



A Message to California's Students, Families, Educators, and Communities

Introducing the New Statewide Individualized Education Program (IEP) Template

Every student who receives special education services deserves an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that reflects who they are as a learner—their strengths, abilities, interests, aspirations, and the supports they need to access meaningful educational opportunities and achieve positive outcomes.

With this vision in mind, California has developed a new statewide IEP template designed to support a more asset-based and student-centered approach to both IEP documents and IEP meetings. The template encourages IEP teams to begin with a clear understanding of each student's strengths and abilities and to use that foundation to develop meaningful goals, expand opportunities, and support improved educational and postsecondary outcomes.

The new template is not intended to add paperwork or complexity to the IEP process. Rather, it is intended to help shift the conversation. When an IEP begins by recognizing what a student can do, who they are as a learner, and what matters to them, teams are better positioned to develop ambitious goals and consider a broader range of opportunities—including participation in general education settings, extracurricular activities, relationships with peers, and pathways to college, career, and adult life.

Ultimately, this work is about expanding opportunities for students and strengthening meaningful partnerships among students, families, educators, and other members of the IEP team.

How the Template Was Developed

The statewide IEP template was developed through a deliberate, collaborative process established in state law and informed by interest holders from across California.

The first phase of the work began with a [statewide workgroup](#) authorized through legislation enacted in 2020. The workgroup was charged with developing a standardized IEP template that could serve as a shared foundation for local educational agencies (LEAs) throughout California.

Building on that work, a second [statewide expert panel](#), authorized through legislation enacted in 2022, was convened to review, refine, and finalize the template. Together, these efforts brought diverse perspectives and experiences to the development process, including those of individuals who understand the IEP process from classrooms, schools, communities, and family settings.

The resulting template reflects years of collaboration and a shared commitment to improving the IEP experience and outcomes for California students with disabilities.

Available in the Languages Families Speak

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Meaningful family participation depends on families having access to information they can understand. In accordance with state law, the statewide IEP template has been translated into 10 of California's most commonly spoken languages, other than English.

These translations are intended to help more parents and guardians understand their child's IEP, ask informed questions, and participate meaningfully as members of the IEP team.

Translated versions of the statewide IEP template will be available beginning January 1, 2027.

Digitized and Designed to Work Across Systems

To support implementation in day-to-day practice, the statewide IEP template has been digitized within the Special Education Information System (SEIS), one of the special education information systems used by LEAs in California. For LEAs that use SEIS, this provides access to a dynamic, electronic version of the template that integrates with the data management and reporting functions used by IEP teams.

Importantly, the statewide IEP template is not limited to SEIS. It was designed so that it can also be incorporated into other special education information systems. This means that school districts, charter schools, and county offices of education can consider using the statewide template regardless of which special education information system they currently use.

In addition to versions incorporated into special education information systems, and in accordance with state law, an interactive digital version of the statewide IEP template is available to the public at no cost. This allows students, families, educators, and community members to explore the template, become familiar with its structure, and better understand its asset-based and student-centered approach.

Available for Use—Not Required

The new statewide IEP template is available for use by California LEAs; however, its use is not required.

LEAs may choose whether and when to adopt the template based on their local needs, practices, and systems.

The California Collaborative for Excellence in Education and the California Department of Education encourage LEAs, educators, students, and families to explore the template and consider how its asset-based and student-centered approach may strengthen IEP development, meaningful participation, and educational opportunities for students with disabilities.

A Resource for California's IEP Community

The statewide IEP template represents years of collaborative work and is offered to California's educational community as a resource to support high-quality, student-centered IEP development.

The template is accompanied by [resources and professional learning opportunities](#) designed to support LEAs and IEP teams. These resources include guidance for facilitating IEP meetings that elevate student voice, recognize student

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strengths and assets, promote meaningful family participation, and maintain a focus on ambitious goals and positive outcomes.

Students, families, educators, and community partners are encouraged to explore the statewide IEP template and accompanying resources and consider how they can support stronger IEP processes and expanded opportunities for California students with disabilities.
