intensiveintervention.org/resource/webinar-strategies-setting-data-driven-behavioral-IEP-goals) challenges current thinking about how to set appropriately ambitious and measurable behavioral goals in light of the 2017 Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District decision by the United States Supreme Court. This webinar shares how to set ambitious behavioral goals for students by using a valid, reliable progress monitoring measure, and how to write measurable and realistic goals focused on the replacement behavior. This webinar is a companion to the [Strategies for Setting Data-Driven Behavioral Individualized Education Program Goals Guide](https://intensiveintervention.org/resource/high-quality-behavior-IEP-goals).

To request professional development from the Agency of Education, please complete our [Special Education Professional Development Request Form](https://education.vermont.gov/webform/special-education-professional-development-request-form).