

Appendix A: Guiding Questions

Guiding Questions for the Consultation Process (from Child Find through the delivery of special education services)

The guiding questions below are not intended to repeat statutory requirements, but to support dialogue, shared understanding and problem solving as agencies implement the requirements described in the main guidance.

I. Iowa's Legal Framework

Understanding Legal Requirements

- “What is everyone’s current understanding on the focus of how Iowa’s requirements exceed federal requirements in this consultation process? Where might clarification be needed?”
- “How do each of our roles ensure that students receive services in the same manner and to the same extent as public students?”
- “Do we have a shared understanding of how all components of Part B of the IDEA, IAC 281.41, and Iowa Code § 256.12(2), influence service delivery decisions, including operational and fiscal responsibilities, and where misinterpretation could unintentionally affect implementation?”

II. Purpose of Guidance

Checking for Shared Purpose & Reducing Confusion

- “Is everyone clear on how this guidance clarifies the focus of consultation on Iowa law ensuring eligible accredited nonpublic school students receive FAPE and are included in the resident LEA weighted funding and pooled AEA federal funding?”
- “What do each of us need in order to communicate this guidance clearly to staff or stakeholders so implementation is consistent across settings?”
- “Where have misunderstandings occurred previously, and how can we prevent them through stronger collaborative communication?”
- “How might practical constraints influence how we implement this guidance?”

III. The AEA Consultation Process (see appendices B-G for support)

A. Level of Consultation

Roles, Authority & Participation

- “Do all representatives at the table have the authority needed to make decisions today?”
- “How can we ensure all participants feel heard and their input meaningfully informs the consultation?”
- “What potential barriers or constraints does each entity face in providing or coordinating services, and how can we plan for them collaboratively?”
- “What structures or meeting schedules will support timely communication and reduce surprises or frustrations?”
- “What expectations or systems do we have for ongoing communication and accountability outside this meeting?”

B. Purpose and Scope of Consultation

Understanding Scope and Staying Focused

This section establishes the required topics and shared goals of consultation, Considerations related to authority, fiscal responsibility and operational constraints are addressed in Section III. C. These questions are intended to move beyond identifying required topics and into examining how those topics play out in local practice.

- “What do we need to understand about Child Find to ensure a comprehensive process across agencies?”
- “How do we confirm that accredited nonpublic students meaningfully participate in services to the same extent as public school students?”
- “How will we work together to determine where, how and by whom services will be delivered to the same extent as public school students?”
 - Considerations may include: class size, proximity, staffing, licensure, types of programs, educational settings, supplementary aids and services and additional support resources available
- “How will public schools ensure implementation, monitoring and supervision of IEPs while coordinating with accredited nonpublic staff and shared service models?”
- “How will we address situations where logistical constraints (e.g., transportation, class schedules, staffing) could limit the ideal delivery of services?”
- “How do we work together to ensure communication with families is aligned with IEP team decisions, reflects that all decisions are made by the full IEP team (not individual members) and supports implementation of the IEP as written across settings?”
- “If disagreements arise, how can we ensure all perspectives are fully considered before documenting them?”

Understanding Program Limitations & Responsibilities

Context, Authority & Accountability

This section is intended to surface legal, fiscal and operational realities that inform service delivery decisions and help prevent misunderstandings after consultation.

- “Does everyone understand that no funds can be paid directly to the accredited nonpublic school, and participation requires proper record-keeping and reporting for audits?”
- “Are all participants clear that public agencies retain control and oversight of special education funds consistent with IAC 281-41.138 and 281-41.1441?”
- “Do all participants understand that while services are determined by individual student IEPs, service delivery models should account for the unique contexts of both the accredited nonpublic school and the public school (e.g., proximity, number of schools served, staffing and licensure, program structures and available resources)?”
- “How do we balance student-centered needs with operational constraints (staffing, schedules, transportation, instructional time) in a way that is fair, transparent and sustainable across settings?”
- “How can we establish shared accountability measures to ensure services are implemented appropriately, whether delivered by public or accredited nonpublic staff?”
- “When public agency decisions differ from input or recommendations provided by the accredited nonpublic school, has the rationale for those decisions been clearly explained and documented in a manner that supports shared understanding and ongoing collaboration?”
- “Do all participants understand that consideration of the unique context of each accredited nonpublic school and input from the accredited nonpublic school is taken into due consideration, but final decisions regarding services are made by the public agency?”

Collaboration & Communication

- “What practices and routines have supported strong communication and collaboration among AEAs, LEAs and accredited nonpublic schools? What gaps remain?”
- “How can we ensure student needs drive decisions across all environments?”
- “What expectations do we all have for communication routines and frequency?”

C. Documentation Requirements

Ensuring Transparency and Shared Accountability (see appendices B-G for support)

- “Are our documentation practices aligned and accessible to all parties? Where might we need to tighten or align them?”
- “What system will ensure consistent tracking of disagreements, consultation notes and Child Find documentation?”

IV. Child Find for Accredited Nonpublic Students

Clarity of Roles & Shared Ownership (see appendix B for support)

- “Are roles, responsibilities and the plan for informing accredited nonpublic families about the Child Find process clear to everyone?”¹
- “What communication strategies help accredited nonpublic schools share concerns early and clearly?”
- “What barriers have we experienced that contribute to delays in referrals, evaluations or communication, and how can we problem-solve them together? What professional learning may be needed?”

V. Providing Special Education Services in Accredited Nonpublic Schools

A. Understanding the State-Mandated Services

- “How do we ensure a consistent understanding of ‘in the same manner and to the same extent’ when providing services to accredited nonpublic students, and what shared systems guide planning, delivery, and monitoring of special education services across LEA, AEA, and accredited nonpublic staff to ensure everyone understands their role?”
- “What complexities arise when delivering services within an accredited nonpublic setting, and how can we address them collaboratively?”
- “What systemic structures ensure full IEP implementation and monitoring, regardless of location of services?”
- “Have we discussed and documented the required due consideration topics of IAC 281-41.134 and 281-41.135?”
 - How, where and by whom special education services will be provided
 - Types of services to be delivered, including direct services and alternate service delivery mechanisms
 - How and when these decisions will be made (see Appendix C)
 - If the AEA/LEA disagrees with the views of the accredited nonpublic school officials regarding the provision or types of services, has a written explanation been provided, including the rationale and timing of delivery of that explanation (see Appendix D)
 - Whether consultation was timely and meaningful, and written affirmations have been received from nonpublic representatives if they concur (see Appendix E)
 - If a nonpublic school does not provide a written affirmation within a reasonable period, has outreach and the consultation process been documented (see Appendix F)

B. Roles (AEA, LEA, & Accredited Nonpublic School)

- “How does the LEA service delivery model guide our decisions today? Does everyone understand its implications?”
- “Where do we need clearer coordination between district staff, AEA staff and accredited nonpublic staff?”

¹ IAC 281-41.138 and .144- Property, equipment and supplies; public agency administers funds, holds title, may place in accredited nonpublic school, supervise placement and use, may remove, cannot repair, remodel or construct, are secular, neutral and nonideological

- “How do we ensure decisions are driven by student need rather than logistics or funding concerns?”
- “What systems support ongoing communication, monitoring and shared oversight of IEP implementation?”
- “What special education roles and responsibilities are currently being performed by nonpublic school staff, including licensed and non-licensed personnel, and how are these activities coordinated, monitored, and supported by the LEA and AEA to ensure Free Appropriate Public Education?”

VI. Accountability and Reporting

Consistency, Accuracy & Shared Responsibility

- “What systems or tools can help us maintain transparency and shared accountability?”
- “Are there areas where reporting or documentation responsibilities feel unclear?”

VII. Summary of Key Principles

Ensuring Alignment Before We Conclude

- “Are we all aligned on Iowa’s guarantee of FAPE for accredited nonpublic students?”
- “Do we agree on the responsibilities of LEAs, AEAs and accredited nonpublic schools in fulfilling that guarantee?”
- “What disagreements remain and need to be documented with LEA/AEA reasoning?”
- “What commitments do we need to make today to support collaboration going forward?”
- “What unresolved questions remain that we need to revisit?”
- “What professional learning opportunities may be needed?”