





Welcome to the BASICS for Special Education Infrastructure Tool

The BASICS for Special Education Infrastructure Tool provides a structured process for LEAs to analyze and identify areas of strength and gaps in the basic components of their special education infrastructure. The results of this infrastructure analysis will help your LEA in identifying and prioritizing areas for improvement.

Instructions:

To complete the BASICS assessment, review the essential practices for each section as they relate to your LEA. For each essential practice, indicate whether it is currently in place by checking the appropriate box. Then determine the overall status: Not Yet (i.e., none of the essential practices are present), Partial (i.e., one or more essential practices are present), or Established (i.e., all essential practices are present).

Adapted from *Serving Students with Disabilities: A Resource for Assessing the Basic Components of Your Special Education Infrastructure*, developed through a partnership between the California Department of Education, the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence, and WestEd.

Updated 01/05/26





Collaboration and Communication

Norms and processes that allow for meaningful and productive interaction between special education programs and other programs, as well as between schools and families.



1.1 Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals

LEA has mission, vision, values, and goal statements that support improved outcomes for all students.

Essential Practices

Check the box for each essential practice that appears to be in place within your LEA.

- LEA intentionally communicates its mission, vision, values, and goals. A key LEA goal is that all offices will have specific roles and shared responsibility for the success of all students.
- LEA has norms that include student-first language (e.g., "students with disabilities" rather than "disabled students").

Status

Determine the status: **Not Yet** (i.e., none of the essential practices are present), **Partial** (i.e., one or more of the essential practices are present), or **Established** (i.e., all essential practices are present).

- Not Yet
- Partial
- Established

Notes



Collaboration and Communication

Norms and processes that allow for meaningful and productive interaction between special education programs and other programs, as well as between schools and families.



1.2 Special Education Engaged in Strategy Development

Special education leadership is engaged in long-term strategy development, including conversations about curriculum, transitions, and resource allocation.

Essential Practices

Check the box for each essential practice that appears to be in place within your LEA.

- Special education leaders are invited to all LEA-level meetings related to changes in standards of practice, staffing, and resources.
- Special education leaders communicate consistent information on policy and practices to site leaders across schools (preschool, elementary, middle, high) and support collaboration across grades for effective transitions.
- LEA communicates expectations that site leadership will include special educators and service providers in all site-level leadership meetings related to curriculum and instruction.

Status

Determine the status: **Not Yet** (i.e., none of the essential practices are present), **Partial** (i.e., one or more of the essential practices are present), or **Established** (i.e., all essential practices are present).

- Not Yet
- Partial
- Established

Notes



Collaboration and Communication

Norms and processes that allow for meaningful and productive interaction between special education programs and other programs, as well as between schools and families.

1.1

1.2

1.3

2.1

2.2

3.1

3.2

4.1

4.2

5.1

5.2

6.1

6.2

6.3

1.3 Systems and Processes

LEA has systems and processes that support relevant and timely two-way communication with, and solicit input from, community stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, community members).

Essential Practices

Check the box for each essential practice that appears to be in place within your LEA.

- LEA includes representative stakeholders (e.g., parents of students with disabilities) in Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) meetings.
- The responsible entity (LEA/special education office/SELPA) holds regular Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings to educate stakeholders on issues related to special education, and the LEA-wide calendar shows dates and times of CAC meetings.
- Special education leaders are represented at school board meetings as appropriate.
- LEA has a process, outside of IEP meetings, for soliciting feedback from parents/guardians and other community members.
- LEA provides interpreting and translation in parents'/guardians' primary languages. LEA provides interpreting for all IEP, LCAP, CAC, and other stakeholder meetings, and translates all materials for stakeholders.

Status

Determine the status: **Not Yet** (i.e., none of the essential practices are present), **Partial** (i.e., one or more of the essential practices are present), or **Established** (i.e., all essential practices are present).

- Not Yet
- Partial
- Established



Collaboration and Communication

Norms and processes that allow for meaningful and productive interaction between special education programs and other programs, as well as between schools and families.

Notes

Processes to monitor and address personnel needs, and strategic allocation of staff with defined roles and responsibilities.



2.1 Staff Hiring and Allocation

LEA hiring and allocation of special education staff is informed by data, conforms to state and local guidelines, and is allocated in a manner that meets student need according to each student's IEP.

Essential Practices

Check the box for each essential practice that appears to be in place within your LEA.

- LEA uses state education code requirements and employment contracts (e.g., resource teachers not to exceed 28 pupils per CA Education Code 56362) to help determine staffing ratios.
- LEA collects and reviews data (e.g., child count, enrollment projections, staffing projections) at targeted points throughout the year (e.g., in relation to budget development process, Human Resources deadlines for staff notifications) to determine programmatic needs and set criteria for personnel additions or reductions.
- LEA has articulated in its Local Control or Accountability Plan (LCAP) whether it has teachers or service providers who are not fully credentialed, and if so, has included a plan for increasing the percentage of fully credentialed teachers and/or service providers.

Status

Determine the status: **Not Yet** (i.e., none of the essential practices are present), **Partial** (i.e., one or more of the essential practices are present), or **Established** (i.e., all essential practices are present).

- Not Yet
- Partial
- Established

Notes



Staffing

Processes to monitor and address personnel needs, and strategic allocation of staff with defined roles and responsibilities.

1.1

1.2

1.3

2.1

2.2

3.1

3.2

4.1

4.2

5.1

5.2

6.1

6.2

6.3

2.2 Strategic Staffing

The special education office is strategically staffed and has a defined organizational structure.

Essential Practices

Check the box for each essential practice that appears to be in place within your LEA.

- LEA has created an organizational chart that clearly outlines where and to whom special education personnel report.
- LEA has identified and communicated whom school staff are to call for support related to IDEA compliance and/or instruction of students with disabilities.
- LEA outlines clear roles, responsibilities, and professional learning expectations for special education staff, and those roles, responsibilities, and expectations are aligned with LEA-wide special education goals.
- Special education administrators receive training in special education law and systems improvement (e.g., root cause analysis) and/or are receiving induction to support their development in these areas.
- Special education leaders, in coordination with human resources and budget leaders, have an articulated plan to fill open positions within a reasonable time frame.
- If attempts to fill critical positions are unsuccessful, the special education office has a specific plan for ensuring that students with disabilities receive the services identified in their IEP.

Status

Determine the status: **Not Yet** (i.e., none of the essential practices are present), **Partial** (i.e., one or more of the essential practices are present), or **Established** (i.e., all essential practices are present).

- Not Yet
- Partial
- Established



Staffing

Processes to monitor and address personnel needs, and strategic allocation of staff with defined roles and responsibilities.

Notes





Policy and Procedures

The existence of up-to-date, documented, and accessible procedures that are compliant with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), along with a robust pre-referral system, such as a multi-tiered system of support.

- 1.1
- 1.2
- 1.3
- 2.1
- 2.2
- 3.1
- 3.2
- 4.1
- 4.2
- 5.1
- 5.2
- 6.1
- 6.2
- 6.3



3.1 Adoption of IDEA Policies and Procedures

LEA/special education office has adopted IDEA-compliant policies and procedures related to the provisions of Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) within the LEA.

Essential Practices

Check the box for each essential practice that appears to be in place within your LEA.

- LEA offers training to staff on the program requirements in IDEA (e.g., least restrictive environment [LRE]).
- LEA makes publicly available a handbook or other resource with written policies and procedures specific to the provision of special education within the LEA, including state and federal legal requirements. The handbook is regularly updated to reflect current policy.
- LEA provides written descriptions (as a part of its handbook or other resource) of the continuum of placements and services available within the LEA to ensure that students with disabilities receive FAPE.
- LEA stays current (e.g., through annual review) on applicable state and federal special education guidance, court findings, and research impacting special education, to ensure that its policies and procedures meet current federal and state legal requirements.

Status

Determine the status: **Not Yet** (i.e., none of the essential practices are present), **Partial** (i.e., one or more of the essential practices are present), or **Established** (i.e., all essential practices are present).

- Not Yet
- Partial
- Established



Policy and Procedures

The existence of up-to-date, documented, and accessible procedures that are compliant with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), along with a robust pre-referral system, such as a multi-tiered system of support.

Notes



Policy and Procedures

The existence of up-to-date, documented, and accessible procedures that are compliant with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), along with a robust pre-referral system, such as a multi-tiered system of support.



3.2 Problem-Solving Policies and Procedures

LEA supports strong pre-referral processes, such as the implementation of a multi-tiered system of support, a student study team, and other problem-solving policies and/or procedures that help general educators address the specific learning needs of students prior to referral for special education and/or related services.

Essential Practices

Check the box for each essential practice that appears to be in place within your LEA.

- Pre-referral processes are integrated and coordinated to support the whole child.
- Decision-making processes and procedures related to students qualifying for and exiting from special education are articulated in written policy (as a part of its handbook or other resource) that is compliant with state and federal law, and it is available for all stakeholders.
- LEA documents all training provided to relevant personnel that is related to pre-referral processes and implementation of multi-tiered systems of support, so it can monitor who attends.
- LEA provides guidance to relevant personnel about the differences between potential disability-related needs and language acquisition needs for English learners, as well as the difference between, and relatedness of, behavioral needs and social-emotional needs.
- LEA monitors, on a quarterly basis, the data on identification rates by school site. Data from sites that have a high referral rate but a low identification rate are analyzed to determine the referral source and additional training needs, and to target additional support.

Status

Determine the status: **Not Yet** (i.e., none of the essential practices are present), **Partial** (i.e., one or more of the essential practices are present), or **Established** (i.e., all essential practices are present).

- Not Yet
- Partial
- Established



Policy and Procedures

The existence of up-to-date, documented, and accessible procedures that are compliant with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), along with a robust pre-referral system, such as a multi-tiered system of support.

Notes

Accurate and consistent data sources that are accessible and monitored at the student, classroom, and school levels.



4.1 Accurate and Consistent Data

LEA produces special education data that are accurate and consistent with requirements for state submission. Systems and structures are in place to ensure that data meet the needs of the state and the LEA.

Essential Practices

Check the box for each essential practice that appears to be in place within your LEA.

- LEA has a written process for data collection and entry, using definitions and codes that are consistent with the statewide data system. Written processes are available for all staff who collect and enter data.
- A team regularly meets to review the central data systems to assess data quality and the effectiveness of the data collection, entry, and management.
- LEA has a calendar for state data submission deadlines, and one person is designated as responsible for data submission.

Status

Determine the status: **Not Yet** (i.e., none of the essential practices are present), **Partial** (i.e., one or more of the essential practices are present), or **Established** (i.e., all essential practices are present).

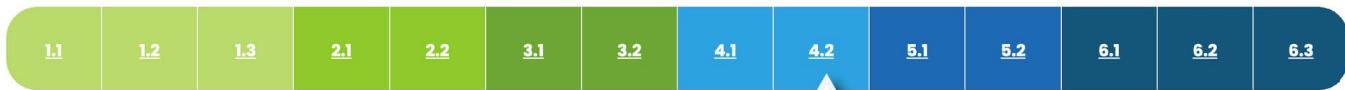
- Not Yet
- Partial
- Established

Notes



Data Systems

Accurate and consistent data sources that are accessible and monitored at the student, classroom, and school levels.



4.2 Performance and Compliance Data

LEA collects special education performance and compliance data and monitors progress toward special education goals.

Essential Practices

Check the box for each essential practice that appears to be in place within your LEA.

- LEA data collection systems are designed to identify key indicators of compliance and performance that are used in site-level goal setting and developing LEA action plans.
- LEA utilizes LEA-wide benchmark assessments that include participation of students with disabilities.
- LEA calendars time for site leadership to develop and/or review action plans for responding to special education performance and compliance data.
- LEA includes data for students with disabilities when presenting results to stakeholders, including review of assessment results for students with disabilities (e.g., Annual Performance Report [APR] data).
- LEA has stated expectations that site leadership, in collaboration with special education providers, will review data (e.g., dashboard indicators and statewide performance plan indicators) to assess student need.
- LEA monitors student placements (including the use of nonpublic schools), alternative dispute resolution rates, and due-process filings and outcomes.

Status

Determine the status: **Not Yet** (i.e., none of the essential practices are present), **Partial** (i.e., one or more of the essential practices are present), or **Established** (i.e., all essential practices are present).

- Not Yet
- Partial
- Established





Data Systems

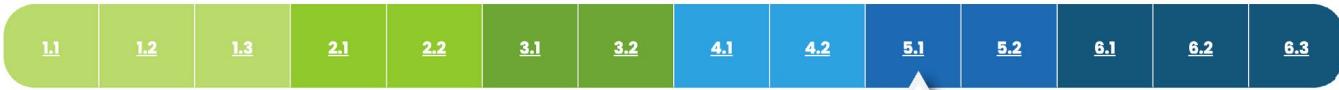
Accurate and consistent data sources that are accessible and monitored at the student, classroom, and school levels.

Notes



Resource Management

Budget planning and monitoring processes that ensure that resources for special education are strategically allocated and managed to meet state and federal guidelines and to serve students with disabilities.



5.1 Budget Planning

LEA multidisciplinary leadership team reviews and evaluates the special education budget and develops sound finance and staffing plans related to fiscal obligations for specialized instruction and supplementary aids and services for students with disabilities.

Essential Practices

Check the box for each essential practice that appears to be in place within your LEA.

- LEA budget prioritizes high quality core instruction funded under the Local Control Funding Formula. To the maximum extent appropriate, supplementary aids and services funded by state and federal special education dollars are provided in general education settings to promote students' access to core instruction.
- LEA monitors on a quarterly basis the data on teacher and service provider caseloads, identification rates, and eligibility categories, with the intent of targeting resources effectively.
- LEA monitors retention (e.g., rates of turnover, percentages of unfilled positions) of new staff, at least annually.
- LEA uses a clear, transparent, and equitable decision making process for how to allocate resources for supports and services. The process is documented in an administrative handbook or a written protocol that articulates the criteria used to allocate funding resources.

Status

Determine the status: **Not Yet** (i.e., none of the essential practices are present), **Partial** (i.e., one or more of the essential practices are present), or **Established** (i.e., all essential practices are present).

- Not Yet
- Partial
- Established



Resource Management

Budget planning and monitoring processes that ensure that resources for special education are strategically allocated and managed to meet state and federal guidelines and to serve students with disabilities.

Notes



Resource Management

Budget planning and monitoring processes that ensure that resources for special education are strategically allocated and managed to meet state and federal guidelines and to serve students with disabilities.



5.2 Budget Monitoring

LEA monitors its fiscal risk factors and provides guidance to staff on the use of state and federal special education resources.

Essential Practices

Check the box for each essential practice that appears to be in place within your LEA.

- Local educational agency maintenance of effort (LEA MOE) is met.
- LEA program and finance leaders receive training on the allowable uses of state and federal special education funds and key reporting requirements (e.g., LEA MOE).
- LEA provides guidance to support staff review of placement options and decisions in conformity with LRE provisions.
- A representative of the LEA (i.e., administrator or designee), who is knowledgeable about the availability of LEA resources, attends all IEP meetings.

Status

Determine the status: **Not Yet** (i.e., none of the essential practices are present), **Partial** (i.e., one or more of the essential practices are present), or **Established** (i.e., all essential practices are present).

- Not Yet
- Partial
- Established

Notes



Instructional Practices

Professional learning opportunities, systems, and processes for general and special education teachers and other personnel, to support high-quality Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and all students' access to the general education curriculum.



6.1 Access to General Education Curriculum

All students have access to the general education curriculum.

Essential Practices

Check the box for each essential practice that appears to be in place within your LEA.

- Special education office has a professional learning plan for both new and experienced staff, based on the identified needs of the LEA.
- Leaders responsible for high quality core instruction have integrated instructional practices to support the needs of students with disabilities into the professional learning they provide to staff.
- All educators receive training and support in instructional and behavioral strategies to support all students, and the training and support includes an intentional focus on students with disabilities (e.g., differentiation, scaffolding, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and specially designed instruction).
- Special education leaders, in collaboration with instructional leaders and site leaders, have the infrastructure to actively support teachers in classrooms (e.g., a system of coaching and mentorship).
- An LEA administrator or designee monitors the development of the accommodations and modifications section of the IEP document to ensure that accommodations and/or modifications, as well as universal tools and designated supports, are discussed and selected during IEP meetings and, once selected, are clearly documented in IEPs.

Status

Determine the status: **Not Yet** (i.e., none of the essential practices are present), **Partial** (i.e., one or more of the essential practices are present), or **Established** (i.e., all essential practices are present).

- Not Yet
- Partial
- Established



Instructional Practices

Professional learning opportunities, systems, and processes for general and special education teachers and other personnel, to support high-quality Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and all students' access to the general education curriculum.

Notes



Instructional Practices

Professional learning opportunities, systems, and processes for general and special education teachers and other personnel, to support high-quality Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and all students' access to the general education curriculum.

1.1

1.2

1.3

2.1

2.2

3.1

3.2

4.1

4.2

5.1

5.2

6.1

6.2

6.3



6.2 IEPs

There is a system in place for monitoring whether students with disabilities have high quality IEPs and whether IEPs are implemented with fidelity.

Essential Practices

Check the box for each essential practice that appears to be in place within your LEA.

- LEA provides training on legal requirements of IEP development and offers expert consultation in providing resources and support related to special education.
- LEA ensures that all teachers have access to and review IEPs prior to providing service to a student (e.g., before school starts and before extended school year).
- Case managers provide parents with progress reports on their student's IEP goals at the same time as general education reporting occurs.
- LEA periodically reviews a random sample of IEPs for quality assurance (e.g., compliance, educational benefit).
- LEA encourages and supports site leadership to schedule IEP meetings with enough advance notice to allow parents/ guardians to arrange their own schedule in order to participate.

Status

Determine the status: **Not Yet** (i.e., none of the essential practices are present), **Partial** (i.e., one or more of the essential practices are present), or **Established** (i.e., all essential practices are present).

- Not Yet
- Partial
- Established



Instructional Practices

Professional learning opportunities, systems, and processes for general and special education teachers and other personnel, to support high-quality Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and all students' access to the general education curriculum.

Notes



Instructional Practices

Professional learning opportunities, systems, and processes for general and special education teachers and other personnel, to support high-quality Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and all students' access to the general education curriculum.



6.3 State Performance Plan Indicator

LEA is on track to meet annual requirements for the State Performance Plan Indicator (SPPI) 5A-C goals for LRE.

Essential Practices

Check the box for each essential practice that appears to be in place within your LEA.

- LEA provides training (annually) on the LRE requirement to all relevant special and general education staff, including site and LEA administrators.
- IEPs have a clear and concise statement regarding consideration of any harmful effects on the child or the quality of services when determining LRE.
- Special education leaders share the LEA's annual performance report with the superintendent and the school board to promote awareness of the LRE requirement and to report progress toward the LEA's LRE target.

Status

Determine the status: **Not Yet** (i.e., none of the essential practices are present), **Partial** (i.e., one or more of the essential practices are present), or **Established** (i.e., all essential practices are present).

- Not Yet
- Partial
- Established

Notes



The BASICS for Special Education Infrastructure Tool Summary Table

Instructions:

Use this table to summarize your responses from the BASICS for Special Education Infrastructure Tool to identify the implementation status of each subcomponent.

Basic Components	Subcomponents	Not Yet	Partial	Established
Collaboration and Communication	1.1: Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals			
	1.2: Special Education Engaged in Strategy Development			
	1.3: Systems and Processes			
Staffing	2.1: Staff Hiring and Allocation			
	2.2: Strategic Staffing			
Policy and Procedures	3.1: Adoption of IDEA Policies and Procedures			
	3.2: Problem-Solving Policies and Procedures			
Data Systems	4.1: Accurate and Consistent Data			
	4.2: Performance and Compliance Data			
Resource Management	5.1: Budget Planning			
	5.2: Budget Monitoring			
Instructional Practices	6.1: Access to General Education Curriculum			
	6.2: IEPs			
	6.3: State Performance Plan Indicator			