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## SESSION 3: GLOSSARY OF EDUCATION TERMS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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Content available at:

<http://www.ndss.org/Advocacy/Advocacy-101/Glossary-of-Terms/> and  
<http://dc.gov/DCPS/In+the+Classroom/Special+Education/Common+Terms+in+Special+Education>

### **IDEA: THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT**

IDEA is a critically important civil rights law guaranteeing education to all children with disabilities, was passed in 1975. Prior to its passage one million children with disabilities were not permitted to attend school in the US and several million children with disabilities were receiving inadequate education. Hallmarks of the law are the mandate for a free and appropriate education for students with disabilities (FAPE) through the provision of special education and related services, due process guarantees and other important safeguards for students and families, the requirement that education be delivered in the least restrictive environment (LRE) , and a clearly defined role for parents in the design of the student's educational program through participation in the development of an annual individualized education program (IEP). This law is periodically reviewed and revised by Congress through a reauthorization process.

### **FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION (FAPE)**

The Individuals with Education Act (IDEA) defines FAPE as "free appropriate public education". This means the child receives special education and related services provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge, that the special education delivered include an appropriate preschool, elementary school or secondary school education that meets the standards established by a State education agency and is delivered in conformity with the requirements of the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). IDEA requires that a student with a disability be provided FAPE in the least restrictive environment (LRE).



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Special education and related services that:

- Are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge;
- Meet the standards of the State Educational Agency, including the requirements of this party
- Include an appropriate preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education; and are provided in conformity with an Individualized Education Program

### **LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)**

LRE is a core component of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which provides that a student with a disability must receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. The LRE provisions of IDEA require that the general education classroom be considered by the IEP team before consideration of more restrictive placements, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in general education classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. This legislative language creates a strong presumption that the appropriate placement for students with disabilities is in the general education classroom and that schools must provide the necessary supports for this placement to be successful.

### **ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT (ESEA)**

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), passed in 1965 as part of President Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty," called for the creation of equal education opportunities for disadvantaged children. It established school system



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accountability for students and provided federal funding for elementary and secondary education. This extensive piece of legislation also provides funds for professional development, instructional materials, educational programs, and the support and encouragement of parental involvement in the education of their child. The most recent reauthorization of ESEA was called the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).

### **ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUESTS**

In 2011, the US Department of Education started permitted states to apply for a waiver for some of the key provisions in NCLB. The application is called an ESEA Flexibility Request and contains details about how schools will be held accountable for the college and career readiness of its students and how teachers and principals will be evaluated. Civil rights and disability advocates have concerns about the impact these waivers will have on school accountability for the academic performance of the disadvantaged students who are the focus of NCLB.

### **NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT (NCLB)**

NCLB was passed by Congress with bipartisan support as an effort to improve the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 2001. The federal legislation focused on advancing education outcomes for disadvantaged students. NCLB requires States to assess all students on the state academic content standards in grades 3-8 and one year during high school, as a condition for receiving federal funding. In addition to testing, the law requires the collection and reporting of data for students by race and poverty and other subgroups such as students with limited English proficiency and disabilities. Schools that fail to meet annual goals for math and English/Language Arts for every subgroup (referred to as adequate



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yearly progress- AYP) are subject to a continuum of consequences from technical assistance to corrective action and even restructuring. Students in schools so identified are to be given the opportunity to attend a better public school and/or receive tutoring. In 2012, most states submitted ESEA Flexibility Requests and were granted waivers from many NCLB requirements, including AYP.

### **INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)**

The term 'individualized education program' or 'IEP' refers to a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with federal law. The IEP guides a special education student's learning. It is created for children between the ages of 3 and 22. It describes the amount of time that the child will spend receiving special education services, any related services the child will receive, and academic/behavioral expectations.

The IEP team meets at least once a year to talk about the child's progress and make any needed changes to the plan.

### **IEP TEAM**

The IEP Team, or Individualized Education Program Team, is a group of individuals including:

- The **parent(s)** of the child;
- At least **one general education teacher** of the child;
- At least **one special education teacher**;
- A **representative of the Local Education Authority (LEA)** who is qualified to provide, or supervises the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities, and is knowledgeable about the general curriculum and the availability of resources of the LEA;



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- An **individual who can interpret assessment results** and the related instructional implications;
- Other individuals, at the discretion of the parent or the LEA, who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel, if appropriate; and
- The child, if appropriate.

The IEP team is responsible for identifying and evaluating children with disabilities, developing, reviewing, or revising an IEP for a child with a disability, and determining the placement of a child with a disability in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

### **INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLAN (IFSP)**

IFSP is a written, legal document required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that is developed and reviewed annually by a multidisciplinary team, including the parents of a child who receives early intervention services. The IFSP identifies the measureable results or outcomes to be achieved, the services necessary to meet the unique needs of the child and the family, the natural environments in which services will be provided and the identification of a service coordinator.

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION COORDINATOR (SEC) OR IEP CASE MANAGER**

The point of contact for all special education matters at a DCPS school. SECs and IEP case managers are responsible for identifying children who may have a disability and for organizing all meetings related to special education. At some DCPS schools, a child's teacher serves as his or her IEP case manager.



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### **STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM (SST)**

Each school has a core group of professionals that leads the work around all areas of student support in the building. This group of core professionals is known as the Student Support Team. The group includes, but is not limited to, administrators, guidance counselors, mental health professionals, nurses, math and literacy coaches, and attendance counselors. As individuals, these professionals serve as resources for teachers and suggest targeted strategies and interventions in their area of expertise. As a group, they meet regularly to collaborate and address more complex cases of individual children who require targeted support.

### **FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT (FBA) AND BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLAN (BIP)**

An FBA is a process used for students who have behavioral or emotional problems believed to be interfering with their educational progress or the progress of other students. During this process, the child's IEP team identifies specific challenging behavior, the purpose of that behavior, and whether the behavior is interfering with the child's educational progress. The FBA leads to the development of a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) plan to teach acceptable alternative behavior. The BIP focuses on teaching new behaviors and skills, but also can require:

- Modification of the school or classroom environment and activities;
- Adaptation of curriculum and instructional delivery; and
- Changes to the teacher-student relationship that has been promoting undesirable behavior.

### **INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION (IEE)**

An independent educational evaluation is an evaluation of a child that is done by a qualified examiner who does not work for DCPS. According to IDEA, parents have



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the right to an IEE administered at public expense when a parent disputes the results of the school's evaluation.

### **PRIOR NOTICE OF PLACEMENT (PNOP) OR PRIOR WRITTEN NOTICE (PWN)**

According to IDEA, parents must be notified in their native language before a school district makes or denies any changes to a child's IEP. This includes before a child is evaluated, moved to or out of non-public placement and before changes in services are made. The purpose of this notice is to give parents an opportunity to respond to the proposed changes before they occur.

### **DC COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (DC CAS)**

The District of Columbia Comprehensive Assessment System, (DC CAS), assesses students on reading and math in grades 3-8 and 10, science in grades 5 and 8, biology in high school, and composition in grades 4, 7 and 10. If a child receives special education services, his or her IEP team will decide whether the child requires accommodations and/or modifications to take the DC CAS.

### **DC COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM – ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIO (DC CAS-ALT)**

The DC CAS-Alt is for students with severe cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in the general assessment (DC CAS) even with accommodations and/or modifications. The DC CAS-Alt is a portfolio assessment that teachers administer over the course of the year, focusing on required state standards.

### **EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES**

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires states to provide early intervention services to children under three years of age who are experiencing developmental delays or has a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a



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high probability of resulting in developmental delay. Some states have elected to extend these services until age 5. The services are designed in the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) to meet the child's needs in the areas of physical, cognitive, communication social/emotional or adaptive development. These services are provided at no cost except where Federal or State law provides for a system of payments by families, including a schedule of sliding fees and are supposed to be delivered in the child's natural environment (e.g. home or childcare setting). Examples of services include, but are not limited to, family training, counseling, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, assistive technology devices and transportation services.

### **OFFICE OF STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION (OSSE)**

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education is the state education agency for the District. As a result, OSSE sets statewide policies, provides resources and support, and ensures accountability for all public education in the District.

### **REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (RSA)**

RSA, a division of the DC Department on Disability Services, provides services to adults whose disabilities are a barrier to finding and maintaining competitive employment. In partnership with DCPS, RSA can begin working with DCPS students as early as age 14 to begin the process of determining whether their disability will be a barrier to finding and maintaining competitive employment.

### **INCLUSION**

Inclusive education is an approach to the delivery of education based on ensuring that students with disabilities are not educated separately from their non-disabled peers. A student with disability in inclusive education receives special education





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and related services as defined in the student's IEP in the student's neighborhood school and in general education classes comprised of age appropriate peers and where instruction provides access to the core academic curriculum studied by non-disabled peers. Many studies show the benefits of inclusion for students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.

### **INDEPENDENT LIVING**

One of the purposes of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to prepare students with disabilities for independent living, which means living in the community with the opportunity to be as self-sufficient as possible. People with disabilities are the best experts on their own needs, having crucial and valuable perspective to contribute and deserving of equal opportunity to decide how to live, work, and take part in their communities, particularly in reference to services that powerfully affect their day-to-day lives and access to independence.

### **ADVOCACY**

A political process by an individual or a group which aims to influence public-policy and resource allocation decisions.

### **LOBBYING**

A form of advocacy where a direct approach is made to legislators on an issue which plays a significant role in modern politics.

### **REAUTHORIZATION**

This term refers to the process by which Congress periodically reviews and prescribes changes, additions, and deletions to existing statutes. The intent of this process is to adjust current programs to meet the nation's changing needs.



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### **SYSTEMS CHANGE**

Systems change is the development of new policies, programs, use of resources, and service delivery by a community or governmental unit (school district, local, state or federal government, etc.). Effective systems change is built on broad stakeholder involvement in such improvement and typically involves a variety of agencies, organizations, and advocates.

### **TRANSITION**

Transition by students with disabilities refers to the movement from one program or setting to another. Such transitions include services for infants and toddlers to preschool, then to elementary school, middle school and high school. Planning for the transition from school to postsecondary education, employment and independent living should start early in the child's life. The requirement for the age transition services must start varies by state, but must start no later than age 16.

### **UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)**

A scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that accommodate individual learning differences by providing flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged. UDL reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient.