

# Creating Change: Student-Led IEPs as a Dispute Resolution Option

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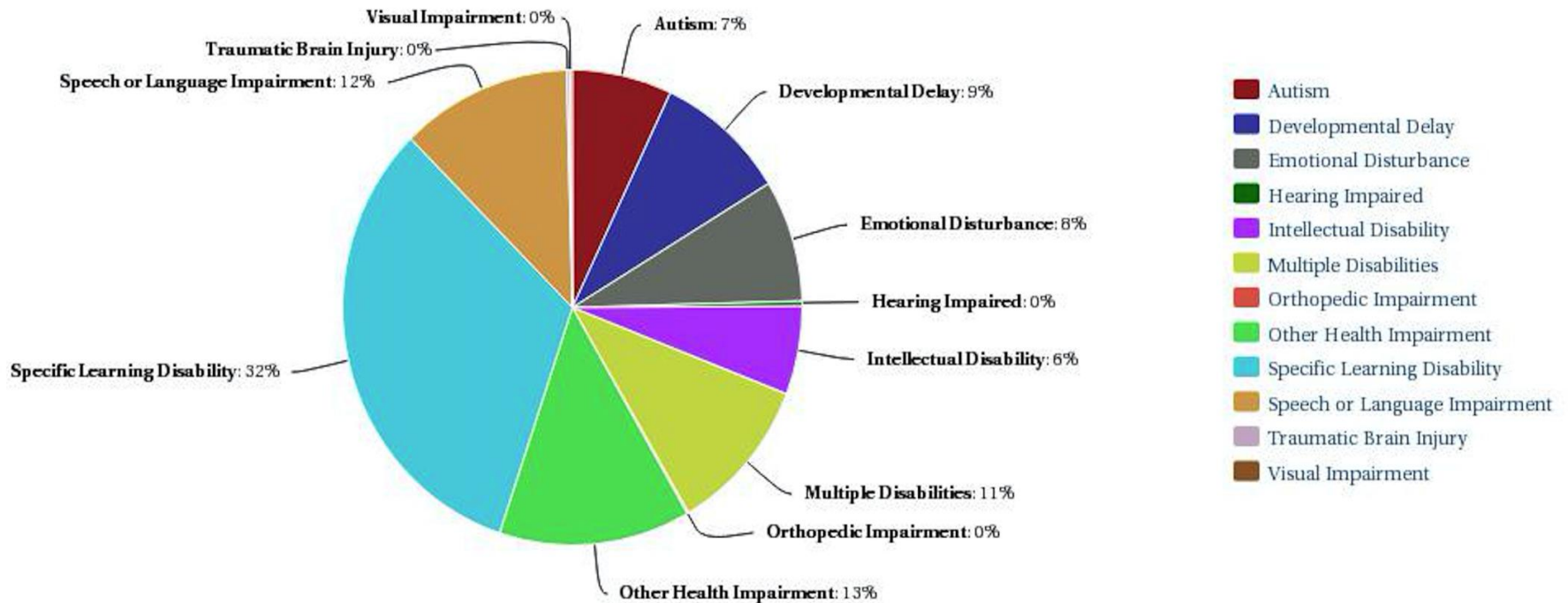


**SchoolTalk**

# DC Snapshot

- \* History of poor school performance & LOTS of conflict
- \* Major reform efforts have been making an impact in the last 5-7 years
- \* DC students attend:
  - DCPS (56%)
  - Public Charter Schools (44%)
  - Non-public
- \* Many students have no knowledge about their disability or that they have an IEP

# Child Count 2014 – Disability



Includes students served in nonpublic programs and students in surrounding counties eligible to be receiving services under IDEA. Surrounding county students are included in DCPS count in its role as the geographic LEA.

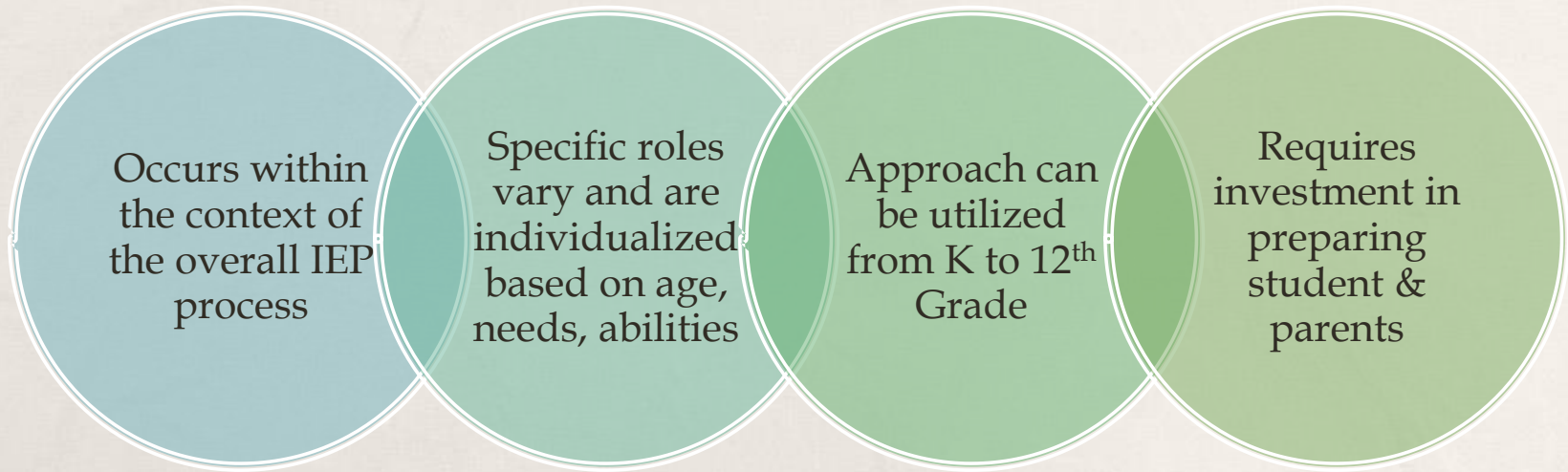


# SLIEP & Youth Engagement as a Dispute Resolution Option

- ★ Stage 1: Prevention (CADRE Continuum)
  - Increasing the capacity of students to meaningfully participate, collaborate and problem solve

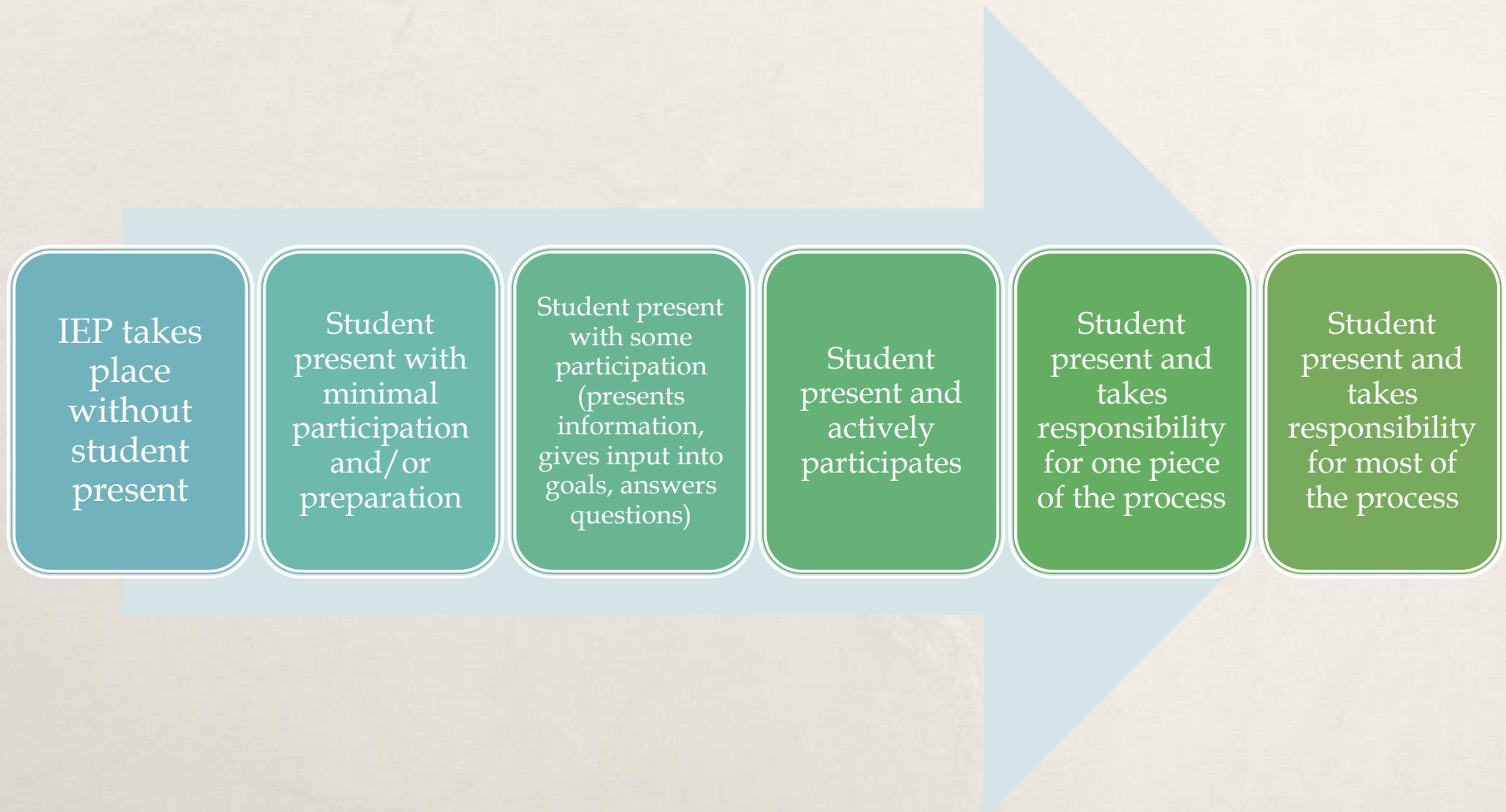


# Defining the Student-led IEP



- ★ Substance: meaningful student participation in IEP development
- ★ Process: the student takes a leadership and decision-making role

# IEP Participation Spectrum



Student engagement levels based on individual needs and abilities

# Research

- \* Student develops stronger self-advocacy and self-determination skills, leads to increased self-confidence
- \* Students gains greater knowledge of disability and accommodations
- \* Increased parent and general education teacher participation
- \* Less tension – meeting environment becomes a forum for inclusive positive communication between all participants
- \* Reduced stigma associated with having a disability
- \* Allowing students to play a decision-making role leads to increased student engagement and accountability
- \* Improved transition outcomes

*“It’s really helped me to gain a better understanding of how vulnerable it is not to have that information. Now that he has that information, me and my husband can sit back and say, ‘OK.’ So thumbs up to him. I’m really excited about it, really excited.” - parent*



# Implementing SLIEPs in DC



Collaborative initiative with OSSE, DCPS, charter schools, the DC Secondary Transition Community of Practice, and SchoolTalk



# Getting Started

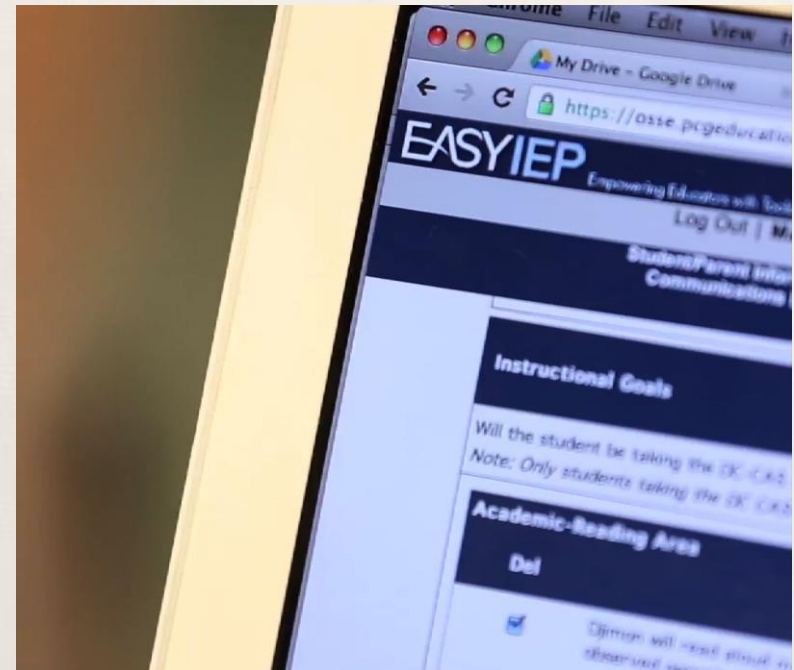
- ✦ Training for all participating schools
- ✦ Start small – choose 3-5 students
- ✦ Assess students
- ✦ Develop a SLIEP goal and plan for each
- ✦ Prepare the student
- ✦ Watch the magic happen...



*OSSE and the CoP provided materials and coaching to support the work at each school.*

# Steps for Preparing Students

- ✧ Build self-awareness
  - Disability,
  - Abilities & Limitations
  - Needs & Supports
  - Goals
  
- ✧ Understand the IEP
  - Rights
  - Process
  - Review own IEP
  
- ✧ Plan for Participation
  - Introductions & Facilitation
  - Ground rules
  - Use technology
  - Create “out” for student
  - Provide opportunities for practice



# Utilize Assistive Technology

- \* Develop powerpoints
- \* Student demos their assistive technology during the meeting
- \* Video tape the presentation ahead of time if student is nervous
- \* Record the IEP meeting and use it to debrief with student after the meeting
- \* Ask student to take pictures to tell their story



# Student Participation



- \* Prepare & send accommodations invitations
- \* Conduct introductions
- \* Make a presentation
- \* Communicate strengths, weaknesses, needs, & interests
- \* Request
- \* Define future goals, dreams, and aspirations
- \* Write sections of the IEP
- \* Facilitate all/part of the meeting



# Findings

- \* Finding the time to work with the students was a significant challenge.
- \* Self-advocacy skills applied beyond the IEP meeting
- \* Start-up was a challenge for schools that didn't already have the building blocks
- \* There are many ways to involve students
- \* Teachers and parents need tools for talking to students about their disability.

# Impact of Increased Participation

Students who lead and participate in IEP meetings gain:

- ★ Greater awareness about their disability
- ★ Understanding of how their disability impacts their academic performance
- ★ Increased self-determination skills
- ★ Knowledge about available and appropriate accommodations
- ★ Familiarity with the IEP process

*“When you are out of school - an adult - you have to take care of everything. You need practice. If only the parents talk, the kids won’t be prepared for life.”*

- Adult Self-Advocate, DC Advocacy Partners

# In their words...

*“Now I can tell people like my teachers what I need, my goals, and what I don’t need”* –**student**

*“When I get to middle school I want to achieve all my goals. Especially, my math goals. When I grow up I want to be an archeologist, a scientist, a biologist, and a basketball player. My career goals are all involve math which makes it important for me to strengthen my skills”* –**student**

*“I’ve seen that what really determines a student’s success is not the severity of their disability. Its how engaged they are and using strategies to overcome it. The kids who really say ‘yes, I know that strategy works for me and I am going to try it,’ they are the ones who do well.”* - **Director** of Student Support Services

# Best Me I Can Be

[www.ossesecondarytransition.org](http://www.ossesecondarytransition.org)

## Video & Toolkit Modules

- \* Module 1: Getting Started
- \* Module 2: Building Self-Awareness
- \* Module 3: Understanding Your IEP
- \* Module 4: Preparing for Participation
- \* Module 5: Student-led IEPs



# Expansion

- \* DCPS self-advocacy curriculum
- \* CoP resources & videos for how to talk to students about their disabilities + public awareness campaign
- \* OSSE professional learning community for SLIEPs with more significant disabilities
- \* Beyond IEPs
  - CIRCLES – Year 3
  - Restorative Justice Pilot
  - DC Youth Leaders Peer Network



**Dialogue:  
Student Engagement as a  
Driver of Change**

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