

Special Education Problems of Practice

Root Cause Analysis Inquiry Guide



Student and Family Engagement

Key Questions:

1. What structures exist to measure student engagement? How is that data utilized?
What programs exist to address the needs of students?
 2. What structures are in place for engaging parents/guardians in order to facilitate their active participation in the IEP process? What structures are in place to provide opportunities for parents/ guardians to access IEP documents to ensure preparation for an IEP meeting?
 3. What home-to-school communication routines exist at the school? How are they monitored?
 4. How is absenteeism monitored? What supports are available when absenteeism is a concern?
 5. What barriers exist for students to engage in school and school-related activities?
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Academics and Achievement

Key Questions:

1. How are students with disabilities provided with ongoing access and exposure to grade-level curriculum?
 2. What is the process for aligning IEP goals with grade-level standards?
 3. How is progress toward academic goals monitored for students with disabilities?
How is this progress shared with the student, family, and other service providers?
 4. How are IEP goals and services revisited when a student is not making progress in the areas of ELA or math?
 5. What instructional strategies are in place to support students with disabilities?
 6. How are accommodations and modifications delivered in classrooms? How do special education and general education teams work together to ensure students are receiving their support?
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Inclusive Educational Environments

Key Questions:

1. How do IEP teams determine the type, frequency, and location of specialized services for students with disabilities?
 2. During IEP meetings, how are the potentially harmful effects of placement in a more restrictive environment discussed with families and as a team? What data is used to support this conversation?
 3. How does the IEP team ensure that accommodation and support options have been exhausted before consideration of a more restrictive environment? How do general education and special education administrators support this process?
 4. For students who are in regular class less than 80% of the time, what are some of the reasons or barriers? Are there any identifiable patterns or trends in the data based on school-site eligibility categories or student demographics?
 5. What beliefs do our educators, students, and families hold about the least restrictive environment?
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Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Key Questions:

1. What assessment procedures are used to determine special education eligibility?
 2. How do IEP teams determine the type, frequency, and location of specialized services for students with disabilities?
 3. During IEP meetings, how are the potentially harmful effects of placement in a more restrictive environment discussed with families and as a team? What data is used to support this conversation?
 4. How does the IEP team ensure that accommodation and support options have been exhausted before consideration of a more restrictive environment? How do general education and special education administrators support this process?
 5. How are students' goals determined and monitored throughout the school year?
 6. How often are file reviews conducted for students with disabilities?
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Preschool Environments

Key Questions:

1. How do IEP teams approach determining the level of service a student needs to address their disability? What structures are in place for making this determination?
 2. What is the current continuum of programming options?
 - a. What structures are in place to identify general education preschool partners that will support the implementation of an IEP?
 - b. Do the options available allow for inclusive opportunities to meet the needs of our students?
 - c. What processes are needed to increase general education participation for preschool students?
 3. What is the process for increasing access to a regular preschool setting? What structures are in place to assist the IEP team and making this decision?
 4. What structures are in place for progress monitoring (data monitoring and determining a student's level of need?
 5. What processes are in place to monitor and support the social-emotional-behavioral skill development of students? Who is involved in these processes?
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Assessment and Eligibility (1)

Key Questions:

1. What child find processes are in place? How are staff, families, and community partners informed about child find?
 2. When reviewing the LEA/district's referral process(es):
 - a. What methods are utilized to track and analyze referrals?
 - b. What was the length of time between referral/initial SST and assessment for special education eligibility?
 - c. What academic interventions are used before assessment? How long are they utilized before assessment?
 - d. Is the intervention process clearly defined and student progress tracked effectively during interventions?
 - e. What data is used to measure the student's response to utilized interventions?
 - f. What social-emotional interventions are used before assessment? How long are they utilized before assessment?
 - g. Are the interventions being used evidence-based?
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Assessment and Eligibility (2)

Key Questions:

3. Do assessment providers have a standard assessment report template to use?

4. What assessment procedures are used to determine special education eligibility?

What is the process of ensuring that a student is assessed in all areas of suspected disabilities?

5. What structures are in place to ensure that culturally relevant factors are considered when determining a student's eligibility for Special Education? How are these considerations documented?

6. What processes are in place to review the eligibility of students eligible for special education?



School Climate & Positive Behavior Supports

Key Questions:

1. What are the discipline policies and practices at the school? How do students, families, and educators feel about the discipline policies and practices at the school?
 2. What data collection systems are in place? Disaggregate data by student group, staff person, location, and time of day.
 3. What structures are in place to regularly collect and analyze disciplinary data (including office referrals and expulsions) by a multi-disciplinary group of staff? How often does that group meet? How are those individuals selected? What training and administrative support is provided to the group?
 4. What are positive alternatives to suspension offered at individual school sites? What training has been provided school-wide or district-wide related to alternatives to suspension? Are supports available to teachers and school leadership teams to facilitate the growth of programs that offer alternatives to suspension?
 5. If a student with a disability receives a disciplinary referral or is suspended, how is the IEP team informed? What are their next steps?
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Staffing and Retention

Key Questions:

1. How are teachers recruited?
 2. How does the LEA/district ensure that new teachers have all of the materials, curriculum, and supplementary resources needed to begin the school year?
 3. What supports are in place for new teachers? Do they have access to consistent coaching, training, and resources?
 4. What information do educators have about why teachers are leaving?
 5. What structures exist to support collaboration within and between different teams?
 6. What retention strategies are in place?
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