Assuring the Documentation of Frequency, Location, and Duration of Accommodations on the IEP

All special education and related services, supplementary aids and services (which include accommodations), program modifications and supports for school personnel that are included on students' IEPs are required to be documented so that all involved with developing and implementing the IEP have a clear understanding of what will be provided to the student.

In addition to indicating the projected date for the beginning of the services, the IEP also requires statements that describe:

- What is going to be provided? (description of the service to be provided)
- When, where, and for how long will it be provided? (documentation of frequency, location & duration of the service)

While this documentation is required for all services, this guidance document was designed to specifically address the above required statements as they relate to accommodations, which are a supplementary aid and service.

What is going to be provided?

IEP teams should discuss in detail what specific accommodations a given student needs. It is not good practice to list any or all accommodations that a teacher might use during instruction or assessment – the IEP should document only the accommodations that an individual student must be provided in order to advance appropriately toward meeting annual goals, to advance in the general curriculum and be educated with their peers.

When beginning the discussion about what accommodations may be needed, the IEP team should refer to the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFPs) section of the IEP. Any needs that the student has should be reflected in the statements in that section. For example, the information may indicate that a student has difficulty attending, has a need for frequent breaks, has difficulty transferring thoughts into written form, is several grade levels behind in reading or math skills, has difficulty concentrating in noisy settings, etc.

It is this type of information that the IEP team should consider as they determine what, if any, accommodations a student may need. Again, it should not be a discussion about what the teacher might ever use or even what might be beneficial to students in general – the

discussion should be about what the individual student reasonably needs to advance appropriately toward meeting annual goals, advance in the general curriculum, and be educated with their peers. Accommodations should be selected based on data from PLAAFPs, progress monitoring, evaluation results, and classroom performance. When an accommodation is written into an IEP, it must be implemented, as written.

Typically, any accommodations in the IEP which are regularly used for instruction should also be used on classroom assessments for students with IEPs. Some accommodations regularly used for instruction may also be used during district and state assessments as well. School districts may establish their own policies for accommodations which are appropriate for district-wide assessments, and the State identifies the accommodations which are appropriate for state assessments (see The Kansas Accessibility Manual: How to Select, Administer and Evaluate Use of Accessibility Supports for All Students.) Especially when it comes to accommodations for assessments, it is important to be familiar with local or state guidance about appropriate accommodations.

Once the team has determined what accommodations are necessary for a student, each accommodation should be described clearly so there is no question about what is to be provided. For example, for a student with a learning disability who is reading several years below grade level, the IEP team might determine that the student will need to have independent reading assignments available in an auditory format.

When, where, and for how long will it be provided?

After an IEP team has determined what accommodations are necessary for the student, the team should then consider when, where and for how long each accommodation will be provided. The result of this consideration is what will allow the team to document the frequency, location and duration of each accommodation.

When is the service going to be provided? (frequency)

The consideration of this question can sometimes be more complicated than expected with regard to accommodations. IEP team members often report that the need for accommodations can change under differing conditions or circumstances.

Consider the example from above where the IEP team determines that a student with a learning disability in reading needs to have independent reading assignments available in a format that allows the student to listen to the assignment. How often should the student receive that accommodation? With further discussion the team might determine that the student is able to read independently when materials are able to be provided at her instructional level but cannot read independently in grade level textbooks or on tests where the reading level is above her instructional level.

Because the need for an accommodation may be different depending on the situation, often the frequency of an accommodation is documented by describing the condition under which the accommodation will occur. Accommodations must be provided consistently based on the specific conditions outlined in the accommodation.

Continuing with the reading example above, the frequency might be documented with a statement such as:

> Whenever Sally is given an independent reading assignment that requires reading text above her current instructional reading level, she will be provided the text through text-to-speech or human reader.

This provides everyone with the knowledge needed to determine how often the accommodation should occur. In this case, everyone should know that the frequency with which this accommodation is to be provided is: every time she is expected to read independently in text above her instructional reading level.

Of course, sometimes the frequency of an accommodation may be able to be described in terms of daily, weekly, monthly, etc. An example of this may be a student who the IEP team knows needs to have a daily check-in before leaving school to ensure assignments are written down and materials to support homework are being taken home.

Where is the service going to be provided? (location)

Once the IEP team knows what service is to be provided and how often the student will need it, the team must also determine the location of where the service will occur.

Is the accommodation for a student needed in all locations (e.g. general classroom, special education classroom, on a job site, on the playground, in the hallway, on the bus, etc.?) Or, is it needed only in one location? It is not good practice just to list every location a student might be and document that the accommodation is needed everywhere. The IEP team should carefully consider where the need exists and determine the location accordingly.

In our example of Sally above, the team might have determined that the only location she needs the accommodation is in the general education classroom as that is where the textbook content generally exceeds her instructional reading level. So, now, putting together what the accommodation is and the statement of frequency and location, the documentation of the accommodations might look something like:

> Whenever Sally is given an independent reading assignment in the general education classroom that requires reading text above her current instructional reading level, she will be provided the text through text to speech or human reader.

This statement includes what the accommodation is, how often (frequency) she is to receive it and where (location) it will be provided.

How long is the service going to be provided? (duration)

The IEP start and end date specify when the IEP is in effect, and sometimes teams mistakenly assume that the duration of services is simply the length of time the IEP will be in effect. While it is true that all services contained in the IEP will occur during that timeframe, the duration of each service to be provided must also be documented. Duration refers to how long the accommodation is provided during a given activity or setting, not the overall IEP effective dates.

The IEP team should discuss each accommodation and decide how long (i.e. the duration of) the service should be provided each time it is provided. Is it going to happen for the length of the language arts block, math class, for 60 minutes, etc.? If it is an accommodation for which it is easy to pinpoint a specific time, using minutes may be the clearest. For example, for a student who can be successful in math if he has fewer independent problems to solve, a statement might look something like:

> Each day, during the last 15 minutes of 3rd grade math class, Tim will be assigned no more than 3 problems to solve independently.

However, because some accommodations are more difficult to quantify in terms of a specific timeframe, how the team describes the duration of the service may vary from accommodation to accommodation. For example, with the example of Sally from above, and knowing that some reading assignments will take longer to complete than others, the complete accommodation statement that includes the duration of the service might look something like:

> Whenever Sally is given an independent reading assignment in the general education classroom that requires reading text above her current instructional reading level, she will be provided the text through text-to-speech or human reader until the reading assignment is completed.

In this example:

- Frequency = Whenever given an independent reading assignment that requires reading text above her instructional reading level
- Location = In any general education classroom
- Duration = Through completion of the reading assignment

In Summary…

Accommodations, like any other part of the IEP, should be individualized to the needs of the student and written in such a way that clearly describes what is to be provided in terms of frequency, location and duration. The next section provides numerous examples of accommodations that meet these requirements.

Each of the following examples provides guidance of how an accommodation might be written, giving options for frequency, location and duration. This is not an exhaustive list of accommodations, and it is expected that these statements would not show up "as is" on IEPs but, rather, be customized according to the individual needs of students that can be linked back to needs contained in the PLAAPF section of the IEP. For your convenience, the examples have been organized according to function in 5 areas.

Presentation Examples:

- When lecture is utilized as the primary instructional format in a general education or special education classroom, an audio recording of the entire lecture will be made available to the student within ___school day(s) following the lecture.

- When written materials are utilized in a general education or special education classroom, the materials will be provided in large print for the length of the class period.
- When the student is given materials in the general education or special education classroom and the student is responsible to read independently, the materials will be provided in large print for the length of the instructional period associated with the independent reading assignment.
- When expected to take notes in the general education or special education classroom, a copy of the notes will be provided to the student prior to instruction for use during the lecture period.
- When expected to take notes in the general education or special education classroom a copy of Cloze notes will be provided to the student for use during the instructional period.
- Given an classroom assessment in a general education or special education setting (establish content areas and this should be based on an inability to READ the assessment) the assessment will be provided auditorily through text-to-speech or a human reader for the duration of the individualized testing session.
- Each time instructions are presented in written form in a general education or special education setting, the written instructions will be represented in oral form to the student for the length of the instructional period.

Response Examples:

- Given written assignments or assessments in the general education or special education classroom, the student will dictate answers to a scribe for the length of the individualized assignment or testing session.
- Given a written assessment in the general education or special education setting, the student will use speech to text to capture responses in oral form for the length of the individualized testing session.
- Given a written assessment in the general education or special education setting, the student will use a computer to type their responses for the length of the individualized testing session.
- Given a computerized assessment in a general education or special education class, the student will take the assessment in paper/pencil form for the length of the individualized testing session.
- Given a standardized assessment in the special education or general education classroom, the student will record answers directly into test booklet for the duration of the individualized testing session.

Timing:

- Given an assessment in the general education or special education classroom, the student will have a ____ minute break for every ____ minutes of testing completed for the length of the testing session.
- Given an assessment in a general education or special education class, the student will have extended time (1 ½ X) to complete the assessment.
- Given an assessment in the regular education or special education classroom, a copy of the study guide will be provided ____ days, week(s) in advance of the assessment date.

Setting:

- When visual supports (board, graphic organizers, videos, etc.) are utilized to support instruction in the general education or special education classroom, the student will be given preferential

seating to gain ready access to the visual supports for the length of the period the visual supports are used.

- Given an assessment in a general education or special education classroom, the student will be provided a space with minimal distractions to complete the assessment within the individualized testing session timeframe.
- Given an assessment in a general education or special education classroom, the student will be given the test in small group setting for the duration of the individualized testing session.
- Given an assessment in a core or elective course, the test will be administered one to one in an alternative test site for the duration of each testing session.

Test Scheduling:

- Given an assessment in a general education or special education classroom, the test will be administered in ___ sessions over ____days.
- Given an assessment in a general education or special education classroom, the test will be administered by a familiar person in the morning for the length of each individualized testing session.

For more information, contact:

Special Education

(785) 291-3097
File.Review@ksde.gov

Kansas State Department of Education
900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212
www.ksde.gov

The Kansas State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: KSDE General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, KSDE, Landon State Office Building, 900 S.W. Jackson, Suite 102, Topeka, KS 66612, (785) 296-3201.