

Table 4.1
Preparing for the IEP Meeting

Review the information from the multidisciplinary team’s evaluation meeting (see Chapter 3)	Reviewing the referral for testing and historical records relating to the student’s performance and challenges in the classroom will give you a general idea of strengths and weaknesses. The evaluation report should enhance this understanding; note that the student’s strengths and weaknesses should establish the basis for the development of the IEP.
	Talk to individuals who were a part of the multidisciplinary team about their impressions of the education this student should receive. Ask them about any parts of the multidisciplinary team report that either you do not understand or with which you need clarification.
Review any previous IEPs	Specifically, look at the goals listed on previous IEPs. Compare them with the results of the evaluation report. If possible, talk with the teachers who implemented previous IEPs, and ask them for suggestions about what worked, what did not work, and what might be done differently.
Meet with relevant team members and school staff	Although assigning responsibility for aspects of the student’s IEP will be a decision made at the meeting, talk to different members to get an idea of recommendations that might be offered for the particular student’s education program. Identify the general education or content-area teachers most likely to be involved in the education of this student.
	Talk with current and past teachers about what has worked with this student, and where there have been problems. Knowing this information will provide you with valuable insight into the educational programming the student should receive.
Consider staffing requirements and resources	For the different teachers or related services personnel who might be involved with this student, look at the caseload or numbers of students for which they are responsible. State departments of education have strict guidelines about the class sizes in special education classrooms. Although it might not be your responsibility to monitor this number, you may need to bring it to the attention of others if the numbers are too high.
	If you are the least bit unsure about your school’s ability to provide potential interventions, programs, technology tools, or other supports, seek clarification from your supervisor.

Table 4.1 (continued)

Preparing for the IEP Meeting

Schedule the meeting	<p>Identify a time convenient to the student’s parent or guardian, and do your best to get them involved, even if it takes several telephone calls, e-mails, or notices sent home. The IEP is a form of communication between the school and the student’s family; your responsibility as principal is to ensure your school makes every effort to include them in the process. (And, for your own protection, you should document your efforts to do so.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure the parents are aware they have the right to invite to the meeting someone they view as knowledgeable about their child’s disability to provide assistance in the development of the IEP (34 C.F.R. § 300.344[a][6]).• As necessary, arrange for an interpreter for parents who use sign language, or for those whose preferred language is not English; ensure that the meeting is accessible to any adult with a disability.
	<p>The meeting also should be convenient for the special education teacher most likely to be implementing or overseeing the plan. The types of decisions that are made at IEP meetings are those that cannot be done in the classroom and with limited time. Identify as this point person someone who is a good “fit” for the student’s needs, and who has the time and the caseload that permits participation. Make it easier for teachers to participate by arranging to cover their classes.</p>
	<p>Students participate in any IEP meetings that relate to their postsecondary transition goals; for these students, ensure that the meeting is scheduled at a time that is convenient for them, too.</p>
Conduct student observations	<p>Observe students in the classroom setting and other areas of the school. Note the academic behavior, social behavior, and how they handle frustration. Observe interactions with other students, how students seek assistance from others, and how well organized they appear.</p>
	<p>Encourage others—those who are knowledgeable about the student’s disability or those who will be involved in implementing the IEP—to observe the student as well. Although, they will get to know the student after the IEP meeting, this will help them in participating in the development of the IEP.</p>