



S.M.A.R.T.E.R.
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13 Federal Mandates for IEP Goals

Use this guide to learn all 13 federal mandates related to IEP goal development

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S.M.A.R.T.E.R. STEPS



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13 FEDERAL MANDATES



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This **SMARTER Steps Federal Mandate Guide** is for school staff and parents. It reviews the 13 federal requirements of Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals in user-friendly format. The legal jargon and expectations can be overwhelming to teams. This Guide helps teams understand the 13 federal mandates surrounding goal development. This Guide can help teams create compliant IEP goals so students have success. Use the following acronym to guide the process of goal development:

Overview of the **SMARTER** acronym

1. **S**pecific Skill sets and observable behaviors; Use specific actions words and contexts
2. **M**easurable with meaningful and manageable data collection, including baselines
3. **A**ttainable with an annual IEP cycle
4. **R**esearch/evidence-based methods are documented in the goal
5. **T**eachable with cues and strategies that are explained in the goal
6. **E**valuate the data and communicate it regularly to parents
7. **R**elevant to the general education curriculum by citing State Standards or Common Core Standards



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Requirement 1: Specific Areas of Need

Present Level of Academic and Functional Progress

- (A) In general. In developing each child's IEP, the IEP Team, subject to subparagraph (C), shall consider—[34 CFR §300.320(2),1(a)]
- (iv) the academic, developmental, and functional needs of the child. [34 CFR §300.320(2),1(a)]

The 1st requirement is that we need to consider the specific areas of need for the student. This is supposed to include academic, developmental, and functional needs of the child. So, when districts say “we only have to look at academics or grades” then that is forgetting the developmental and functional mandates of IDEA.

Requirements 2 and 3: Specific needs, measurable, relevant to general education curriculum, progress monitoring, contexts

A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals designed to:

- Meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum. [34 CFR §300.320(a)(2)(i)(A)]
- Meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability. [34 CFR §300.320(a)(2)(i)(B)].

The 2nd and 3rd requirements mention specific needs again except this time it is referring any other educational needs that result from the disability. So, this is where all the related services come into play. But also here we have the concept of measurability playing into the equation now.



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Requirement 4: Specific needs expanded to include benchmarks for alternative assessments

For children with disabilities who take alternative assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards (in addition to the annual goals), a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives. [34 CFR §300.320(a)(2)(ii)]

The Specific needs are expanded further to include alt assessments with benchmarks and short-term objectives.

Requirement 5: Measurable: The “how” of data collection, frequency, baselines, and what is considered mastery

A description of:

- How the Child’s progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured. [34 CFR §300.320(a)(3)(i)]

HOW refers to your evaluation system and the data that you will be gathering. This is so important because teams often forget to put baselines, data collection frequency, and what criteria will be considered mastery.

Requirement 6: Evaluation of the data and communication to parents

- When periodic reports on the progress the child is making toward meeting the annual goals will be provided such as through the use of quarterly or other periodic reports, concurrent with the issuance of report cards. [34 CFR §300.320(a)(3)(ii)]



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The 6th requirement involves Periodic evaluations of the data must be reported at certain intervals determined by the team but at least as often as report cards. The communication in this section is referring to parent communication. The part of the law cited there will specifically state communication to parents/ guardians, etc.

Requirements 7, 8, and 9: Research based Services, Teachable Cues, Strategies, & Aids

- A statement of the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided to enable the child: (see below for mandates 10, 11, & 12). [34 CFR 300.320 (a)(4)]

Requirements 7, 8, and 9 relate to research and evidence based requirements for special education, related services, and supplementary aids being used to attain progress. These must be documented in a statement somewhere on the goal or in the present level. This has been a requirement since 2004 although rarely do school districts document this as mandated. We are beginning to see the first due process cases over this issue and parents are winning. In addition, the evidence base must relate to the skill sets and behaviors that are “teachable with cues and strategies”.

Requirements 10, 11, and 12: Attainable, Relevant to general education curriculum, & Participation with non-disabled peers

The requirements above related to research based services, cues, strategies and aids must enable the child:

- To advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals. [34 CFR §300.320(a)(4)(i)]



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- To be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum and to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities. [34 CFR §300.320(a)(4)(ii)]
- To be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities. [34 CFR §300.320(a)(4)(iii)]

Requirements 10, 11, and 12 relate to a goal being attainable, relevant to general education curriculum and participation with non-disabled peers. This refers to context which is ties back to the specific skill sets we mentioned earlier.

Requirement 13: Transition, Relevant to employment, post-secondary, or independent living

Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16, or younger if determined appropriately by the IEP team, and updated annually thereafter, the IEP must include:

- Appropriate measureable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills [34 CFR §300.320(b)(1)]
- The transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals [34 CFR §300.320(b)(2)]

Transition services are focusing on the same ideas that we have mentioned: specific, measurable, attainable, research based. But for the relevance piece it needs to be employment-related or pertaining to post-secondary education or independent living skills instead of the general education curriculum.

Source: <http://idea.ed.gov/>