Indiana Department of Education

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Technical Assistance Overview and Process

Overview

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) is dedicated to ensuring that local educational agencies (LEAs) receive effective and efficient targeted support when needed. Technical assistance (TA), commonly referred to as consulting, is the process of providing targeted support to an organization with a development need or problem. TA is an effective method for building an LEA's capacity and increasing outcomes for students with disabilities.

TA involves communication between a TA specialist and the LEA. The specialist is informed of the organizational culture and any specific circumstances related to the development need. TA is typically delivered over an extended period. The structure of how TA is delivered varies. TA can be one-on-one consultation, small or large group facilitation, etc. For this type of assistance to be effective, the specialist or consultant should adhere to a set of core principles. Effective TA should be:

- Collaborative: Work jointly with LEA staff to identify underlying needs.
- Systematic: Use an orderly approach.
- Targeted: Determine where technical assistance will have the greatest impact.
- Adaptive: Be flexible.
- Customized: Respond to the unique needs of the LEA.
- Results-driven: Identify measures that indicate improvement.

Requesting Targeted or Intensive TA

While LEAs can request TA when needed, in certain circumstances IDOE may also require LEAs to engage in TA. This identification can be based on the following but is not limited to: areas of noncompliance (singular or ongoing), credible allegations, student outcome data, service provision, and program effectiveness. Under these circumstances, IDOE will identify LEAs and identify areas of need for assistance.

TA Process for LEA Submission:
1. LEAs identify a need for TA and navigate to IDOE's Office of Special Education webpage.
2. LEAs submit a TA Request Form, identifying a point of contact and a brief overview of the type of assistance/service requested.
3. IDOE reviews the submission and determines the appropriate TA partner.
   a. IDOE will schedule an intake call, if needed, with the LEA requesting additional information via Microsoft Teams or another web conferencing application.
4. IDOE sends the request to the appropriate TA partner or provides individualized support based on the TA level agreed upon by both parties.

Levels of Technical Assistance

Universal, General (Level One)

Level one TA is defined as passive and describes information provided to independent users through their initiative, resulting in minimal interaction with TA support staff. This TA includes information presented as newsletters, guidebooks, or research syntheses downloaded from the TA center's website by individuals.

Examples:
- Collaborative IDOE professional development resources
- Professional sessions and resources in the [Indiana Learning Lab](#)
- Brief, informal informational sessions over technical topics
- Short informational session (informal)
- Policy interpretation and guidance documents

Targeted, Specialized (Level Two)

Level two TA is developed based on the needs of multiple LEAs and is not extensively individualized. In level two TA, a relationship is established between the LEAs and the TA provider(s). This TA can include one-time, labor-intensive events, such as facilitating strategic planning or hosting regional or national conferences. It can be episodic, including less-intensive events over an extended period (e.g., conference call series on numerous topics based on the recipients' needs, communities of practice).

Examples:

- Facilitation of a program evaluation toolkit process
- Hosting ongoing office hours to address stakeholder questions
- TA providers review resources, proposed guidance, or presentations the LEA created to provide support and suggestions

Intensive, Sustained (Level Three)

Level three TA services are often provided on-site and require a stable, ongoing relationship between the TA provider(s) and LEA. TA services are defined as a series of activities designed to reach a valued outcome, such as increased compliance with Article 7 requirements. This level of TA should result in changes to policy, programming, practice, or operations that support increased recipient capacity and/or improved outcomes at one or more systems/levels.

Examples:
- Holding, required meetings with corporation leaders for up to one year that result in improved compliance with Article 7
- Support teams in completing a program evaluation, educational benefit review, root cause analysis, and corrective action plan
- Providing direct assistance and professional development opportunities for Special Educators

Technical Assistance Partners

IDOE's Office of Special Education provides TA to LEAs and partners with the IEP TA Center and the ATLAS Project to provide Indiana public schools with additional professional development and other TA options to improve teaching and learning.

The IEP TA Center works to increase the knowledge, skills, and capacity of Indiana educators to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. The IEP TA Center promotes inclusive education with a belief in shared responsibility and equitable access to a strong core curriculum with high-quality instruction benefiting all students. To fulfill this purpose, IEP TA Center staff provide professional learning, technical assistance, and resources to support educators in the field.

The K-12 ATLAS Project offers an Assistive Technology Equipment Lending Library, a no-cost service that loans assistive technology devices, software, and resource materials to school personnel at Indiana LEAs. LEAs may request demonstrations or technical assistance to accompany the equipment available for loan. Items are shipped directly to schools to preview and/or trial with students. Items are loaned for a six-week evaluation period. ATLAS is also committed to providing LEAs with effective, efficient, and focused support to ensure that students have equitable access to the curriculum through assistive technology. This support is delivered through both virtual and in-person technical assistance.

The Indiana Educational Resource Center (IERC) is a statewide, centralized repository of accessible education materials (AEM) for school-age students who are blind or visually impaired or have other documented print disabilities, in LEAs. AEM formats include digital files, braille and large print instructional materials, tangible aids, and equipment specifically designed for use by students who are blind or have low vision. IERC manages the delivery of AEM to the ordering LEAs via the online ordering system. Requests for instructional materials are submitted by the LEA-appointed digital right's managers (DRMs) and processed by IERC. All materials are provided at no cost to eligible students and are on loan to LEAs.

The Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education (Center) serves deaf and hard-of-hearing children in Indiana from birth until they leave school. The Center provides assessment, services, information, resources, and recommendations related to communication, language development, and education of deaf and hard-of-hearing children. The Center follows children (with parent permission) and works with early intervention programs and schools to create positive long-term outcomes.

Reference: CDC Technical Assistance