

Special Education Requirement Professional Development Plans (PDP)

This bulletin provides local presidents and Professional Development Plan (PDP) team members with information on the requirements to include the professional development needs of teachers and other school personnel who are involved in the education of students with disabilities in the Professional Development Plan of school districts or BOCES. This bulletin also includes resources to assist PDP teams in their work regarding this requirement.

1. Are school districts and BOCES required to provide professional development to all school personnel who work with students with disabilities?

Yes. When the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized in 2004 the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) requirement was eliminated and the following requirement was added to the components of PDP in Section 100.2 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. Each school district and BOCES must now provide professional development for all professional and supplementary school staff who work with students with disabilities. Supplementary school staff includes teaching assistants and teacher aides. Each PDP team is required to conduct a needs assessment of staff, annually develop the Professional Development Plan and submit recommendations to the local Board of Education for its review by June 1. The plan must now include, but is not limited to, a description of the professional development activities provided to all professional staff and supplementary school personnel who work with students with disabilities to assure that they have the skills necessary to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

2. How are needs of these personnel to be determined?

The PDP team develops the plan based on the results of the needs assessment designed and implemented by a PDP team, teacher center, district or BOCES special education department, or outside consultant. Needs may be assessed by survey, interview, focus group, examination of student data or other process that identifies topics and processes that will help personnel to more effectively work with students with disabilities.

3. What kinds of professional development programs meet this new requirement?

The State Education Department (SED) has suggested that appropriate professional development programs to address the needs of school personnel working with students with disabilities and to accomplish the goals of this amendment may be strategies to improve outcomes for students with disabilities; school improvement in literacy; behavioral supports; quality instruction for special education.

4. What resources are available to support school districts and PDP teams in addressing these needs?

PDP Teams, school districts and BOCES should consider the following resources in developing and implementing this special education professional development component:

1. NYSUT Education and Learning Trust (ELT) can assist districts or Professional Development teams in the development of the Professional Development Plan by providing workshops and courses in conducting specific needs assessments for personnel who work with students with disabilities. www.nysut.org/elt.

Special Education Training and Resource Centers (SETRC) priorities are to work with districts designated based on poor performance under the School Performance Plan (SPP) as the districts in greatest need of assistance. They can provide workshops and consultation. <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/lsn/setrc.htm>

2. Teacher Centers administer annual needs assessments and also provide high quality, research-based, job-embedded professional development programs to school personnel in the districts and BOCES they serve. To find your local teacher center go to www.teachercenters.org.
3. The New York Higher Education Support Center for Systems Change (HESC) is an initiative of the Department's Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID). Its goals are to develop and sustain high quality inclusive teacher preparation programs and to engage in and support the professional development efforts of selected schools in the seven regions of New York State. HESC sponsors an annual conference on Inclusive Schools and Communities and also offers workshops and summer institutes for teachers. These activities are collaborative efforts among multiple partners from around the State and the nation. More information is available at <http://www.systemschange.syr.edu/hesc/index/php?>
4. A Framework for Professional Development is a document developed by New York State Education Department (NYSED) to assist teams in planning comprehensive professional development. <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ppd/frameworkprofdevelop.shtml>

Advice to Local Leaders

1. Confirm that your PDP team is meeting regularly and that the team includes a majority of teachers appointed by the union. Consider appointing general and special education teachers and supplementary school personnel who work with students with disabilities to the PDP Team.
2. Confirm compliance with all requirements of the regulation including the new one related to school personnel who work with students with disabilities.
3. Empower the PDP team to collaboratively plan and provide high quality professional development for your members.
4. Remember that it is the mutual responsibility of the district and the union and other stakeholders to design the PDP collaboratively.