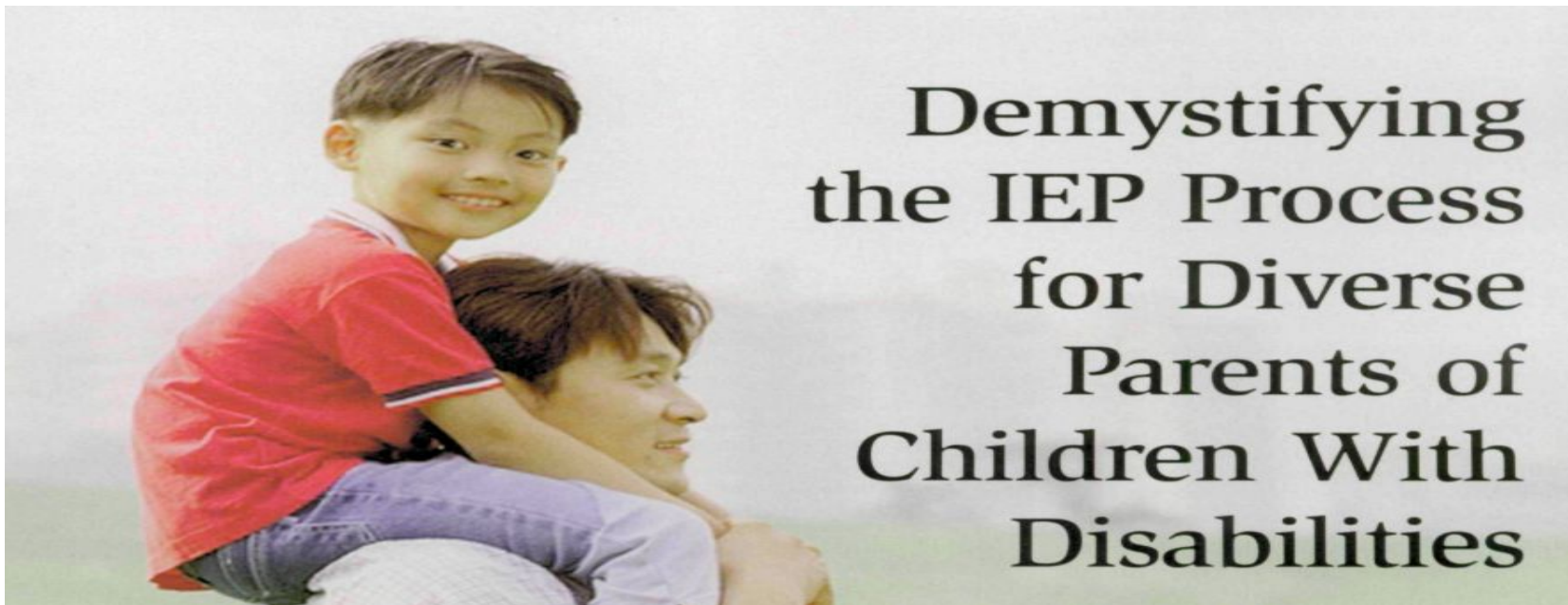




BPS Office of
**English
Learners**



Ellen Kelleher - OEL /Special Ed

Objectives

1. Help parents/guardians have a better understanding of the Special Education Eligibility Determination Process
1. Help parents/guardians become engaged participants in the development and implementation of an effective Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Brief Special Education Law Introduction

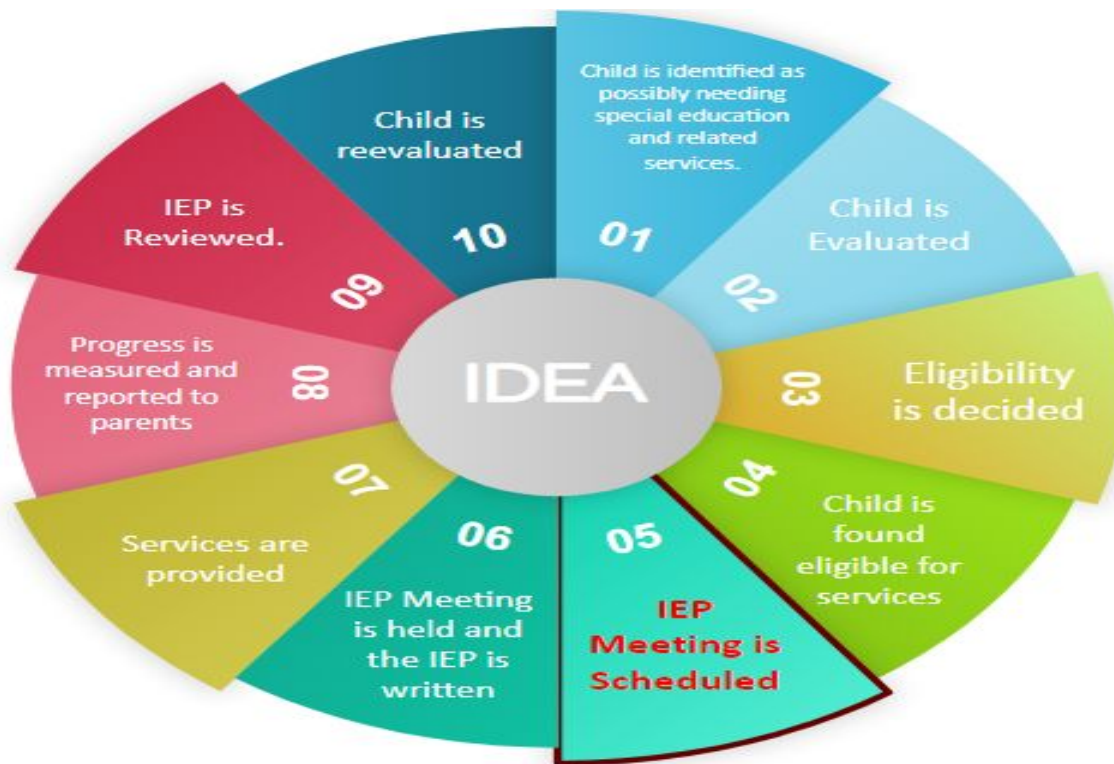
Laws concerning Special Education, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA, 2006) were enacted to ensure that all children with disabilities, age 3 to 21, receive a free and appropriate public education as well as services that address their disability related needs.

Boston Public Schools is mandated to have a team of individuals hold an annual individualized education (IEP) meeting for each child with a disability.

The team of individuals should include, but not limited to parents/guardians, special education teachers, general education teachers and service providers (e.g. OT, PT, SLP, Psych, etc.) and as appropriate, the student with disabilities.

Active parental involvement in the IEP process is strongly emphasized in IDEA. The underlying assumption of this expectation is when the parents/guardians are actively involved in making the decisions regarding special education services and placement, their children benefit.

The Basic Special Education Process Under IDEA



Parent Preparation for IEP Meeting

Parents who are new to the United States or new to the Special Education Eligibility Process in general, may find the special education process intimidating and overwhelming.

Before the first or annual IEP meeting:

- Gather information about your child: medical information, work samples, report cards, progress reports, past IEPs, classroom observations, independent evaluations, therapists' reports, State assessments and most importantly, assessments/observations anecdotal history based on your own first-hand knowledge.
- Don't be afraid to dream big! Draft a vision statement with your child's input, if appropriate. Describe future goals for academics, behavior, post-secondary education, independence and employment.
- Assess your child's present level of ability in reading, math, language, attention, social skills, emotional skills, fine and gross motor skills, self-care and technology. Even if you are not a trained educator, your assessment is invaluable; you know your child better than anyone else.
- Consider inviting a trusted friend to attend the IEP meeting with you as an advocate/notetaker.
- If you need translation/interpretation services, please notify the Special Education Coordinator at your school so that the appropriate language support is scheduled for the IEP meeting.
- Review the Parents Procedural Safeguards Brochure that was sent with the IEP meeting notices.

IEP Team Meeting Participants

Interpreter
(if needed)

6

1

The Student
(if over 14)

District Representative

5



2

Parent

Specialists, Related Services, Other

4

3

General and/or the Special Education Teacher

During the IEP Meeting

- Be informed, strong voice, advocating for the best interests of your child. Listen respectfully to all meeting participants. Don't be afraid to ask as many questions as needed.
- Expect goals that address a specific need, are measurable and appropriately challenging.
- Find out how progress will be measured and when will you be provided with progress reports.
- Consider related services that may be needed, such as therapies: speech, OT, PT, APE, counseling
- Note which modifications and accommodations are being proposed: for example: preferential seating close to the teacher, frequent breaks, clarified directions, extra processing time, shorter assignments, etc.
- Come to a consensus about where IEP services will be delivered, keeping in mind that it must be the least restrictive environment: with a consult, within the general education classroom, within the special education classroom or any combination.
- Start early discussing what will happen after high school. Consider now what will pave the way for a successful post-secondary education, employment and independent living.

Special Education Disabilities

What is a disability: A set of behaviors that impede learning and adversely impact school performance. It could fall under one of the following categories:

**Developmental
Delay**

**Emotional
Impairment**

**Health
Impairment**

**Intellectual
Impairment**

**Neurological
Impairment**

**Physical
Impairment**

**Sensory
Impairment**

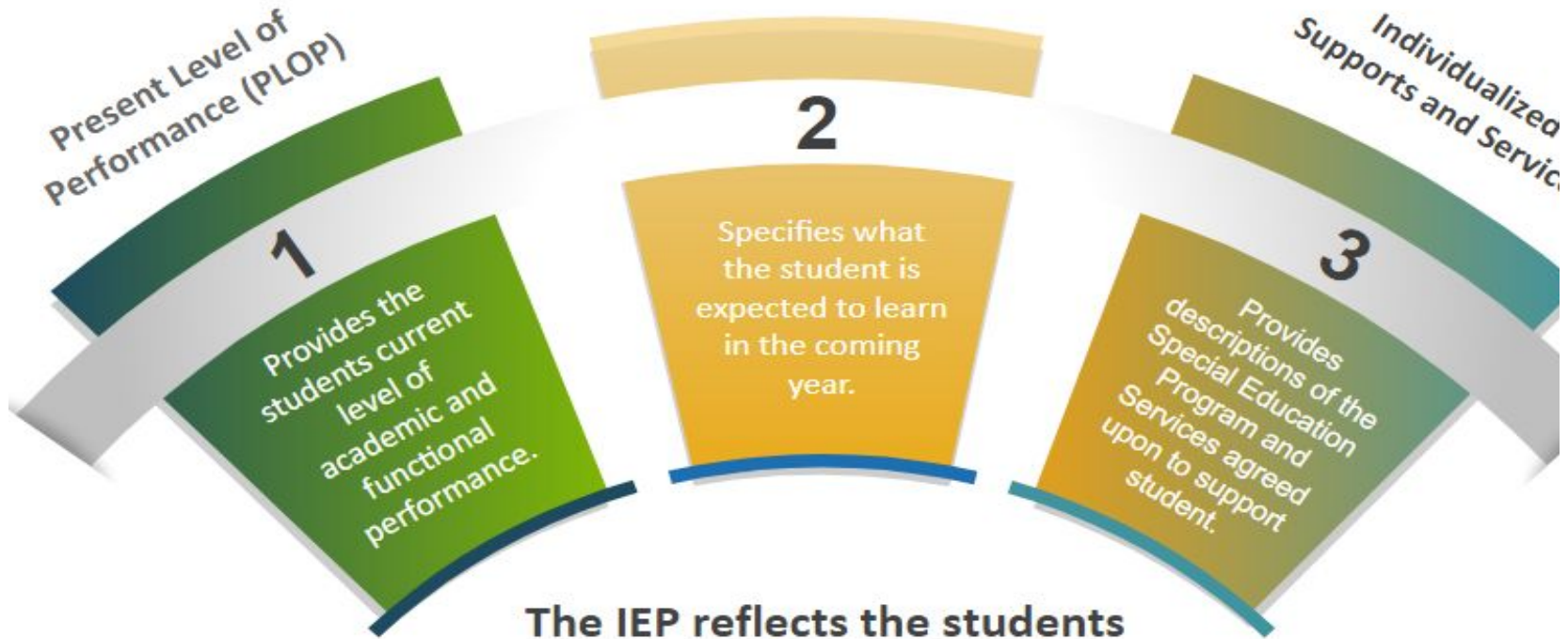
**Specific Learning
Disability**

Autism

**Communication
Impairment**

What's Covered During the IEP Meeting

Annual Goals



The IEP reflects the students

After the IEP Meeting

- Explain to your child any changes that may be proposed and the reason for the changes, so they are not surprised or upset by unexpected changes in their routine.
- Monitor your child's progress. If there are significant gains, a substantial lack of progress or a new issue that needs to be addressed, request that the IEP team reconvene.
- Ask for a communication log or teacher emails (daily, weekly or monthly) to make sure you are made aware of any school issues, concerns or successes
- If you are not in agreement with the evaluations or Team decision, you may ask the Coordinator for guidance on next steps.

Resources

- [Anatomy of an IEP](#): Provides an overview of an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, [Special Education Disability Definitions and Related Links](#)
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, [Individualized Education Program \(IEP\)](#), www.doe.mass.edu/sped/iep/
- [A Parent's Guide to Special Education](#), www.fcsn.org/parents-guide
- [Quick Reference Guide for IEP Forms and Notices](#),
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/iep/forms/pdf/qkref.pdf>
- [Special Education Dictionary of Terms](#), www.specialeducationguide.com/special-education-dictionary/
- Massachusetts Teachers Association, Special Education: [Understanding Federal and State Statutory Requirements](#)
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, [Special Education Parent's Rights in Special Education Handouts](#)
- [Common Special Education Terms and Definitions](#)
- Demystifying the IEP Process for Diverse Parents of Children with Disabilities -
http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/olms2/data/ck/sites/271/files/Week03_Lo.pdf

Thank You!

