# An Introduction to Competency-Based IEPs for Families

**by**
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Welcome to Competency-based IEPs for Families! This presentation was created by Jill Della Vedova, School District 43 Learning Services IEP Coordinator and Jo-Anne Pearce, School District 43 Learning Services Programs and Services Zone Coordinator.

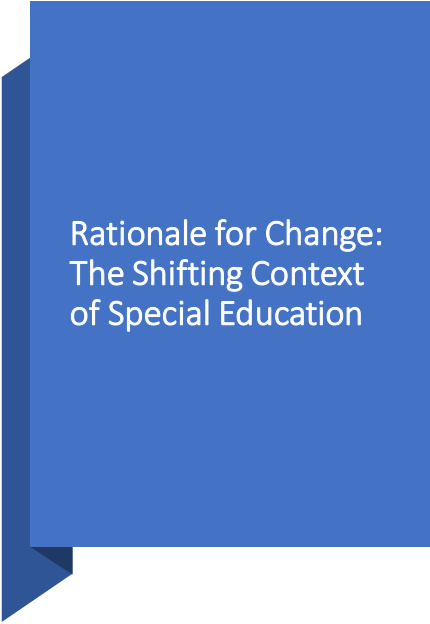Session presented October 2020 via Kinsight
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## Changing to a Competency-based IEP

- Rationale
  for Change: The Shifting Context of Special Education
- The Dream: An IEP for the 21st Century
- Comparison of Traditional and New IEPs
- More than a Document Change:
  The New IEP Process
- Unpacking the Competency-based IEP Document
- Questions

A few years ago, our school district began a transition to a new Competency-based IEP along with several districts in the province. This new IEP format and process was supported by the Ministry of Education and collaboratively developed by representatives from several school districts, the BCTF and the Provincial Audit Team. In this presentation we will look at the rationale for this change, how this IEP differs from traditional IEPs, review the new IEP process and walk you through the basic elements of the Competency-based IEP.

## Rationale for Change: The Shifting Context of Special Education

- Inclusive Education as a Human Right
- 21st Century Learning
- Equity and Accessibility

Special Education is evolving in response to several changes that are happening throughout the world.

## Inclusive Education as a Human Right

- BC Ministry of Education - shift from a medical/deficit-based model to a model that supports diverse learners
- BC Ministry of Education - supports (formerly adaptations) can be made available to any student who needs them

In August 2016, the United Nations declared Inclusive Education as a Human Right. While BC has embraced inclusive practices for many years, our Special Education model has been based on medical diagnoses and deficits. The Ministry of Education recognizes the diverse strengths and needs in our student population and to this end, it is broadening its Inclusive Education policies and procedures beyond a medical model. The Ministry has also adopted a more universal approach to providing supports (formerly adaptations) to students with diverse needs.

## 21st Century Learning

- BC Ministry of Education implements a new curriculum for all learners with a **concept-based approach to learning**, and a focus on the development of **competencies**, to foster deeper, more transferable learning
- Core Competencies are designed for all learners and include skills that have traditionally lived in Special Education (e.g. communication, social and self-regulation skills)
- Core Competencies reflect new life skills needed for the 21st Century
- Curricular and Core Competencies represent growth-based continuums that include all learners

The 21st Century ushered in the Information age and a demand for a new set of skills. Information and media literacy, critical and creative thinking as well as communication, collaboration and social skills have become as essential as academic skills. The BC Ministry of Education recently re-designed the entire K to 12 curriculum to reflect these changes. One of the biggest changes to the curriculum was the addition of Core Competencies; these represent 21st Century life skills that develop over time and are applicable from cradle to grave.

# Defining Competency

Competencies represent a combination of skills, processes, behaviours and habits of mind

Both Core and Curricular Competencies are key features of the redesigned BC curriculum. Competencies represent a combination of skills, processes, behaviours and habits of mind.
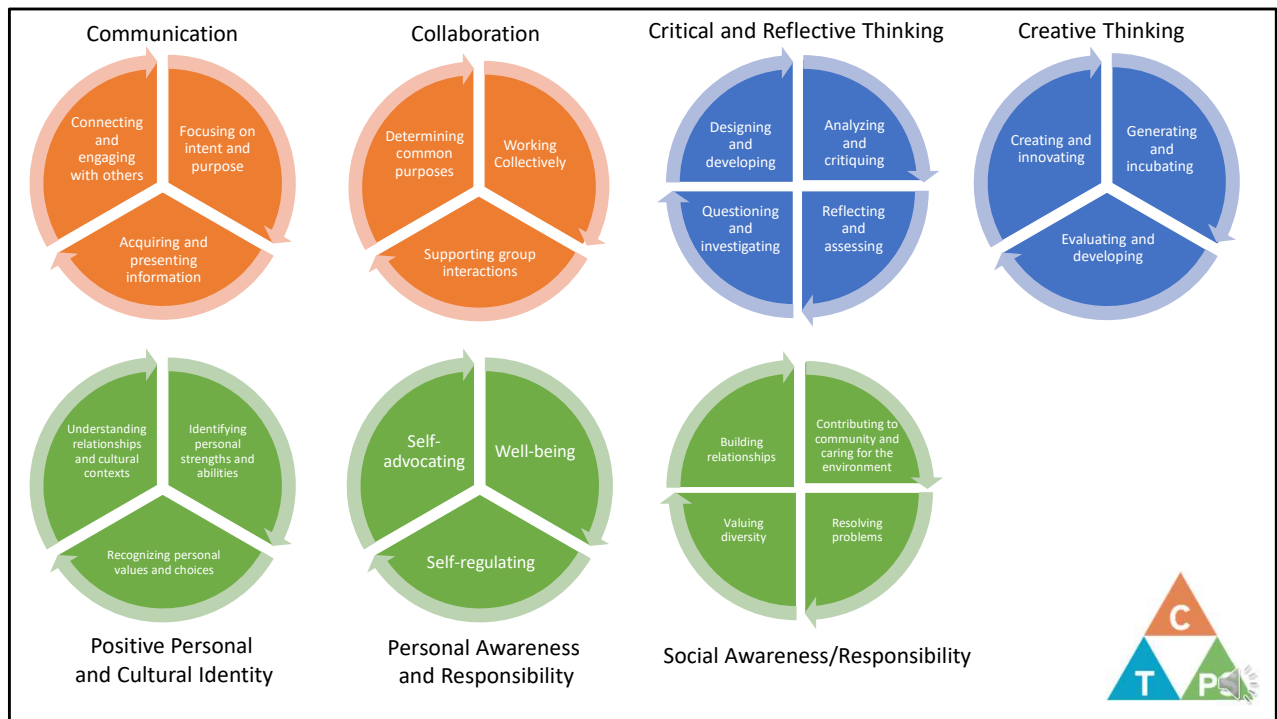
Core competencies focus on the development of Personal, Social and Intellectual skills and attributes .They are key to the development of the whole person. They are strengths-based and student-centered – focusing on what the learner currently CAN do. They are developed over the course of a student's schooling and into adulthood.

Many of the skills that were part of traditional IEPs are now imbedded in the Core Competencies that are part of the curriculum for all students. Because the competencies are developmental continuums, all students are included, but will be at different stages in different areas. For example, one student may be working on expanding their social communication using a talking board to share an idea with a friend; another student may be working on social communication by learning to give and receive feedback about a project with a group of peers. One student may be using a picture exchange symbol to request an item while another student may be developing their ability to ask and respond to questions in a job interview.

## Equity and Accessibility

- **Universal Design for Learning** Principles foster equity and accessibility through designing environmental supports that give all students an equal opportunity to succeed
- This approach offers flexibility in the way students access material, engage with it and show what they know
- This is a shift from changing the person to fit the environment to changing the environment, so it is accessible to the person

Universal design is a term borrowed from architecture where features like curb cuts and automatic doors were built into the design to avoid costly after-the-fact adaptations for individuals with disabilities. Universal Design for Learning applies the same principles to education, creating a curriculum and environment to meet the learning needs of a wide range of students, including those with disabilities and special talents. It is about providing students with the supports that they need and removing barriers in order to create equitable access to learning which is essential for authentic Inclusion.
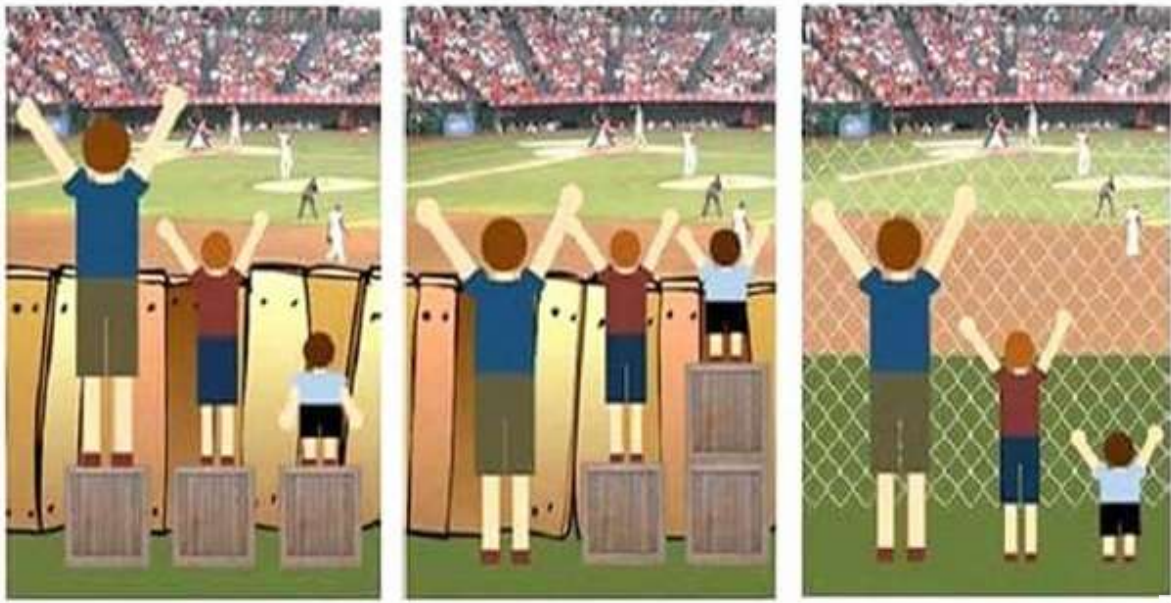
In the first picture the children are given equal supports; in the second, the children are given the supports they need after-the-fact in order to see the game; this is equitable; in the third picture the barriers are anticipated, and the fence is designed to meet the needs of all people. The third picture is an example of Universal Design.

**PJ1**     Pearce, Jo-Anne, 10/8/2020

## What if IEPs could …

- Align with the same curriculum as peers
- Be specific to the changing contexts of a student's day
- Be growth-based - shift to focus on strengths - not "Should"
- Show authentic progress over time
- Include support plans that are more universal
- Include the role of student and family more in the process
- Be student focused and seek meaningful evidence / data collection and assessment on what a student can do

The Competency-based IEP was born out of the wish for a best practice individualized planning tool that authentically reflects the intent of the redesigned curriculum, inclusive practice and the principles of equity and accessibility.

SD43 has been part of a multi-district provincial project implementing a new IEP that is reflective of the redesigned curriculum.

Several School Districts collaborated to co-create an IEP process that has student agency and self-regulated learning at its core – an IEP is for the learner! Developed out of the 'dream' - as pictured on the slide – that was envisioned by the members of the provincial working group.

The Competency-based IEP will align with the same curriculum of peers using competency-based goals that focus on growth. The student and family will be more involved in the process. Progress will be measured over time and include a variety of evidence from the various contexts of the student's day at school. Supports will be based on Universal Design principles that focus on accessibility to support authentic inclusion. The IEP will reflect the needs of the student to access the curriculum.  Some IEPs will be very short; others will be longer. You will notice that much of the confidential information that was included in previous IEPs has been removed so that

the plan is more accessible to the learner; this information is held elsewhere.
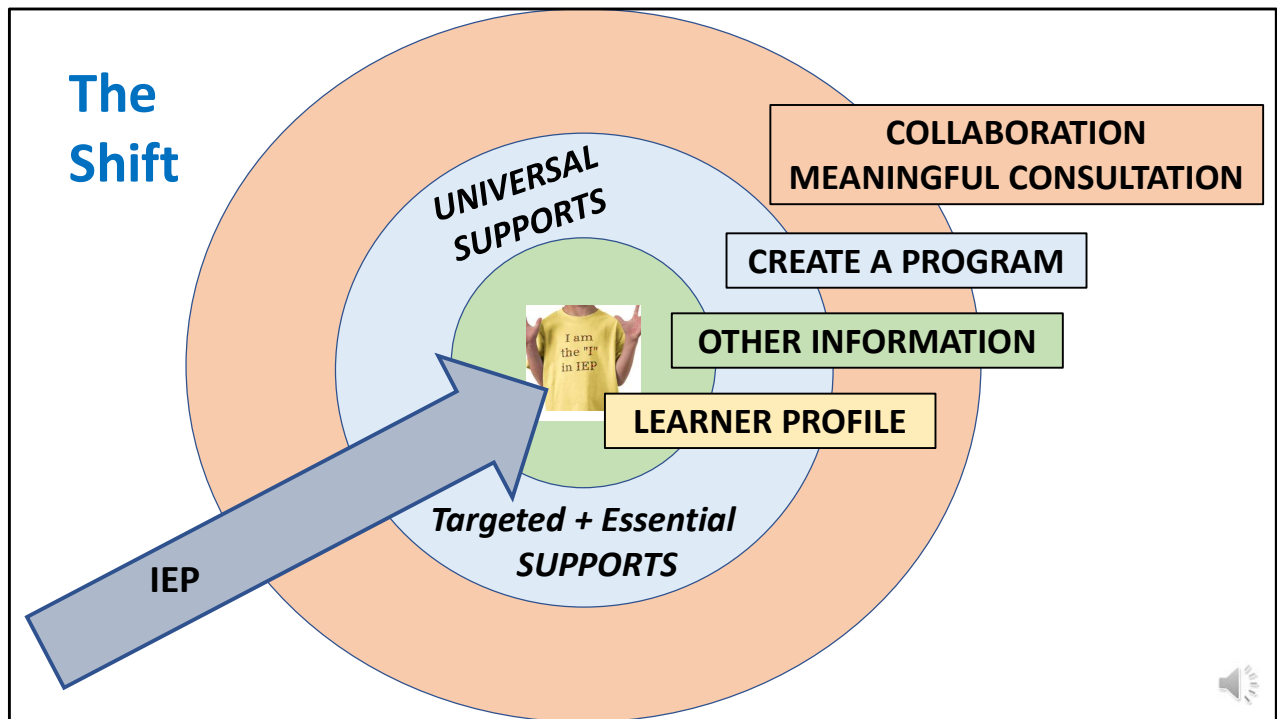
The competency-based IEP is more than just a document change; it is a shift in process as well. An intentional shift to create a more accessible focused learning plan.

The Competency-based IEP process moves away from the historic practice of IEP development - where the IEP was the entire program and developed largely in isolation for a segregated classroom setting

One that was:
- deficit based -> what we were going to do to the child to fix them so that they could be included in their classroom and community
- One that did not always reflect the voice of learner
- And one that was often written in isolation with only paper as evidence sources

Moving to a process that is:
- student centered with the creation of a Learner Profile that includes the voice of the learner as well as the larger team supporting the student
- And a process that values the development of a program that reflects the learner's strengths, interests and needs

The entire process is intended to be infused with collaboration and meaningful

consultation.

The IEP is a focused learning plan where key aspects of the Program are highlighted – the IEP development process endeavours to have consultation and collaboration at its heart. We are working to flip the traditional IEP development process: Not starting with the IEP but starting with the learner and their program.

A competency based-IEP can no longer be written in isolation with solely paper as sources. It requires consultation on an ongoing basis
with multiple voices represented including the voice of the learner, family, school personnel, and larger team.

It is no longer about what we are doing to the student – instead we ask: What can we do together with the student to support their learning?

Visual on slide provides a reference to the Program and IEP Development process
- start at centre with creation of Learner Profile and move outwards with IEP coming after program creation

IEPs will vary in length; some will be very short – others longer - match complexity with needs of the student to access the curriculum

Universal and Essential Supports will be highlighted later in the presentation.

# The CB-IEP - More than a Document Change

## Traditional IEP Process

- Information gathering (file review, assessments, checklist home)
- IEP drafted and sent home for feedback
- **IEP meeting** - October/November

## CB-IEP Process

- Development of a Learner Profile (file review, assessments, observations, student and family input)
- **Program/IEP Consultation meeting** - September/October
- IEP created as a focused learning plan based on collaborative consultation

The process of creating the Competency Based IEP is different than the more traditional/historic IEPs. It is intended to be much more collaborative with the voice of the student and family represented in the development of a comprehensive Learner Profile. The overall program and area(s) of focus (from which the IEP goals and objectives are derived) are at the heart of the consultation meetings with families. Once consultation has occurred and decisions have been made regarding the program and focus for learning, the IEP is created.

## Developing the IEP: Step 1
### Creating the Learner Profile

- **Develop a Personal and Learning Profile of the Student**
  - Interests, Learning Preferences, things you need to know about the student, Strengths, Stretches, Supports, Additional Plans (Health Care Plan, Emergency Plan, Personal Care Plan, Transition Plan etc.)

- **Gather Information from Multiple Sources**
  - Documents (IEP, report cards, assessments, data collection), People (Family, Student, Teachers, EAs etc.), Student Observations (classroom, outdoors, gym etc.), Conversation with the Student

  → **Summarize information on the IEP document**
     Include student's voice and thoughts from the team (school and family).

The first step includes the development of a Learner Profile which includes interests, learning preferences, strengths, stretches, needs and supports. The information is gathered from multiple sources including the student and their family. This information may be gathered through interviews, meetings, questionnaires, interactive observations and/or assessments.

This slide illustrates the shifting language from a deficit-based approach to a more child-centered/strengths-based approach. The IEP is also not designation specific – it is not solely written through the lens of special needs diagnosis/designation. There is a saying that many of you may be familiar with: *If you've known one child with autism, you've known **one** child with autism*. The profile that is created is strengths-based and reflects the voice of the student, their family and school team. The program and IEP goals and objectives that will be created come out of this profile. Where is the student currently in their learning, where are they going and how can we support the student to get there.

# The Learner Profile on the CB-IEP report

| Student Profile | | |
|---|---|---|
| **My Interests :** | | |
| **My Learning Preferences :** | | |
| **What You Need To Know About Me :** | | |
| Location of Evidence : . | | |

| My Learning Profile | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ **Thoughts from my team** | **Personal**<br>*What I am able to do on my own* | **Social**<br>*What I am able to do with others* | **Intellectual**<br>*How I think* |
| **My Strengths** | | | |
| **My Stretches** | | | |
| My Focus Area This Year | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| *These learning domains can inform the IEP development in these core competency areas* | **PS** Core Competency Connections<br>Personal Awareness and Responsibility<br>Positive Personal and Cultural Identity | **C C PS** Core Competency Connections<br>Communicating<br>Collaborating<br>Social Awareness and Responsibility | **T T** Core Competency Connections<br>Creative Thinking<br>Critical and Reflective Thinking |

This is an example from the front page of the CB-IEP - where the information collected to inform the student's Learner Profile is summarized. Most of the entire first page of the IEP is dedicated to the Learner Profile with information divided into two parts:
(1) the Student Profile – interests, learning preferences, other information the student, family and larger school and home teams want highlighted, and
(2) the Learning Profile – the student's strengths and stretches in three domains – Personal, Social and Intellectual – that align with the Core Competencies of the curriculum.

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## Developing the IEP: Step 2
### Develop the Student's Program

- What are the student's strengths
- What are the student's stretches
- In which areas does the student need programming support beyond what is typically offered to peers:
  - Communication
  - Personal Care
  - Self-regulation
  - Social Skills
  - Academics
- When and where (schedule), Who (SLP, Resource Teacher, Classroom Teacher), How (strategies)
- Universal and Essential supports:
  - Universal supports can be used by any student, but are essential for a particular student
  - Essential supports are designed for a particular student and are really only usable by that student

The student's individualized program is developed from the personal and learning profile that was created. The student's program will vary in complexity with their needs. For example, a student with a learning disability in math might have some regular small group teaching sessions from a resource teacher in addition to the classroom lesson as well as classroom supports such as a calculator/multiplication chart. Other students may have a more extensive individualized program that includes personal care skills, money skills, self-regulation skills and/or social interaction skills.

The program plan will include decisions on who will be responsible for each part of the program, where and when services will occur, and the strategies that will be used.

Universal and essential supports will also be put in place to support student's needs.

# Universal and Essential Supports

We all use supports to navigate our day in the different places we live our lives. Universal supports are supports that are essential for those who need them but are also useful for others. These include things like curb cuts which are essential for people in wheelchairs to navigate sidewalks, but also useful for families with strollers, travelers with luggage and people with wheeled grocery totes.

Essential supports are those that are designed for one person and really only useful for that person. These include things like glasses, hearing aids, Braille, personal visual schedules etc.

**Program Planning: Example**
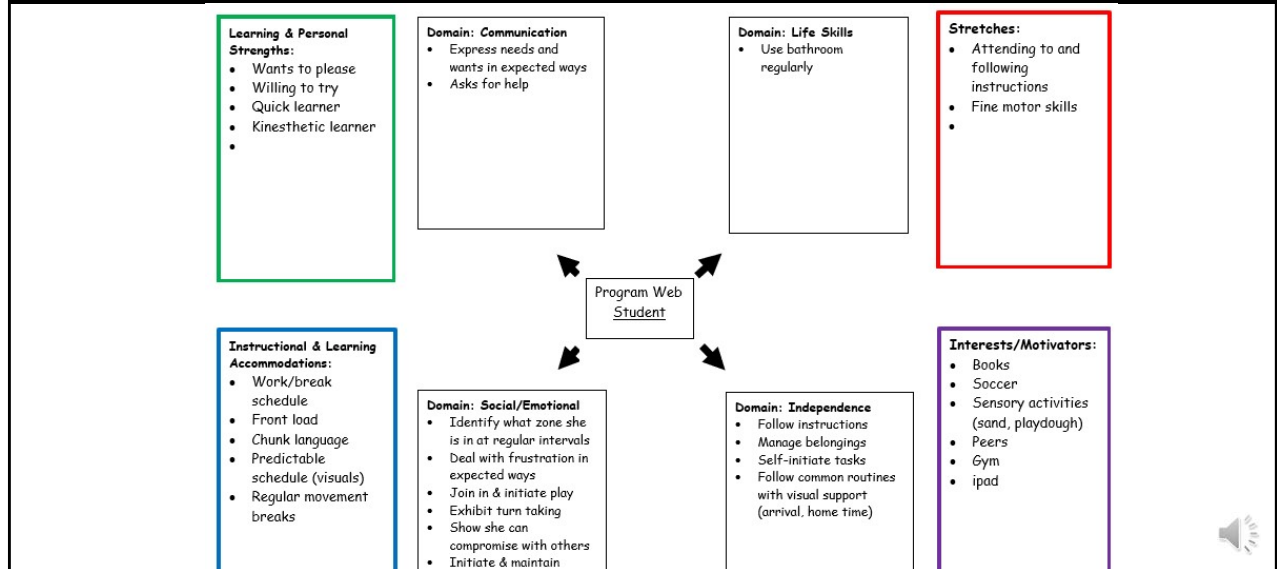
This is an example of what planning for an individualized program might look like. Additional pieces of the program planning process include creating a schedule and developing the strategies and resources that will be used to support the student's growth.

# IEP

What competencies do I want to work on?

⬇

What aspects of my program will be the focus for this term/semester/year?

As the program is developed a decision is made collaboratively with the school team, family and student on the areas that will be a focus for the student during the year. The IEP is updated throughout the year as needed.

# Core Competency Categories

**Communication**
**Collaboration**

**Creative Thinking**
**Critical and Reflective Thinking**

**Personal Awareness and Responsibility**
**Positive Personal and Cultural Identity**
**Social Awareness and Responsibility**

Usually one or two areas are selected as a focus for documenting on and IEP even though a student's program may be more extensive. These areas are collaboratively chosen based on the strengths and stretches identified in the learner Profile (personal, social and intellectual). Once the area(s) of focus is selected, the IEP goals and objectives are written using language from the Core Competencies and in some cases, the Curricular Competencies.

## Developing the IEP: Step 3
## Writing Goals and Objectives in Competency Language

- **Goals** are written using the **competency language** of the curriculum; represent the long-term vision for growth and reason for the objectives
- **Objectives** are **specific to the student** and reflect what you want them to be able to do as a step toward meeting the long-term goal
- **Strategies** outline the **methods/resources** used to support the student in reaching their objectives

**What can you do?** (baseline data/information from the personal and learning profile)

**Where are you going?** (goals/objectives)

**How will you get there?** (strategies/resources that will be used to support the student in reaching their objectives)

The goals are written using the competency language of the curriculum. The objectives are written in a way that is specific to the student. They must be measurable/observable and reflect the next steps towards meeting their long-term goal. For example, making and keeping friends is a complex process; the next step will very with the current skills and age of the student. For one child this may be learning how to ask a peer to play. For another child this may be recognizing an emotion in their friend and responding appropriately. Strategies and resources that will be used by the school team to help the student meet their objectives are also included.

Core vs. Curricular Competency Goals

**Core Competency Goals**
- All students with an IEP will have at least one core competency goal

**Curricular Competency Goals**
- Some students will have additional curricular goals

**Supplemental *or* Replacement**

FEW
REPLACEMENT

SOME
SIGNIFICANTLY ADJUSTED

MOST
Regular Curriculum
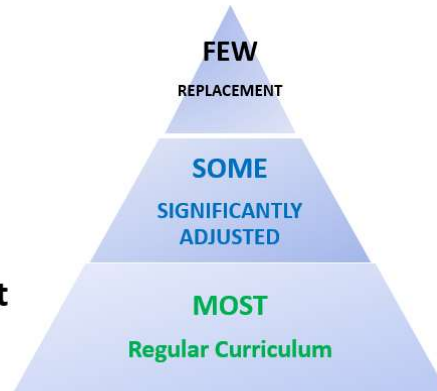
Every student with an IEP will have at least one Core Competency goal. Others will have more. Not all students will have Curricular Goals. There are two types of Curricular Goals: Supplemental and Replacement.

## Supplemental or Replacement Curriculum

- **Supplemental Curriculum** is *additional* to what the student learns in relation to peers; It does <u>not</u> alter the provincial learning standards. Students are working towards meeting the BC Graduation Program (Dogwood).

(examples: additional support for reading, writing, spelling or math)

- **Replacement Curriculum** changes what a student learns in relation to peers. It alters the provincial learning standards. Students are working towards school completion (Evergreen Certificate).

(examples: life skills, functional literacy or math, work experience)

Students who are on the regular curriculum but need additional individualized instruction in an academic area will have a Supplemental Curricular Goal. For example, a student who is receiving additional instruction for reading will have a reading goal. Students who are on the school completion pathway (Evergreen Certificate) and have a curriculum that is different in relation to their peers will have a Replacement Curricular Goal for what they are working on achieving in the course. There are examples of curricular goals and objectives a little later in the presentation.

## Examples: Core Competency Goals

**Communication**

- **Goal**: I (can) ask and respond to simple, direct questions by:
  - **Objectives:**
    o using my iPad to choose a one- or two-word response to a question
    o using my talking board to request a choice from a list of 3 items

- **Strategies/Resources**: Direct Instruction and modeling use of the iPad and talking board/Discrete Trial/Direct instruction of Vocabulary (nouns and simple adjectives, *wh* words) Resource: *Who, What Where*?

This is an example of a goal and objectives that might be written for a non-verbal student who is working on using their assistive technology and AAC device to develop their communication skills. The goal is written using language from a core competency in the area of communication. The objectives are based on the next step that the child is working on; they must be specific and observable/measurable. Please note that the word can is used in the Core Competency language; this does not mean that the child can currently demonstrate this competency; it is what they are working toward. The word 'can' in the goal statement may be deleted if this causes confusion; it is not mean to be stating what the student is already able to do , but rather, what the student is reaching for – a goal.

## Examples:  Core Competency Goals

**Personal Awareness and Responsibility**
- **Goal**: I take responsibility for my emotional well-being by:
    - **Objectives**:
        - knowing when I need a break
        - asking an adult for a break when I need it
        - using tools to help me regulate

- **Strategies/Resources**: Direct instruction in recognizing emotions in oneself; video modeling with social narratives; *Zones of Regulation; various tools such as wiggle cushion, fidget tools*

This is an example of a goal and objectives that might be written for a student who is working on strategies to help them self-regulate and cope with feelings when they feel stressed or worried.

# Examples: Curricular Competency Goal

**Supplemental Goal for Literacy (Grade 4)**

- **Goal**: I use a variety of comprehension strategies before, during and after reading, listening or viewing to deepen understanding of text by:
  - **Objectives:**
    - o reading text at my reading level with fluency
    - o using strategies to monitor for words that I don't understand

- **Strategies/Resources**: Repeated reading of text at student's independent level; pre-teach vocabulary using analogies, synonyms and visual aids; model strategies for monitoring when comprehension breaks down.

This might be a supplemental curricular goal for a student who has a reading disorder and receives small group reading instruction in addition to the classroom Language Arts program.

## Example: Curricular Competency Goal

**Replacement Goal for Science (Grade 10)**
- **Goal**: I can demonstrate a sustained intellectual curiosity about a scientific topic or problem of personal interest by:
- **Objective**:
  o creating a digital scrapbook about 20 objects in the universe that includes pictures and labels

- **Strategies:** Direct instruction in the creation of digital scrapbooks/texts at student's reading level/modeling strategies for collecting, sorting and grouping information.

This goal might be for a student with a mild intellectual disability who is on a replacement curriculum for Science 10; the student is working towards school completion (Evergreen Certificate). The goal is from the Curricular Competency for grade 10 Science that all students in the course are working on; this learner is exploring science concepts through content that is significantly different than their peers. This is reflected in the objectives.
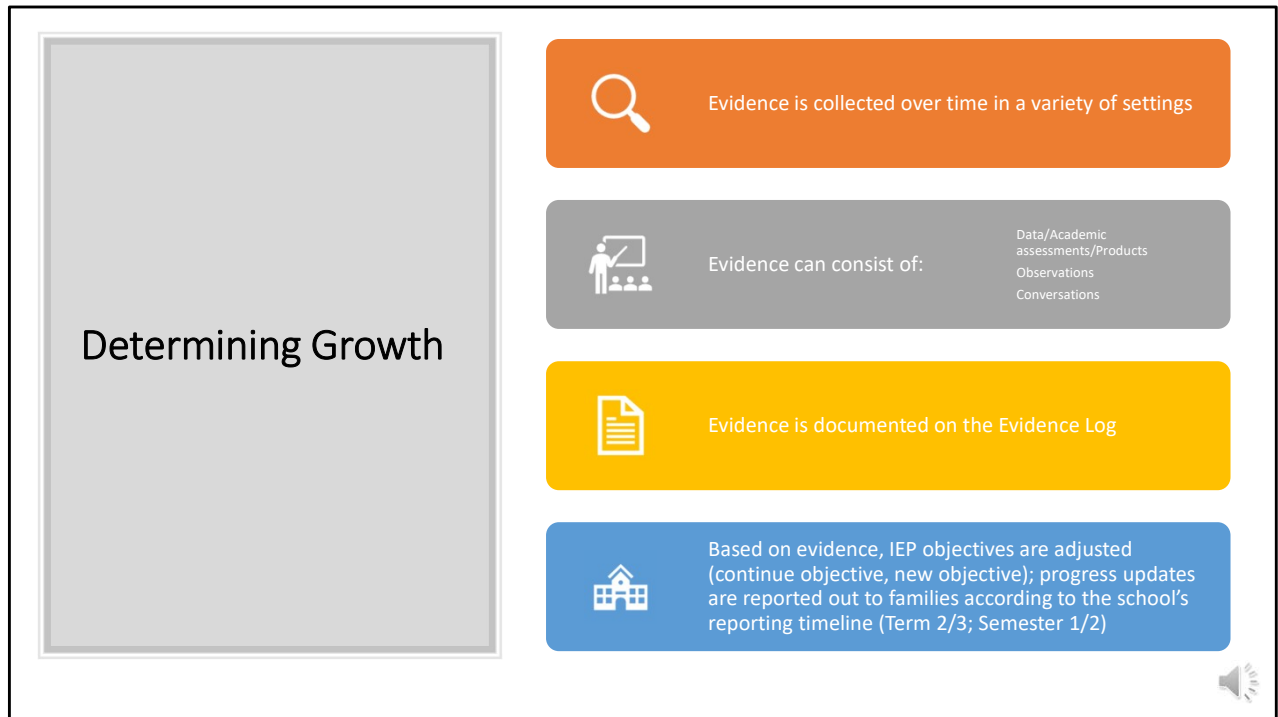
# Redefining SMART Objectives

| Personal Awareness | | I can take ownership of my goals, learning and behaviour | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | | **Strategy** | |
| by completing my morning routine independently(hang coat and back~~~, change shoes,take o~~ ~~ activity) | Qualitative Objectives What STUDENT does | Role play with E.A. and Skill Development Teacher<br>Peer Modelling<br>Direct teaching to 'read the ~~~<br>Visual Shape of the Day chart<br>Positive recognition and feedback | Strategies are VERBS What WE do |
| by identifying positive alternative choices to address sensory needs | | Direct verbal cues: "that's private" or "no thank you"<br>Social story | |

There is still a place for traditional SMART objectives when the objectives are behavior based, however, most objectives will be written in a way that more qualitative. They will be strength/growth-based, meaningful and can be observed or measured through a variety of evidence that is collected over time. (Strength-based/Meaningful/Authentic/Responsive/Triangulated)

One the CB-IEP, the Objectives are descriptive of the skills and behaviours that the student is working to develop and demonstrate. The strategies are the teaching/guidance that the student support team provides to assist the student in developing the objective/goal.

Determining Growth

Evidence is collected over time in a variety of settings

Evidence can consist of: Data/Academic assessments/Products Observations Conversations

Evidence is documented on the Evidence Log

Based on evidence, IEP objectives are adjusted (continue objective, new objective); progress updates are reported out to families according to the school's reporting timeline (Term 2/3; Semester 1/2)

In order to determine growth towards meeting IEP objectives, evidence is collected in a variety of ways and settings over time. The evidence is documented in the evidence log and IEP objectives are adjusted based on the evidence. Progress is updated and  reported twice a year at the schools formal reporting periods.

*Evidence of Learning:*
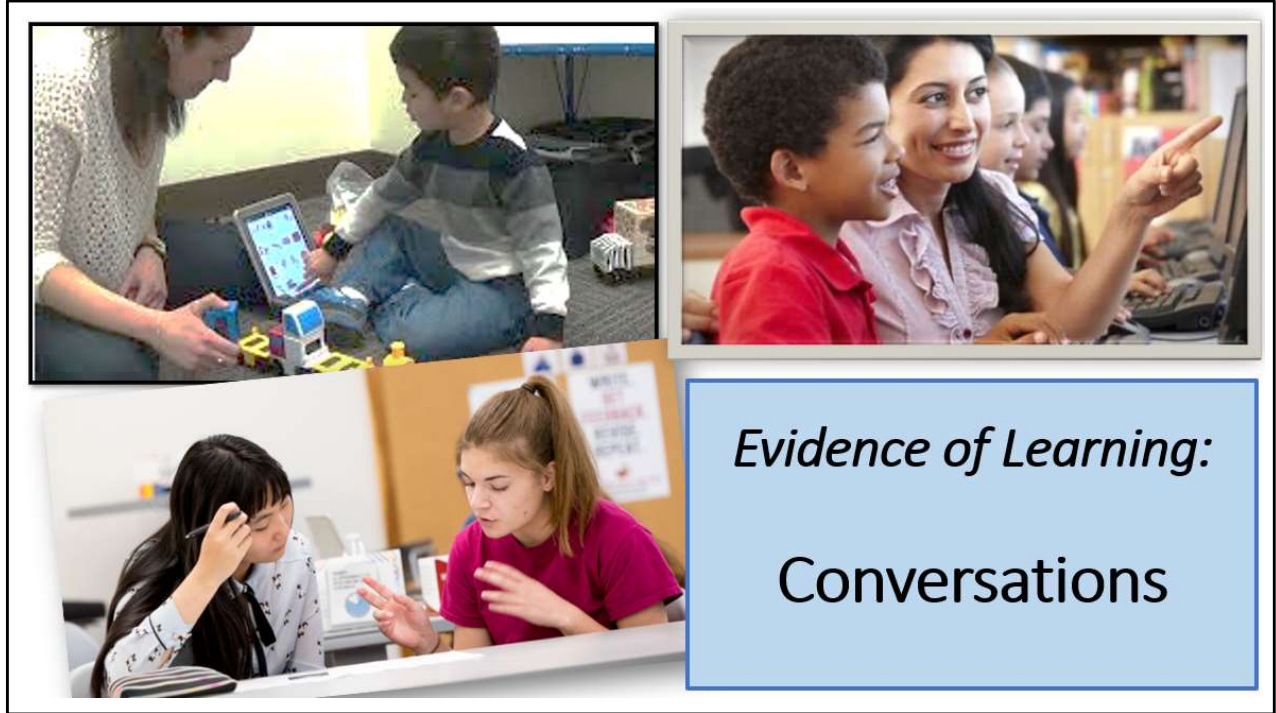
Conversations

Evidence of progress can be collected in a variety of ways. Through conferencing or conversations with the student, family and school team.

**Evidence of Learning:**

**Observations**

Through observation using data collection, videos, photos and anecdotal notes to document what is observed.

*Evidence of Learning:*

Products

Products can also provide evidence and show growth over time.

Currently, the Evidence Log is a separate document; we are hoping that it will be added to the IEP in the MyEd platform in the coming year.

## Accessing the IEP

- Created in the My Education BC Information System
- Transfers automatically between BC Districts
- Accessed by families through the Parent Portal
- Easily viewed by classroom teachers

School districts in BC are moving towards storing files and documents in digital formats. The Competency-Based IEP is written and stored on the My Education BC information data system. This means that IEPs will transfer automatically when a student moves to another school or district in BC; parents will eventually be able to view the IEP through the parent portal, similar to how report cards can be viewed at many sites currently (this is a distribution mode that is coming soon). In addition, the IEPs are easily accessed by the student's classroom teacher(s).

## SD43 Timeline of CB-IEP Implementation

**2019–2020**
- Each manager to complete one CB-IEP for a student of choice (minimum)

**2020–2021** Targets
- Grades 6 and 9
- New diagnosis
- New to SD43 (cross-district/out of province)

**2021–2022**
- All students requiring IEPs on CB-IEP format by end of school year

Exceptions
- Students currently in grades 11 and 12 may remain on the SD43 IEP template

The 2021-2022 school year is the third and final year of the CB-IEP Implementation in SD43. By the end of the school year, all students requiring IEPs are expected to be on the CB-IEP format. There may be a few students in grades 11 and 12 who will remain on the SD43 IEP template; however, the information included, and language used in IEPs, no matter the format in use, is expected to reflect the competency-based pedagogy.

**Resources to consult for more information:**

SD43 IEP-at-a-glance pamphlet

BC Curriculum: www.curriculum.gov.bc.ca

Core Competencies:
www.curriculum.gov.bc.ca/competencies

**If you have questions about your child's program and/or IEP, please reach out to the case manager and administrator at your child's school.**

We would like to thank you for listening. We know that this is a lot of information and represents a shift for all of us. Families, schools and teachers are all still transitioning to the new process. Everyone still has a lot of questions. We are hoping to answer them as we move forward together.