



Clarify timing, contents of appropriate progress reports to parents

Failing to provide appropriate IEP progress reports to parents of students with disabilities can have higher stakes than a student forgetting to give his parents his report card. Parents of students with IEPs need to know that their child is learning what he is supposed to be learning and when changes might need to be made to his programming if his progress stalls.

If your district isn't regularly providing progress reports to parents of students with disabilities that contain appropriate information, they may deny parents meaningful participation in their child's educational process, according to Jill S. Holinka, a school attorney at Jill Holinka Law, P.C. in Boise, Idaho. Depending on how long the district failed to address a student's progress, it may also be on the hook for compensatory services. Holinka shares what to include in progress reports and how to ensure parents receive them in a timely manner.

"Consistently make sure district staff and parents are on the same page about what district staff means when they say they are going to provide progress reports and have a good understanding of when those progress reports are going to be sent," Holinka said. "They need to be consistent."

Discuss timing of progress reports

The IDEA gives the example that reports can be provided quarterly, but they can be provided more often depending on the needs of the student and his goals and objectives, Holinka said. See [34 CFR 300.320\(a\)\(3\)](#). "It could be monthly," she said. "It could even be weekly." A student may have behavioral issues that need to be watched closely, Holinka said.

Be clear with parents that they may have informal discussions with staff about progress between these formal reports, but they should not be looking for progress reports daily, Holinka said. "You have parents that contact the school on a daily basis about a progress report, and it's like, 'Wait a minute,'" she said. "'We cannot do this.'"

Determine best way to provide reports

Slipping a progress report into a student's backpack is not the most reliable way to get information to parents, Holinka said. Email is likely the soundest way, as long as the parents agree and you're consistent. "If you say you are going to email the reports on a monthly basis, make sure you are emailing them on a monthly basis," she said. Email is best because both sides have proof of when it was sent, Holinka said. If parents prefer traditional mail, consider how you and the parents will prove mailing and receipt.

There is no requirement to have parents sign a student's progress report, but you should keep good records of the emails you send and designate a person on the team to manage the reports, Holinka said.

Know what to include in progress reports

Include objective evidence of progress in the report, Holinka said. For example, if a student's IEP goal is to do a task three to five times within five minutes, her progress report should include the information that the student was asked to do the task on Monday this week and she was only able to do it two out of five

times, and it took him 10 minutes. "The progress report should include quantitative data as opposed to comments that the student is lazy and is not doing the work as they should," she said.

Share progress in a user-friendly way

Share the data in an accessible way so parents understand what they are reviewing, Holinka said. You may want to use a chart or spreadsheet. Resist using jargon in the report. "The more user-friendly you can make the reports, the better," she said.

See also:

- [Address student progress with parents with these 5 strategies](#)
- [SmartStart: IEPs -- Measuring Progress](#)
- [Are They Staying on Track? Monitoring Students' Progress Under the IDEA](#), by Amy E. Slater, Esq.

[Cara Nissman](#) covers autism, school psychology, and IEP team issues for LRP Publications.

January 9, 2023

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