



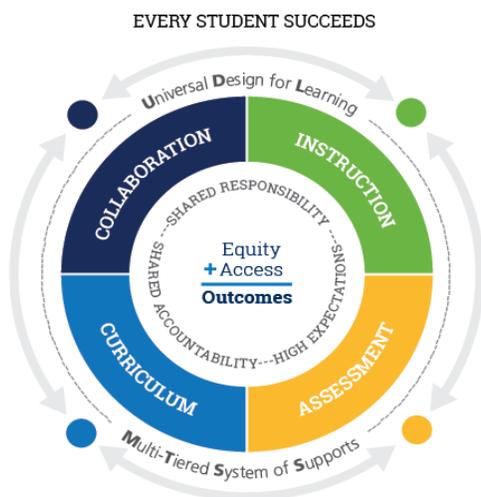
# FROM THE DIRECTOR

## INDIANA SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATES

DEAR COLLEAGUES:

I hope you have all had a chance to review our first short share that begins a video series on improving outcomes for students with disabilities. The first edition was an introduction to the framework that operationalizes our message (see graphic below). If you have not had a chance to view it, the link is included below (it was also posted in our August 12th newsletter. If you viewed it then, it has not changed!) The second short share will be available in the next week or two and focuses on the importance of equitable access to the general education curriculum. We have received several comments and questions about the information shared and we welcome these! Kudos to all of you for taking five minutes to view it and provide thoughtful consideration to its contents. Although all of the elements of the framework are significant, it is clear that improving outcomes takes a commitment from both general and special educators, from parents and the community. It also takes a belief in the capabilities of the students we serve.

~Pam



Short Share #1 <https://youtu.be/iUZHx8c-Te0>

AUGUST 26, 2016

FROM THE DIRECTOR



**Dr. Pamela Wright**

**Director of Special Education**

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Corporation Test Coordinators and Special Education Directors

**FROM:** Dr. Michele Walker, Director of Student Assessment  
Dr. Pamela Wright, Director of Special Education

**DATE:** August 16, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Update: ISTAR Alternate Assessment 2016-17 and Spring 2016 ISTAR Reports

For the 2015–2016 school year ISTAR, Indiana’s alternate assessment program for students with significant cognitive disabilities, was administered in three parts:

- Part 1 consisted of a placement test, or screener, administered in October 2015, which determined one of three tiers in which the student was placed.
- Part 2 occurred in January 2016 and assessed the first half of the curriculum for students.
- Part 3 occurred in April and May 2016 and assessed the second half of the curriculum.

The Part 1 placement test was designed to help route students to assessment items in later test administrations at an appropriate level of challenge or tier. The purpose of the tiers was to allow the students’ knowledge of the academic standards to be assessed using content that is accessible for those students. Generally, Tier 1 items are less complex and require less interaction with the content than Tier 2 items, and Tier 2 items are less complex and have less interaction than Tier 3 items. The items developed for Tiers 1, 2, and 3 measure the Content Connectors based on the Indiana Academic Standards and are structurally appropriate for that tiered form.

In Part 1, all students took the same test form with a range of items for all three tiers. Items assessed content from a section of the blueprint aligned with fall instruction.

The Part 2 and Part 3 assessments were designed to reduce the time testing in any particular session and to align the tested content with the curriculum taught in a specific part of the school year.

The 2016 design presented some challenges. Scaling was an issue because of the need to link items across tiers and over time, and because Part 1 was used for placement only, those items had no value in the overall score.

The IDOE and Questar have consulted the Indiana State Board of Education-appointed Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to discuss the Spring 2016 ISTAR assessment. The outcome of meetings with the TAC resulted in design changes to enhance the technical quality of the ISTAR assessment.

# ISTAR Alternate Assessment 2016-17

Based on feedback from the TAC, the ISTAR assessment has been redesigned for 2016-17. In Part 1, all students will take the same 20 items, which represent a range in terms of difficulty, complexity, and structural level (Tier 1, 2, and 3 items). Items assess content from a section of the blueprint aligned with fall instruction. Part 1 will be administered in a testing window from January 9 – February 3, 2017. The Part 1 test is designed to help route students to assessment items in Part 2 that are at an appropriate level of challenge/tier.

The Part 2 test will be administered in a testing window from April 10 – May 19, 2017. This portion of the assessment contains 12 operational items and 2 field-test items. Items assess content from a section of the blueprint aligned with spring instruction. The operational items will be primarily drawn from one of three tiers based on the student's performance in Part 1.

Performance on items from both Part 1 and Part 2 will be combined for the summative score.

## ISTAR 2016-17 Test Windows

Part 1	Part 2
January 9 – February 3, 2017	April 10 – May 19, 2017

## ISTAR Reports for Spring 2016

For the 2015-16 School Year, the ISTAR report will not include scale scores or performance level descriptors (*Pass+*, *Pass*, *Did Not Pass*). Rather, information about Tier Placement, raw scores and percent correct, along with Tier descriptors are included.

Date	Action
September 6	Reports available to Corps/Schools via the Questar Admin Site, including Corporation Summary Data and School Roster Reports
September 13	Delivery of <i>Individual Student Report (ISR)</i> paper copies and labels for students' cumulative files

You are welcome to contact the Office of Student Assessment with any questions or concerns by calling 317-232-9050 or via email [istar@doe.in.gov](mailto:istar@doe.in.gov)

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

### FEDERAL SPECIAL EDUCATION GUIDANCE

Significant guidance issued over the summer reminds schools that a student may have a disability, even when the student is performing well academically.

Note: This is part 2 of 2 articles summarizing recent significant guidance on the topic of ADHD. In the last issue we reviewed the **July 26, 2016 Dear Colleague Letter**, in which the US Department of Education reminded schools of their Section 504 and ADA Title II requirements when it comes to **ADHD**. This issue includes the main points of the 42 page document, **Resource Guide on Students with ADHD and Section 504**, that accompanied the July 26, 2016 Dear Colleague Letter. The letter and guide may be accessed electronically at: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201607-504-adhd.pdf>

#### When Must a School District Conduct an Evaluation?

Under Section 504, a school district must identify, locate, and conduct a free evaluation of any student who because of disability “needs or is believed to need” special education or related services. This obligation may be more commonly known as “Child Find.” A district must conduct an individual evaluation:

- ⇒ before taking any action with respect to the student’s initial placement; and
- ⇒ before making any subsequent significant change in placement.

#### Summary – School District’s Obligation to Identify and Evaluate Students with Disabilities:

- Section 504 requires a school district to identify and conduct an evaluation of any student who needs or is believed to need special education or related services because of a disability.
- A school district must evaluate students who are suspected of having any kind of disability in all specific or all related areas of educational need, even if the students do not fit into one suspected disability category or fit into multiple disability categories.
- Students who achieve satisfactory, or even demonstrate above-average, academic performance may still have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity and be eligible for special education and related aids and services because the school district is not meeting their needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met.
- Implementation of intervention strategies, such as interventions contained within a school’s RTI program, must not be used to delay or deny the Section 504 evaluation of a student suspected of having a disability and needing regular or special education and related aids and services as a result of that disability.

#### Summary-Conducting Evaluations for Students with ADHD to Determine Whether the Student Has a Disability:

- In determining if a student has a disability and needs special education or related services because of disability, school districts must consider all the potential major life activities that may be impacted by the student’s impairment, *not just learning*, and review facts concerning the condition, manner, or duration of a student’s performance of a major life activity.
- Never act on stereotypes and generalizations about students with ADHD. For example:
  - \* Monitor both male and female students carefully for ADHD, without relying on sex-based stereotypes.
  - \* Monitor students of all races carefully for ADHD, without relying on race-based stereotypes. Race could influence how a school perceives student behavior and thereby affect whether a student is evaluated for ADHD.
- School districts must interpret the disability broadly and cannot consider the positive effects of mitigating measures in evaluating for disability.
- If the school district believes that a medical assessment is necessary to determine whether the student has ADHD and needs special education or related aids and services because of the ADHD, *the student’s parents cannot be required to pay* for it.
  - \* Note, there is *nothing in Section 504 that requires a medical assessment as a precondition to the schools districts determination that the student has a disability* and requires special education or related aids and services due to his or her disability. In fact, the determination of whether an individual has a disability need not demand extensive analysis.

(continued on p. 5)

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

### FEDERAL SPECIAL EDUCATION GUIDANCE

*Continued from p. 4*

#### **Summary – Placement Determinations for Students with ADHD**

The following are key principles that school districts could keep in mind when educating student's with ADHD:

- Evaluate and provide supports for students with ADHD. Students who are evaluated properly and receive appropriate supports will often meet the challenge of school, including advanced course placement and honors classes.
- School districts must tailor services to the individual needs of the student, and must not limit placement options under Section 504 for students with disabilities to a predetermined universe of options that are unrelated to an individual determination of what particular students need, or because the school district already offers certain options.
- Students with ADHD who are eligible for FAPE under Section 504 are entitled to the provision of the placement team (CCC) decides are appropriate, regardless of cost or administrative burden, and especially where such services have been provided to IDEA-eligible students in the past.
- The special education or related aids and services a student needs that are included in a Section 504 Plan, or other document, should be clear and as detailed as necessary so that the school and parents both understand what the plan requires.

#### **Summary – School Districts Must Provide Parents and Students with Procedural Safeguards:**

- Parents may appeal district actions regarding the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of students with disabilities who need or are believed to need special education or related services.
- A school district that denies a parent's request for a Section 504 evaluation of a student, regardless of the grounds for the denial, must inform the student's parents of its decision and of the parent's procedural safeguard rights, as set forth in the Section 504 regulations.
- School districts must ensure they provide notice of a parent's due process protections.

NOTE: The resource guide is in the public domain, which means you may reproduce it in whole or in part for training or distribution. If used, the guide's citation should be:

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, *Students with ADHD and Section 504: A Resource Guide* (July 2016).

# Indiana Resource Center For Autism

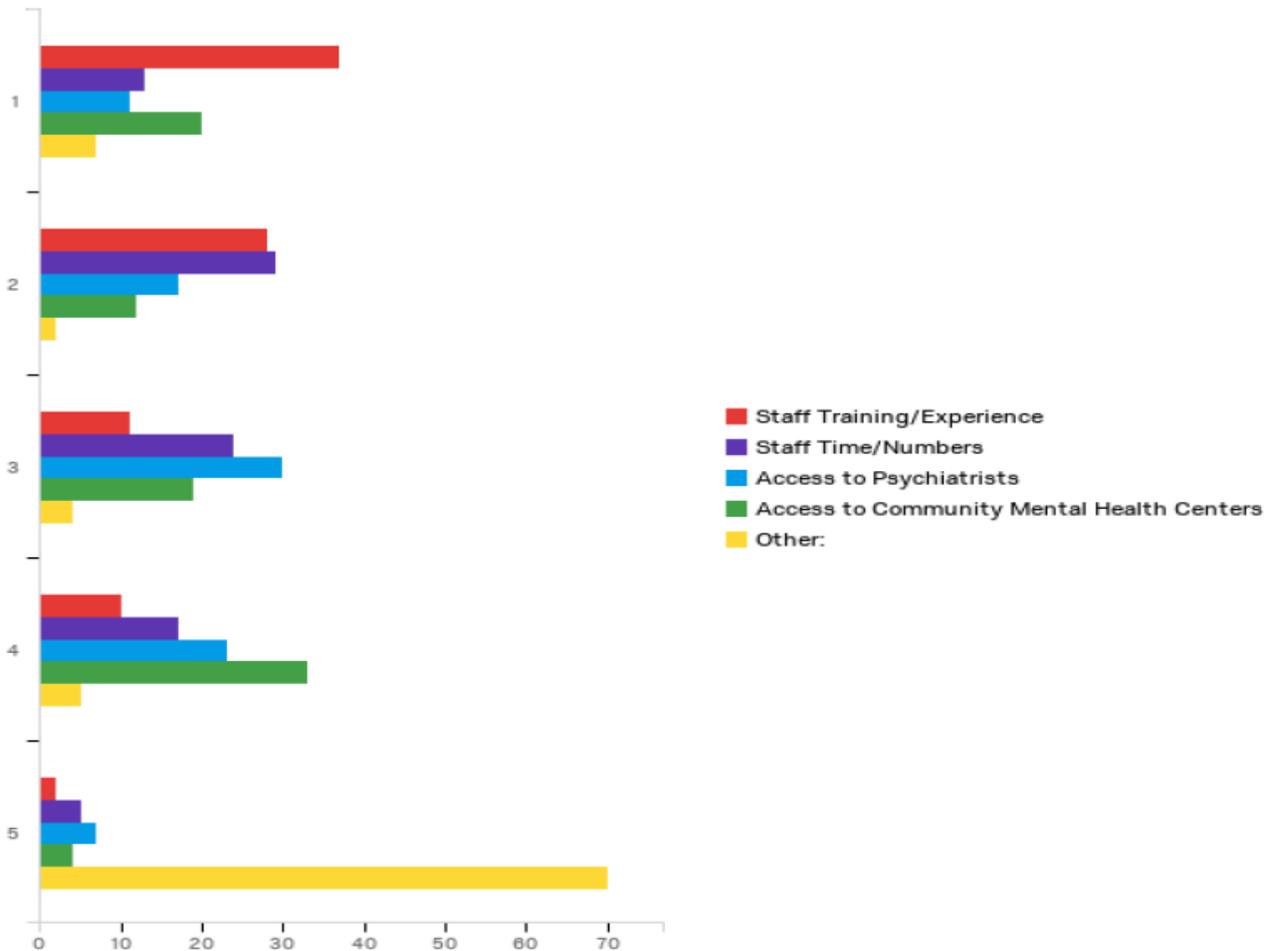
## Survey Results

Every three years, the Indiana Resource Center for Autism conducts a Needs Assessment survey to gather data from families and/or professionals about the status of programs and supports related to individuals across the autism spectrum.

Link to survey results: <https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/styles/iidc/defiles/IRCA/IRCAMentalHealth16.pdf>

For more information regarding IRCA research projects, please contact Dr. Cathy Pratt at (812) 855-6508, or email at [prattc@indiana.edu](mailto:prattc@indiana.edu).

**Q12 - What do you see as the greatest areas of need in your schools to improve mental health outcomes? Please rank from 1 to 5 with 1 showing the greatest need and 5 showing the least.**



**FROM THE DIRECTOR**

**POST-CASE CONFERENCE PARENT SURVEY**

The new post-case conference parent survey is now available on the IDOE website at <http://form.jotformpro.com/form/42805655713962> or <http://www.doe.in.gov/specialed/indiana-parent-survey>. Schools are asked to encourage parents to take the survey—it should take no longer than 10 minutes—and to provide a computer and privacy to the parent so that they may take it following the case conference. A letter has been sent to state directors through the Learning Connection that explains the purposes of the survey to parents. Thank you for your help in administering the survey!

**What in the World are IRNs?**

Have you heard of the Indiana Resource Network (IRNs)? These resource centers provide targeted, comprehensive support to schools across the state to improve teaching and learning. All IRNs can be viewed at: <http://www.doe.in.gov/specialed/indiana-resource-network>

NOTE: Some of the IRNs listed on our website are free and at the top of the list. Some IRNs are not so free, but part of our network, and are listed under “Additional Resources.”

Did you know?

**MEDICAID MATTERS**

Correction:

Please pardon our error in the August 12 issue. Rather than having been “recently enacted,” the state law referenced in the following 8/12/16 newsletter statement has actually been in effect since 1994: The correct statement should have read:

*State law requires every Indiana public school corporation to enroll as an Indiana Medicaid service provider – including school corporations that opt not to claim reimbursement for covered IEP required services. I.C. 12-15-1-16.*

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

### Registration for free trainings through the Indiana IEPRC are now open!

Visit [www.indianaieprc.org](http://www.indianaieprc.org) and click on the “Workshops & Events” tab. Use the menu system to view and register for trainings throughout the 2016-2017 school year related to the Indiana IEP System, IEP Processes, and Improving Local Practices.

Upcoming trainings for August and September – register soon:

- \*Utilizing Paraprofessional Support in the General Education Classroom (Holiday Inn Indianapolis Airport) on 9/1/16
- \*Writing Standards-Based Goals & Measuring Progress (Radisson Hotel at Star Plaza, Merrillville) on 9/6/16
- \*Indiana IEP for Administrators (Holiday Inn Indianapolis Airport) on 9/7/16
- \*Advanced Reporting: Basics (Holiday Inn Indianapolis Airport) on 9/7/16
- \*Effective Case Conference Committee Meetings (Radisson Hotel at Star Plaza, Merrillville) on 9/7/16
- \*Indiana IEP Walkthrough (Radisson Hotel at Star Plaza, Merrillville) on 9/9/16
- \*Developing BIPS (Hilton Garden Inn – Indianapolis Northwest) on 9/13/16
- \*Writing Standards-Based Goals & Measuring Progress (Hilton Garden Inn - Indianapolis Northwest) on 9/15/16
- \*Effective Case Conference Committee Meetings (Holiday Inn Indianapolis Airport) on 9/16/16
- \*Indiana IEP Walkthrough (Hilton Garden Inn – Indianapolis Northwest) on 9/23/16

## **UPCOMING DATES & DEADLINES**

Part B Federal Funding: 611, Part 2 (Includes MOE & Excess Costs) due on or before .....September 15

Part B Federal Funding: CEIS (if applicable) due on or before .....September 15

For Assistance at any time please contact the Special Education General Line: 317-232-0570  
email: [specialeducation@doe.in.gov](mailto:specialeducation@doe.in.gov)