

Focused On-Site Monitoring Team Leader Training Manual



Reaching for Positive Student Outcomes

*National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring
Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center, Human Development Center
New Orleans, Louisiana*

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Team Leader Training Manual

Section 1 - Introduction

Accountability for effective and meaningful implementation of the *Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act – 2004* (IDEA) is fundamental to achieving the intent of Congress in providing “that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.” This emphasis on results is specifically noted in relation to Part C of IDEA 2004, where Congress states:

“... there is an urgent and substantial need (1) to enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities, to minimize their potential for developmental delay ... (2) to reduce the educational costs to our society, including our Nation’s schools, by minimizing the need for special education and related services after infants and toddlers with disabilities reach school age; (3) to maximize the potential for individuals with disabilities to live independently in society; (4) to enhance the capacity of families to meet the special needs of their infants and toddlers with disabilities ... ”

Monitoring this system of accountability, encouraging continuous improvement in results, and ensuring that implementation of the law is enforced are the responsibility of the U.S. Department of Education, state agencies, and local programs, with the ongoing support and oversight of monitoring stakeholders.

Focused Monitoring Within the Context of General Supervision

Federal law requires that states provide for general supervision of IDEA implementation. An effective accountability system for the implementation of the IDEA must ensure that any noncompliance is identified and that deficiencies are corrected as soon as possible within one year after the deficiency is identified. Such accountability systems must indicate responsibility for all the requirements of the federal law and address contemporary principles of effective general supervision. When viewed in the context of the concepts and principles of focused monitoring, this general supervision is commonly described as a system involving at least 7 interdependent elements: (1) State Performance Plan and State Goals with measurable targets, (2) Effective Policies and Procedures, (3) Data on Program Processes and Results (disaggregable into meaningful units for analysis) routinely disseminated to the public, (4) Targeted Technical Assistance and Professional Development with measurable indicators of implementation and results, (5) Effective, Responsive Dispute Resolution, (6) Integrated On-Site and Off-Site Monitoring Activities, including a focus on selected priorities, and (7) Improvement and Corrective Action Planning, Incentives and Sanctions.

Focused monitoring, an integral and interdependent aspect of an effective general supervision system, is an important part of each of the above elements. The intensity or the extent of focused monitoring will vary for each of the 7 interdependent elements (including on-site investigations as part of the most intense level) based on rules adopted by the state. Some elements may include more requirements within the IDEA than others; an effective general supervision system must be multi-faceted with all elements linked to ensure IDEA compliance and successful outcomes for children and students with disabilities.

On-Site Focused Monitoring

The Advisory Board for the National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (NCSEAM) has defined “on-site focused monitoring” as:

“a process that purposefully selects priority areas to examine for compliance/results while not specifically examining other areas for compliance to maximize resources, emphasize important variables, and increase the probability of improved results.”

The components of on-site focused monitoring are similar to those of traditional comprehensive on-site monitoring, including pre-visit activities, on-site interviews and record reviews, resulting in a post-site final report. When compared to the other components, traditionally the on-site component required the highest level of commitment from the state agency resulting in a final report outlining the findings of noncompliance and requiring a subsequent corrective action plan/improvement plan (CAP/IP) from the local district/program. Generally, if the district/program expended the effort specified in the CAP/IP (in short, completed all activities), the local district/program was determined to have met the compliance requirement. The difference in a CAP/IP based on an on-site focused monitoring visit is that the primary local accountability, once the plan is implemented, is not in completed activities but in corrected noncompliance and in improved outcomes or results for children/students with disabilities in Part B and young children and their families in Part C.

To show evidence of corrected compliance and improved results, the local district/program’s data must be able to demonstrate **Evidence of Change** including two separate parts of a “two pronged test.” First, there should be **Evidence of Correction**, meaning clear evidence that the school district/program has corrected any noncompliance as soon as possible but within 12 calendar months from the final report identifying the noncompliant findings. Second, NCSEAM strongly recommends there be **Evidence of Improvement** indicating that the changes in the system have yielded significantly improved outcomes in the focused area for children/students with disabilities in Part B and young children and their families in Part C. At this point, the Part B focused monitoring systems ensure that Evidence of Improvement is demonstrated through gains in child/student outcome data. As child and family outcomes measurements become available in Part C state accountability systems in the coming years, progress in these indicators will become an important part of general supervision systems.

It is imperative that the on-site investigation informs the selected district/program of the correction and program improvement necessary to enable, in the end, the local district/program to demonstrate the evidence of change. A focused monitoring report of an on-site visit will provide the roadmap to guide the design of a CAP/IP. This roadmap will furnish the foundation for the CAP/IP to address correction of any noncompliance and continuous improvement of systemic issues, ultimately producing improved results for children/students with disabilities in Part B and young children and their families in Part C.

The process of examining priority areas for compliance to improve results is the responsibility of an on-site team and its team leader. While it is important for each on-site team member to demonstrate personal leadership, the effectiveness of the overall team is dependent on the personal leadership and focus of the team leader.

Focused monitoring teams are typically comprised of the team leader, state/regional representatives, parents, and local representatives from other districts/programs within the state, often referred to as peer team members. Developing and sustaining the focus of the on-site team on the priority area throughout the pre-visit, on-site visit, and post-visit are largely dependent on the skills and behaviors of the team leader. The organization, leadership, and focus of the team leader are vital to the overall effectiveness and success of the on-site team in identifying both noncompliance and the systemic changes necessary to improve outcomes in the priority area. The following provides the qualifications and roles and responsibilities of the team leader outlined to ensure the success of the team and ultimately the district/program in demonstrating the evidence of change.

Team Leader Qualifications

When selecting a team leader, it is important to ensure that the individual has the following minimum qualifications:

- Comprehensive knowledge of special education/early intervention rules and regulations
- Strong leadership skills
- Ability to organize and coordinate on-site activities
- Ability to collect and analyze data
- Ability to travel and attend all team and district/program trainings

Roles and Responsibilities

Within a traditional monitoring system, often the duties of the team leader were primarily conducted during the on-site visit at the district/program. Much less attention was given to pre-visit data analysis and even less to post-visit results. The responsibilities of the team leader within a focused monitoring model are intensified at all levels, particularly at the post-visit stage to ensure a local district/program is making progress toward both evidence of correction and evidence of improvement within required timelines. The minimum responsibilities at all levels are listed below. A more in-depth description of preferred practices in meeting all responsibilities is included within the remaining sections of this document.

Pre-visit

- Attending all focused monitoring training for team leaders, team members, and selected districts/programs
- Coordinating data collection from both the state and local levels specific to the priority area
- Analyzing pre-visit state and district/program data to develop initial hypothesis(es)
- Coordinating on-site logistics with the district/program administration
- Organizing all pre-visit data to present to team members (e.g., packets, folders)
- Ensuring all procedures to invite parents to a parent focus meeting are completed with integrity (if this activity will be a part of the on-site visit)

On-site

- Leading the monitoring team during all activities of the on-site review (3-5 days depending on district/program size)
- Opening and overseeing the parent focus meeting (if this activity will be part of the on-site visit)
- Identifying team assignments and data-collection activities to triangulate and corroborate findings
- Maintaining the focus of individual team members during all team activities
- Leading daily team meetings
- Organizing daily data collection and analysis around gathering supporting evidence to test hypotheses, validate noncompliance, and determine the underlying issues and causes of any poor performance

Post-visit

- Drafting monitoring a report and revising it as needed per review by the state administration
- Supporting and monitoring the district/program's development of the CAP/IP including assisting the district/program in identifying resources for interventions and effective improvement strategies
- Supporting and monitoring the district/program's implementation of the CAP/IP
- Engaging the on-site team and district/program administration in an evaluation of the monitoring process
- Reviewing and monitoring district/program progress reports on all corrective actions and improvement activities throughout the following year
- Conducting a follow-up review with the district/program within specified timelines to review evidence of change

All behaviors and skills necessary for a focused monitoring team leader are depicted in the NCSEAM Team Leader Implementation Checklist in Appendix A.

Section 2 – Pre-Visit Activities

Relationship Building

Due to the “gotcha” nature of many traditional compliance-monitoring strategies, establishing a collaborative relationship with local personnel can be difficult. Within a focused monitoring model, it is imperative that the monitoring team, facilitated by the team leader, establishes a close working relationship with the local district/program. Together they can build the foundation necessary for the district/program to meet the evidence of change.

Strategies to assist the team leader in establishing a collaborative relationship with the local district/program include:

- Educating the district/program in the purpose of focused monitoring and the processes that occur pre-visit, on-site, and post-visit
- Identifying specific strategies the State agency will use to support the district/program throughout the process
- Identifying resources and support that will be available to the district/program to meet the evidence of change
- Being available throughout the process for technical assistance and support, both on- and off-site
- Connecting the district/program with local peers who have been through the process and can provide an additional level of support
- Listening and being supportive if the local agency becomes frustrated with the process and reminding them of the support they will receive to reach the desired outcome

The time and effort the team leader spends upfront in establishing trust and a collaborative commitment to improvement with the district/program will have tremendous payback later in the process, specifically during the post-visit phase, when the most important work of improving results and meeting the evidence of change occurs.

Initial Hypothesis(es) Development

Preparation and organization are essential to the success of the on-site team’s work, which becomes the basis of the final report and subsequently the CAP/IP designed to improve results. Within a focused monitoring model, the collection and analysis of state and local data pertaining to the priority area are the basis for all on-site visit preparation and organization.

Because traditional models of compliance monitoring often involved only procedural monitoring (sometimes referred to as monitoring to ensure that t’s were crossed and i’s were dotted), the preparation and organization before the on-site visit involved designing a schedule to cover as much ground as possible while on-site. It was designed to ensure that an adequate number of child/student records, buildings, and programs were reviewed and interviews conducted to support results.

Focused on-site monitoring is a hypothesis-testing approach to compliance monitoring. For the purpose of focused monitoring, a hypothesis(es) is:

- An educated guess regarding potential noncompliance with statutory or regulatory requirements and/or underlying reasons why performance is low
- Based upon the data collected and analyzed above
- As specific as possible

Hypothesis testing is a form of statistical inference that uses data from a sample to draw conclusions about a population. Compared to previous data analysis, hypothesis(es) testing is a distinctive method of compliance and performance monitoring. Focused monitoring involves testing a hypothesis(es) that the team's data analysis suggest is a root cause for poor performance and noncompliance in the priority area. Hypothesis(es) testing in compliance monitoring is an investigative method that many team leaders are neither familiar nor comfortable with.

It is the team leader's responsibility to collect and analyze data on the priority area prior to the on-site visit. This analysis will inform the initial hypothesis(es) and monitoring. In some cases, the team leader will facilitate the team's analysis of the data and development of the hypothesis(es). In other cases, the team leader will complete this activity and share it with the team.

Part B examples of data collected and analyzed at this phase should include:

- Local district policies and procedures
- Previous complaints and due process related to the priority area
- Professional development plan related to the priority area
- Parent survey data
- Local self-assessment
- Student data including calculations of disaggregated data related to the focus area by:
 - ⇒ grade level
 - ⇒ building level
 - ⇒ disability category
 - ⇒ LRE placements
 - ⇒ race/ethnicity at the district level
 - ⇒ race/ethnicity at the grade-level groupings
 - ⇒ race/ethnicity at the building level
 - ⇒ race/ethnicity by disability category
 - ⇒ race/ethnicity by LRE placements

Part C examples of data collected and analyzed at this phase may consist of updated program information relevant to the priority area including:

- Past disputes
- Family survey data
- Past monitoring/corrective action status
- Self-assessment information
- Disaggregated child data including the following possibilities:

- ⇒ age of children
- ⇒ provider
- ⇒ race/ethnicity

Other data to be considered in the pre-visit analysis are dependent on the uniqueness of the district/program, e.g., special programs or schools located within the boundaries of the district/program that may impact the district/program outcome data.

When developing an initial hypothesis(es) on potential causes to poor performance, data are drilled down to determine any patterns with respect to the disaggregated data. For Part B, this may include age, race/ethnicity, particular disabilities, grade, building, program, service provider, etc. For Part C, this may include age of child, referral source, service coordinators, age at referral, race/ethnicity, service provider, etc. This enables the team leader, and in some cases the entire team, to ascertain whether particular sub-groups of children/students can account for data that deviate from the average for the state or local district/program.

An initial hypothesis(es) is critical to investigating the most likely causes of poor performance and to maximizing the efficiency of the on-site team. It enables the team leader to identify specific locations/buildings, populations of children/students, programs, and roles to be interviewed or examined when beginning the on-site investigation.

Parent Focus Meeting

In Part B focused monitoring systems, it is customary for on-site teams to conduct a parent focus meeting one night during the on-site visit (typically on the first night). The purpose of the parent focus meeting is to include parents meaningfully in the focused monitoring process in order to build trust, accountability, and integrity into the overall process.

Prior to the visit, the team leader must work with the district/program to:

- Determine meeting locations
- Ensure room set-up
- Provide the district with the required parent invitation template
- Gather written documentation from the district/program that parents have been notified of the focus meeting per state agency procedures, e.g., use of media such as newspaper, radio, etc.

Parental input into the strengths and concerns of the district/program related to the priority area is critical to testing the team hypothesis(es) and building the foundation for an effective CAP/IP to ensure the district/program meets the evidence of change.

Team Preparation

Preparing the on-site team is a critical role of the team leader. The team leader must hold a preliminary team meeting, which can be a conference call, a videoconference, or face-to-face meeting, before the visit or immediately upon arriving at the district/program. The meeting allows the leader to develop or share the initial hypothesis(es) and all data

supporting that hypothesis(es). To ensure participation of all team members, the team leader must be clear in all communication regarding the time, location, and importance of the meeting to the team's overall work.

During the initial team meeting, the team leader should provide team members with a packet of information designed to:

- Share the pre-visit data that were considered in developing the initial hypothesis(es). Because these data can be overwhelming, they should be shared in an organized fashion such as graphs and charts.
- Present a summary or conclusions based on the data gathered and examined in preparation for the on-site visit.

In some instances, particularly in Part C focused monitoring systems, the monitoring team works together to analyze the data, develop the hypothesis(es), and prepare the protocols for the on-site visit. Often in these cases, the team leader will contact the local program to be monitored, sharing the team's initial hypothesis(es) and giving the program administrator the opportunity to suggest additional or different hypothesis(es).

When the team leader is responsible for these activities, it is important for the team leader to:

1. Solicit feedback from team members concerning district/program information
2. Provide a rationale for how the initial hypothesis(es) on noncompliance leading to the district/program's performance status is related to the data reviewed
3. Solicit feedback from team members concerning initial hypothesis(es)
4. Make changes, based on consensus with team members, to the initial hypothesis(es)
5. Summarize the discussion among team members concerning the preliminary data and initial hypothesis(es) of noncompliance
6. Describe the on-site activities and information that would support or refute the hypothesis(es)
7. Make an observable effort to fully include all members in the team discussion (This may be particularly important for first-time team members, including parents who may not have experience as a compliance monitor)
8. Review the procedures, including the roles and responsibilities for each team member during the parent focus meeting; the team leader should also remind team members of the time, location, and other logistics concerning the meeting
9. Take the time to answer all questions and address concerns by other team members

As with the time spent developing a positive and collaborative relationship with the district/program, efforts on the part of the team leader to adequately prepare the on-site team will assist in ensuring the team's work is collaborative and focused, and that their time is spent efficiently.

Initial Team Assignments

One of the challenges of the team leader is appropriate and effective time management for the team. The assignments of individual team members, concerning where and how they spend their time on the first day of the visit, need to be calculated based upon the

data analyzed for the initial hypothesis(es). It is not necessary to visit buildings or interview roles that will not provide fruitful or meaningful data regarding the hypothesis(es) being tested. Rather, the team leader must determine where the team must visit, which interviews will be conducted, and what documents must be reviewed to assist the team to triangulate data to test the hypothesis(es).

For example: The district's data suggest that LRE changes significantly at the middle school level, indicating that students with disabilities are placed in more restrictive environments when they transition from elementary to middle school. The data also suggest that LRE is consistent with current state LRE annual targets in the State Performance Plan. Given this scenario, the team leader will want to devote significant team time at the middle school level and at the last grade of the elementary level to determine what is happening at the middle school and during the transition from the elementary to middle school that negatively impacts students being placed in the LRE. In this example, depending on what the team learns during the on-site visit, it may not be necessary for the team to spend time at the early elementary grades or at the high school.

Another example: Prior to a Part C focused monitoring visit to a county whose percentage of children served was the lowest in the state, the monitoring team reviewed data that were available about the county's referral and evaluation activities. It found the county had about the same referral pattern as other counties but had a very high percentage of children who were referred and not found eligible. To ensure that the evaluation and eligibility process was being completed appropriately, the team focused significant time in interviewing referral sources, parents of children who were found not eligible, and members of the evaluation team as well as reviewing records of children who were not found eligible.

When giving team assignments, the team leader should include within the packet used to share the district/program data the instruments needed to conduct on-site activities e.g., interview protocols, record review forms, building/provider specific information. The team leader needs to give clear and specific instructions including:

- Location each team member is assigned to monitor
- Data to be requested and reviewed, e.g., child/student records, discipline records, service provider/service coordinator logs, evaluation reports, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs)
- Services to be observed (when applicable)

Based on the initial hypothesis(es), time must be spent walking through the protocols and all forms to designate specific items that should be included in or eliminated from the investigation. The protocols generally include questions that may not pertain to the specific hypothesis(es) or the particular district/program receiving a visit. It is not efficient for a team to be investigating areas beyond the hypothesis(es), and to do so may cause the team to become unfocused and spend time on issues unrelated to the priority area. Time with the team should also be spent determining potential follow-up questions and on other potentially helpful concerns not included in the protocols.

When concluding the meeting the team leader should:

- Ask each person if he/she has questions about his/her assignment
- Ask if he/she has needed materials
- Share logistics for the end of the first day team staffing, including time and location
- Remind team members to come to the team staffing at the end of the first day of the on-site visit with daily summary sheets completed
- Ask each team member to provide contact information to enable team members to reach one another during the day, e.g., cell phone numbers

At the beginning of the visit, team members can only be as organized and prepared as the team leader. If the team starts the visit in a state of disarray, it will be difficult to recover as a team and, most important, to feel confident in the team findings and conclusions at the end of the on-site visit. On the other hand, a well-organized and focused team will identify any noncompliant findings that are valid as well as areas of needed program improvement that will ultimately lead to improved outcomes for children and students with disabilities.

Section 3: On-Site Activities

Similar Types of Methodology With a Different Focus

Previously in procedural compliance monitoring, the team needed to review a large number of records in order to reach a confidence level that a particular procedure was indeed out of compliance. The investigation resembled an approach similar to quantitative research, presenting the results with numbers and percentages.

When conducting a focused monitoring investigation to determine the root causes of poor performance, including poor child/student outcomes, the investigation becomes more like a qualitative approach; in addition to reviewing records, the team conducts interviews revealing the perspectives of many roles, including parents, to find the causes of poor performance. As a result, the findings are presented as facts in narration in addition to numbers and percentages.

The methods used to collect data during a focused monitoring on-site visit are very similar to those used in traditional compliance monitoring visits, e.g., interviews, record reviews, observations. The difference between the two types of visits lies in the different roles and positions interviewed, the types of records reviewed, what is being observed, and the purpose of the review. When a team is looking for the root cause of poor performance, including child/student performance, in addition to procedural compliance, data is collected from more sources and perspectives than were previously sufficient for traditional compliance monitoring.

In the past, Part B compliance monitoring typically involved interviewing special education administrators, special education teachers, multidisciplinary teams, with some general education teachers and administrators. Record reviews routinely included Individuals Education Plans (IEPs) within a special education record. Because the concerns surrounding poor performance and outcomes of students with disabilities are many times a result of behaviors and practices in general education, interviews and record reviews for a focused monitoring visit involve many roles and types of data not included within previous monitoring efforts.

For example, an on-site visit to investigate poor performance by students with disabilities on the statewide reading assessment may require an interview with the reading curriculum coordinator. If the purpose of the on-site visit is to investigate the over identification of a population of students for special education programs and services, it will likely be more fruitful to review discipline records, building assistance team records, and documentation of pre-referral activities, rather than student IEPs, when determining the cause of the over identification. Both examples also may require very different types of observations.

During a Part C focused monitoring visit, investigating poor performance in transition to appropriate services after the child turns 3, the team probably will interview administrators, service coordinators, and other service providers within the early intervention program. The team will also spend significant time interviewing parents of

children who have transitioned to school district programs and other community services; local school district staff who are involved in preschool special education eligibility and IEP development; and local Head Start and other early care and education providers in the community. Record reviews would be focused on documentation of activities related to the transition process.

Team Leader Availability

As a result of reviewing different types of data and conducting an investigation that has more qualitative characteristics than quantitative involving hypothesis(es) testing, team members may become uncertain as to how to follow-up and probe deeper into what they learn while conducting their investigation as an independent monitor throughout the day. It may be necessary for the team leader to offer immediate guidance if a team member becomes overwhelmed or is uncertain about the next step of data collection. It is important that the team leader be available to individual team members by informing team members of his/her location each day and providing team members with a cell phone number or other contact method.

It is a good practice for the team leader to routinely contact each team member daily to determine whether additional guidance is needed and that sufficient progress is being made. It also provides the team leader an opportunity to immediately address concerns or questions rather than waiting until the end of the day. The regular contact avoids wasting time on-site or having the team member lose focus and begin taking the investigation in a different direction. As an official of the state, if the team member discovers noncompliance in any area, the team is obligated to report it as a finding. If a team member or the team as a whole loses focus and produces multiple findings unrelated to the priority area, it will become extremely challenging for the district/program to remain focused in the CAP/IP and, as a result, to meet the evidence of change.

In some instances, if schedules permit, the team or members of the team with the team leader, can meet in the middle of the day (perhaps at lunch) to share what they are learning and make any adjustments in the interview questions based on that knowledge. This flexibility assists the team in making the best use of the time available and maximizing their ability to find the root causes of the poor performance.

Parent Involvement/Focus Meeting

In addition to parent interviews, often Part B visits will include a parent focus meeting, which is viewed as a critical data collection activity while on-site. In most cases, it is the responsibility of the parent team member to facilitate the parent focus meeting. Responsibilities of the team leader include working with the district/program to ensure all pre-visit meeting preparations are complete (see Section 2). During the parent focus meeting the team leader must:

- Monitor that all team members are fulfilling their responsibilities during the meeting (e.g., note taking, attending the sign-in table)
- Ensure that the meeting room set-up, sign-in sheets, and other arrangements are in order prior to the scheduled start of the meeting

- Welcome parents/caregivers (including family members, surrogate parents, personal care attendants, etc.) as they arrive
- Ensure the overall context of the meeting is clear and that participants understand how information will be used
- Redirect the discussion to the focus area (when necessary)
- Ensure that questions from parent/caregivers are handled appropriately
- Verbally express appreciation to the parents/caregivers attending the meeting for their presence and willingness to share information

Facilitated by the team leader, the team needs to analyze the data collected during the parent focus meeting to determine whether the information begins to corroborate the initial hypothesis(es) or whether the data suggest another hypothesis(es). Parental input is critical when triangulating data to test the initial hypothesis(es) and/or developing other hypothesis(es) about the causes of poor outcomes and potential noncompliance.

Generally, Part C lead agencies have determined that the most effective way of getting family information necessary to contribute to the focused monitoring process is through one-on-one parent interviews. These often occur by telephone, sometimes in person. Team members can conduct the interviews prior to and/or during the on-site meeting.

Based on the area of focus, the Part C data system is often used to select names of parents to call. For example, if the team is investigating poor performance in transition, a list of parents whose children have recently turned age 3 are selected from the data system. These parents are called during the on-site visit. Many on-site focused monitoring teams find it helpful to conduct parent interviews throughout the visit and not all on the first day, so that interview questions can be modified throughout the visit as new information is found. The process of on-site investigation leads to changes in investigative strategies either by changing the interview questions used or the specific people interviewed.

Introduction Meeting

It is customary to conduct an on-site introduction and orientation meeting with the district/program administrators (e.g., superintendent, director of special education, program director, early intervention coordinator). The meeting may have multiple purposes, including introducing all team members, reinforcing the concepts and principles of focused monitoring, reminding the district/program of the evidence of change necessary to complete the process, and arranging the time and location of the exit interview at the end of the on-site visit. There are times when this meeting may also include a discussion of the hypothesis(es) developed prior to the visit.

Interviews

While investigating the system, the team is investigating systemic issues that affect large numbers of children, families, and/or students. Systemic issues include (1) how the district/program's policies, procedures, and infrastructure support daily practice to ensure high performance and successful outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families and students with disabilities, (2) whether professional development has been offered, required, and monitored to ensure effective practices, and (3) what daily

supervision is in place to ensure all components of the system are working simultaneously to produce the ultimate child/student outcomes. This context changes the nature and scope of interviews when compared to compliance monitoring that pertained only to procedural compliance.

Team leaders are typically responsible for all administrative interviews. While administrative interviews have historically been an important component of compliance monitoring, they have an elevated level of importance within a focused monitoring investigation. When determining the causes of poor outcomes of children/students with disabilities in Part B and young children and their families in Part C on the priority area, the team will be reviewing and investigating the system that enables children, families, and students to be successful.

While there are routine roles that should be interviewed regardless of the priority area being investigated (e.g., superintendent, director of special education, early intervention program director, service providers), other roles needing to be interviewed are determined based on the priority area (e.g., curriculum coordinator, secondary transition coordinator, referral sources, evaluation team members, community representatives). As with the administrative interviews, when determining who will be interviewed and making interview assignments to other team members, the team leader is determining compliance and programmatic issues related to the following areas:

- Policies/procedures
- Infrastructure
- Supervision
- Professional development
- Daily practice

As with the data collected during the parent focus meeting, the data collected during the interviews are used to triangulate and corroborate the findings related to the team hypothesis(es).

Record Reviews

Record reviews are a critical data source when triangulating findings to corroborate the team's investigation of poor performance. As stated above, focused monitoring is an investigation of the system. Systemic noncompliance is applicable to large numbers of children/students and is proven through evidence of policy, procedure, or routine practice that, when applied to individual students with disabilities, results in a violation of requirement/entitlement. Therefore, noncompliance in policy, procedure, or routine practice as determined through interviews or observations should be substantiated through record reviews.

Traditional compliance monitoring relied heavily on record reviews. Monitors trained and experienced in the traditional approach are at times more comfortable extensively reviewing records than they are conducting interviews. Experience has shown that if the team starts the investigation of the initial hypothesis(es) by reviewing records, there may be a tendency to look beyond the specific data needed to investigate that hypothesis.

Until the team members are experienced in conducting a focused monitoring on-site visit, it is more effective to conduct interviews first and then corroborate what they learn by looking for specific data within a child/student record. That is not to imply that a case-study approach to on-site focused monitoring is not effective in determining noncompliance and causes of poor performance for team leaders and members highly skilled in such an approach and able to remain focused on the priority area being investigated. It is important to emphasize that if noncompliance is found, it must be reported. Additionally, if the team loses focus and produces multiple findings unrelated to the priority area, it will become extremely challenging for the district/program to remain focused in the CAP/IP and, as a result, to meet the evidence of change.

Observations

Observations are typically conducted by on-site team members when specifically looking for evidence of causes of poor performance as recorded through interviews or record reviews. It is not a good use of team time to observe classrooms, programs, team meetings or service providers without a very specific purpose. Depending on the priority area under investigation, the observations may not be appropriate or useful to the hypothesis(es). The team leader will need to determine the usefulness of observations and, if appropriate, offer team members the specific behaviors and data they are to look for.

Daily On-Site Monitoring Activities

Each day of the on-site visit, team members will be interviewing, reviewing records, and conducting observation per team leader direction. In some instances, individual team members are in different buildings or locations throughout the day. At the end of each day the team leader will convene a team staffing at an agreed location to review data collected in light of team hypothesis(es) documenting the team findings related to the priority area. The team leader should organize the data each day using the format that is required for the final report. In essence the team leader is writing the final report while on-site, thereby greatly enhancing the ability to meet all final report timelines.

During the daily staffing, the team leader should adhere to the following structure:

1. Review hypothesis(es) from pre-staffing meeting
2. Ask team members to report positive finds/strengths related to the hypothesis(es) and/or priority area
3. Ask each team member to report evidence (potential noncompliance and/or reasons for poor performance) related to the hypothesis(es) from their daily activities on their daily summary sheet
4. Summarize the finding after each member reports
5. Record the evidence to support, modify, add, eliminate hypotheses(es) as a result of team member daily findings (e.g., newsprint on the wall, LCD projecting screens from computer)
6. Quantify the types of evidence and numbers of supporting records, interviews (including parents), and/or observations

7. Redirect team members to the priority area when findings and evidence are not related to the priority area
8. Record any noncompliance finding unrelated to the priority area to ensure it is addressed in an addendum to the focused monitoring report or handled in a separate letter
9. Facilitate discussion leading to identification of areas of noncompliance based on state statute/rules, IDEA regulations, or state policy manual
10. Facilitate discussion of information gathered that demonstrates reasons or contributing factors to poor performance
11. Use data collected by team members to determine what additional data/information will be collected the next day or whether there is enough data to support a finding of noncompliance
12. Make an observable effort to engage every team member in the discussion (e.g., round-robin reporting)
13. Based on the existing hypothesis(es) and the progress of the team thus far, review the interview and record-review protocols with the team to designate items that should be included in the investigation and those that should be eliminated
14. Address each team member's questions or concerns
15. Set the time and location for the following end-of-the-day team staffing, and
16. Provide each team member with additional instruments needed to conduct on-site activities for the following day. These may have been edited as a result of the discussions

The daily staffings are critical to the work of the team in that they keep the team focused on the priority area, create consensus on findings through discussion, ensure that data are triangulated and that findings corroborated, organize the team for the next day, and provide the team leader with a format to begin organizing the data for the final report. The success of the daily staffing is dependent upon the team leader's organization and facilitation skills.

To ensure success, the team leader must (1) set clear expectations that team members come to the meeting prepared, (2) manage the time during the daily staffing by keeping the team on task and focused on the priority area, (3) use the proper organizational tools (e.g., daily summary sheets, newsprint or LCD projector), and (4) organize the data collected on the newsprint or LCD projector in the same format as required for the final report (e.g., include the categories strengths, findings, supporting evidence).

Prior to leaving the district/program, the team leader should collect all completed protocols, daily summary sheets, and any other documentation used by the team to support the findings in the final report. This is to ensure a paper trail exists at the state agency in the event the district/program or others challenge any findings.

Exit Meeting

At the end of the on-site visit, the team leader conducts a brief exit interview. State agencies differ in the purpose of this visit as to whether initial findings of the on-site team will be shared at that time or whether the data collected by the team will be further reviewed and analyzed upon returning to the state agency. While some cases, the team leader will discuss what the team found in relation to the original hypothesis(es) discussed at the meeting the first day of the visit, in the event that additional data collection or analysis will occur it may be premature to share even initial findings at the exit meeting.

Regardless of whether initial findings will be shared, there is basic information that should be shared at the exit meeting facilitated by the team leader. The team leader is responsible for

- Introducing team members, if present
- Expressing appreciation for the cooperation and efforts of the district/program personnel
- Providing a brief reminder of the reason for the visit
- Providing a general description of the data collection methods used for the on-site visit (e.g., interview, observation, record review)
- Explaining the sequence of post-site activities and timelines (e.g., report writing, development of the CAP/IP, presentation of findings to the Board)
- Explaining any required dissemination of the report
- If known and available, providing the name and contact information for state technical assistance personnel responsible for assisting the district/program with the development and implementation of the CAP/IP following the on-site visit
- If the team leader will be providing the technical assistance to the district/program, establishing a date for a follow-up contact to begin the development of the CAP/IP
- Reminding the district/program that correction according to the CAP/IP must occur as soon as possible but no later than within 12 months of the date of the final report to the district/program
- Addressing district/program personnel's questions

One of the most critical functions of the exit meeting is for the district/program to understand what the next steps are in developing the CAP/IP. With the increased level of accountability requiring the district/program to demonstrate evidence of change at the end of the process, it is essential that the team leader ensure that the district is aware and has a plan for developing and implementing the CAP/IP.

Section 4: Post-Site Activities

Final Report

It is the responsibility of the team leader to draft a final monitoring report based on the data collected by the team throughout the process, including pre-visit and on-site activities. The draft is submitted to the state agency administrator who has the authority to issue the final report including the findings and required corrective actions. The administrator may ask for clarification or offer revisions to the draft, requiring the team leader to revise and finalize the report. It is important that the team leader secures all supporting documentation at the state office. This should include all raw data (e.g., completed protocols, district/programs documents) considered in defending the results of the on-site visit in case the findings are challenged by internal administrators or the district/program.

Recommended practice suggests that state agencies have timelines in which final reports need to be issued to the local district/program. Many states have struggled with issuing timely final reports, thereby losing momentum, commitment, and interest on the part of the state agency staff as well as diminishing state agency credibility and/or any feelings of obligation on the part of the local district/program. It is critical that the final report reach the district within required state timelines so the district/program can begin developing and implementing the CAP/IP. This will enable it to move forward in meeting the required evidence of change within all required timelines and, more important, to begin experiencing improved results for children/students with disabilities in Part B and young children and their families in Part C.

State agencies use many different formats for the final focused monitoring report. One of the most critical purposes of the final report is to provide information that will guide the district/program in developing the CAP/IP. The district/program cannot meet the evidence of change if the final report does not provide the appropriate data and information enabling the local team to know exactly what needs to be done to make the necessary changes. Through the work of 34 plus partners, NCSEAM has identified the following as critical components of the final report:

- Follows clear methodology
- Maintains focus on the focus area
- Links quantitative data to investigation
- Triangulates evidence leading to a finding
- Makes clear findings of noncompliance
- Describes related areas for program improvement
- Specifies requirements for district/program release from the focused monitoring process

Follows clear methodology

The report clearly describes the methods used to investigate the focus area so that someone without knowledge of focused monitoring would understand how information was gathered and verified. Sources of information may include (but are not limited to) parent survey information, surveys of professional staff, interviews with various

district/program personnel, parent interviews, student interviews, child/student performance data, staffing data, observations, information from parent forums or other meetings, local stakeholder input, and other information gathered on-site. In most instances, record reviews should be conducted only after other information has been thoroughly reviewed and should be limited to providing support or triangulating other data. There are instances, however, when record-review data (e.g., service coordinator/provider logs, eligibility data, progress notes) can be helpful in developing or revising interview questions throughout the visit.

- The various methodology used to gather and examine data is described in report.
- Content of the report illustrates that methodology was followed and/or explains rationale for any deviation from planned methodology. In some cases, the plan for gathering data is changed when new information comes to light or one source of information leads to an unexpected source of data. In such a case, the team should indicate what they did to investigate the issues
- Description includes explicit data for each method used. The report should document the data sources explicitly (e.g., 12 parent interviews, 31 parents attending focus group, 23 records reviewed, 11 interviews)

Maintains focus on focus area

When the team conducting an on-site visit has maintained focus, the report should primarily document areas of noncompliance related to the chosen focus area. The number of citations unrelated to the focus area should be limited.

- Primary content of the report is related to an investigation of compliance and performance in the focus area on which the program was selected
- Majority of the findings of noncompliance and areas for program improvement stated in the report are related to the focus area

Links quantitative data to investigation

In preparation for an on-site visit, data related to the focus area have been requested, compiled, and analyzed. The analysis of these data helps the team to formulate initial hypotheses and structure their initial investigation.

- Data on the focus area are thoroughly analyzed and discussed, with a succinct description of the analysis of the pre-visit data and its usefulness to the investigation
- Evidence derived from monitoring processes is quantified when appropriate. When additional data are examined during the on-site visit, there should be a summary of those data indicating how they were incorporated into the investigation

Triangulates evidence leading to a finding

Whenever possible, teams should seek multiple sources of information to verify the existence of problems in the focus area. Multiple sources of the same information leading to a specific citation lend additional credence to the findings.

- Noncompliance is determined through several sources of evidence derived during the monitoring process. Teams should seek opportunities to verify with a second and third data source whatever findings develop. For example, information gleaned from the parent forum might be verified using interviews with other parents, specific record reviews, and/or interviews with teachers
- All citations of noncompliance are based on a minimum of two different sources of evidence. The more data available to support the finding, the stronger the case for what needs to change

Makes clear findings of noncompliance

- All findings of noncompliance in the area of focus are specified and should be directly related to the focus area. When necessary, an explanation should be included
- Systemic noncompliance (applicable to large numbers of students) is described including evidence of policy, procedure, or routine practice that, when applied to individual child/students with disabilities, results in a violation of requirement/entitlement
- Systemic noncompliance is differentiated in terms of policies, procedures, or practices. Taking the time to specify this allows district/programs to more effectively target noncompliance in their CAP/IP
- Child-specific noncompliance (evidence of a violation of procedural or other requirement/entitlement specific to a child) is described and personally identifiable information is included as an appendix to the report to facilitate correction
- Findings of noncompliance *not related* to the focus area, when detected by the monitoring process, are specified in the report or separate letter
- All findings are referenced to state and federal requirements. Every finding should have as its basis a specific state or federal requirement

Describes related areas for program improvement

- Areas for program improvement noted during the monitoring process, but not specific findings of noncompliance as determined by triangulation of evidence, are explicitly described in the report
- Areas for program improvement are based on a discrepancy between what was observed and research-based or preferred practices
- All change efforts should be based in practices that have been demonstrated as effective for children/students with disabilities in Part B and young children and their families in Part C and those whose demographics are similar to the population served in the district/program

Specifies requirements for district/program release from the focused monitoring process

Required Evidence of Correction should be very specific and indicate what data must be provided to demonstrate that the system has corrected noncompliance. Specific expectations allow the state agency to judge the district/program's success in making needed changes.

Evidence of Improvement is data-based evidence that demonstrates the benefit of the systems change(s) for children/students with disabilities in Part B and young children and

their families in Part C. Evidence of Improvement must include data documenting the change in performance including child/student performance in the focus area.

Optional: Specific strengths are based on sound information and data related to the focus area. While a focused monitoring team is likely to observe a range of strengths and positive outcomes for children/students in a district/program when they visit on-site, any strengths noted in the report should have relevance to the focus area or the potential to support systemic improvement in the focus area.

- Strengths are specific and well-described. Positive attitudes and good intentions are important to system change but, without tangible evidence that these are resulting in daily practice that benefits children/students, they should not be considered strengths
- Strengths are based on research-based or preferred practice
- Strengths are related to the focus area

These components are outlined in a checklist in Appendix B. The “Monitoring Report of On-Site Visit” checklist is designed to allow state agencies to assess and revise their current formats to include all components as well as a training tool for team leaders on how to write a final report.

Corrective Action Plans/Improvement Plans

Each local district/program will bring different ideas and resources to the task of creating an effective plan to address the system’s weaknesses and capitalize on its unique strengths. It is recommended practice for the CAP/IP to be developed by a local interagency team. In the case of Part B, this would include parents and general education teachers and administrators as well as special education teachers and administrators. In Part C, this would probably include service providers, administrators, parents, and representatives of community-based programs and services.

Other team members should be added relevant to the priority area (e.g., graduation would include high school counselors, drop-out prevention coordinators, discipline officers; child find would include members of evaluation/eligibility teams).

When it is the team leader’s responsibility to facilitate the local interdisciplinary teams charged with designing an CAP/IP, the team leader should assist in examining a variety of ways to address areas that need to change, including seeking expert technical assistance and providing high-quality professional development. Each part of the CAP/IP should have the commitment of the resources and support necessary to ensure effective outcomes.

NCSEAM has developed the following, which outlines the necessary components of a district/program CAP/IPs.

CAP/IP explicitly addresses findings of noncompliance in the report

The CAP/IP should explicitly address the findings in the report, and the various parts of the plan should clearly demonstrate how the activity will correct cited noncompliance to produce improved outcomes for children/students.

CAP/IP (or separate agreement) explicitly addresses individual child/student findings of noncompliance in the report

CAP/IP addresses areas of program improvement (not specific to noncompliance) in the report

In many cases, there are features of a system that are problematic in the focus area without being noncompliant with federal regulations. When these are identified, the team should address them in the report.

Activities are designed to correct the cited noncompliance and contribute to the district/program meeting both the Evidence of Correction and Evidence of Improvement

Each finding outlined in the final report should be translated into meaningful activities that will correct the cited noncompliance and result in improved outcomes. It is particularly important to plan a means of building and expanding needed expertise among all members of the district/program and communities. The need for parents and other stakeholders to be fully prepared for participation in their child's education should be considered in each cited area.

In Part B, it is also important to consider the necessary close collaboration between regular and special education in order to support their shared responsibility for improving outcomes for students with disabilities. Genuine collaboration between the two systems requires sharing resources, training across special and regular education issues, and providing ongoing support for collaboration. Simply training special educators in general education issues is not enough, nor is providing regular educators with the accommodations needed to work with particular students.

For Part C, this critical collaboration must include members of the community including local school district representatives providing early childhood services, Head Start, and others providing early care and education services.

Numbers of activities are strategically limited to promote maximal change with available resources

It is rare to have unlimited resources and districts/programs need to make the most judicious use of the resources available. Activities included in the CAP/IP are those that have the highest priority and will make best use of resources.

Activities are planned in a logical sequence that supports ongoing change

The CAP/IP will document a sequence of activities that build and promote ongoing systems change. When one activity is based on successful completion of another, there is an explicit implementation outcome that indicates the plan is a foundation for ongoing improvement of the system to produce more effective outcomes for children/students and

enable the district/program to meet both the Evidence of Correction and the Evidence of Improvement within the required timelines.

Plan explicitly addresses collaboration among general education, special education, and other community-based partners and describes responsibilities of each in implementing the plan

It will generally be impossible for the systems change necessary to promote improved outcomes for children/students with disabilities in Part B and young children and their families in Part C to involve only special education or early intervention personnel and resources. Plans should include provisions for collaboration.

Description of rationale links the activities to expected Evidence of Correction and Evidence of Improvement

This ensures that the activities chosen are directly tied to and will enable the district to meet both the Evidence of Correction and the Evidence of Improvement.

Specific persons are identified as responsible for implementation of the activity

Whenever possible, the CAP/IP should include names of those who are responsible for implementation. When it is not possible to name each person, the plan should include specific roles to clearly indicate who will be accountable for making change happen.

Specific persons are identified as responsible for supervision of implementation

Each activity should have a single person or small group associated with it and identified by name. That person or persons will supervise implementation of the activity, monitor progress, and intervene when necessary to ensure that the system is improving and students are benefiting from the activity. The Plan should include multiple layers of responsibility in order to maximize change across the system.

Resources include fiscal resources and personnel, both internal and external to the system

Committees or interdisciplinary teams who craft CAP/IPs should critically consider all needed supports and seek whatever resources will be needed to improve the system to correct weaknesses.

When choosing to commit resources that are internal to the system, the existing capabilities should be considered. Most systems have untapped potential and talent that may be used to foster change. However, if internal resources alone have not produced positive outcomes for children/students, seeking additional resources outside the system may be necessary to align or expand existing resources.

Whether internal or external resources are chosen for implementation of the plan, the CAP/IP should reflect broadly based resources targeted toward fostering lasting change. If internal resources are chosen, the committee should have considered why the resources have not already produced needed changes and plan specifically to address barriers in the district that may have prevented the best use of resources.

Documentation of implementation is measurable

Documentation of implementation should not be superficial; it needs to record authentic efforts to toward expanded skill or system capacity. As an example, professional development may be insufficiently documented, without signatures indicating attendance and dissemination of information.

To assure professional development is having its intended outcome, committees writing CAP/IPs may consider documenting a range of possible results, including (but not limited to) pre- and post-surveys that demonstrate learning, assigned activities that demonstrate application, advanced training that includes discussion of how the new skills can be applied, logs developed by support and consultation personnel who help implement new methods or procedures, and formal supervisory observation and feedback sessions from personnel trained to support continuous skill development.

Timelines are specific, reasonable, and allow review that informs technical assistance

Each activity should be broken down into timelines that allow meaningful periodic review. Ongoing and planned monitoring of progress makes it possible to adjust the plan to better accommodate the needs of personnel and assure that the system is making progress toward Evidence of Correction and Evidence of Improvement. Timelines should include at least quarterly review by the state agency to assure that needed assistance can be available necessary.

Evidence of Correction describes criteria for determining correction of noncompliance

Evidence of Improvement is objective and measurable

Evidence of Improvement should be observable and objective and should lend itself to measurement. The most powerful Evidence of Improvement is demonstrated through ongoing review of outcome data related to the focused area. It is only when performance, including child/student outcomes, is improved that systems change be judged as successful.

These components are outlined a checklist in Appendix C. The “Corrective Action Plan/Improvement Plan (CAP/IP)” checklist is a tool designed to enable state agencies to assess and revise their current formats to include all components as well as to train team leaders and local districts/programs on the required components and expected quality of CAP/IPs.

Follow-Up

When the role of the team leader includes the post-visit responsibilities of monitoring the CAP/IP development and implementation, it is imperative that the team leader maintains continuous communication with the district/program. There will be few others who will understand the idiosyncrasies and underlying causes of poor performance in the priority area better than the team leader. While important throughout the entire process, the trusting and collaborative relationship referred to in Section 1 is particularly critical during follow-up. Establishing a partnership throughout the life of the CAP/IP will

enhance the success of everyone, most importantly the children/students with disabilities in Part B and young children and their families in Part C.

The activities conducted during this phase of focused monitoring are determined by state agency procedures, which are often dictated by state agency capacity. Common approaches to team leader follow-up include:

- Facilitating local stakeholder meetings to ensure an understanding of the issues needing to be corrected and improved within the district/program
- Facilitating the work of a local team assigned to developing and implementing the CAP/IP
- Ensuring that the CAP/IP includes appropriate activities, personnel, resources, timelines, and local monitoring strategies to best support the district/program in meeting the required evidence of change
- Brokering and suggesting resources for the district/program to consider when looking for support to implement the CAP/IP
- Monitoring the district/program's progress on implementing the activities at least quarterly
- Reviewing district/program data to indicate improved child/student outcomes at least quarterly or when available
- Intervening when the district/program's CAP/IP becomes derailed or conditions change with the district/program that could potentially cause a disruption in the district/program's progress, e.g., the vacancy of critical role
- Conducting an evidence-of-change review at the end of the 12 months to ensure that all noncompliance has been corrected and improvement on the priority area is evident
- In the event the district/program meets all required evidence of change, recommending to the state agency that the district/program be released from the monitoring process. This release from the CAP/IP must be sent in writing to the district/program.
- Notifying the state agency in the event the district/program does not meet all required evidence of change

While not the only factor in ensuring a successful focused monitoring process from beginning to end, the role of the team leader is vital to the workings of the on-site team and within the district/program. Data analysis, leadership, facilitation, and the interpersonal skills of the team leader are all necessary and fundamental to the ensuring the focused monitoring truly leads to improved child/student outcomes.

Appendix A

Team Leader Implementation Checklist



NATIONAL CENTER FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY MONITORING

Team Leader Implementation Checklist

The Team Leader Implementation Checklist describes the roles and activities of the team leader for an on-site focused monitoring visit. The listing is used to ensure that the visit is conducted with fidelity to the planned roles and responsibilities of the team leader.

PRE-VISIT

<i>Initial Team Discussion</i>		Yes	No
1	The time and location of the initial team meeting/discussion are clearly communicated, resulting in all team members being present for the discussion.		
2	During the initial team discussion, the team leader	Yes	No
	a. provides written descriptions of the district/program to include a general overview of district/program		
	b. leads a discussion of the focus area specifically, with data from the district/ program		
	Part B examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ shares updated data reflecting status within 2 months of visit date ➤ shares calculations of disaggregated data by the focus area at district and grade level groupings ➤ shares calculations of disaggregated data by the focus area at building level ➤ shares calculations of disaggregated data on the focus area by race/ethnicity and/or ruling at district level ➤ shares calculations of disaggregated data on the focus area by race/ethnicity and/or ruling at grade level groupings ➤ shares calculations of disaggregated data on the focus area by race/ethnicity and/or ruling at building level ➤ shares visual depiction of the district data with team members (e.g., pie chart, graphs) 		
	Part C examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ shares updated data related to the focus area reflecting program status within 2 months of the site visit ➤ shares disaggregated data relevant to the focused area, as available, based on factors including age of children, provider, trends, race/ethnicity, reasons for low performance, etc. 		

	➤ shares other program information relevant to the focus area including past disputes, family survey data, past monitoring/corrective action status, self-assessment information, CAP/IP status, etc.		
	c. presents summary statements/conclusions based on the data examined in preparation for the site visit		
	d. solicits feedback from team members concerning district/program information		
	e. provides a rationale for how the preliminary hypothesis(es) of noncompliance or reasons for performance status are related to the data reviewed		
	f. solicits feedback from team members concerning initial hypothesis(es)		
	g. makes changes, based on consensus from the discussion with team members, to preliminary hypothesis(es)		
	h. summarizes the discussion among team members concerning the preliminary data and hypothesis(es) of noncompliance		
	i. describes the on-site activities and information that would support/refute the hypothesis(es)		
	j. makes an observable effort to fully include all members in the team discussion (e.g., asks parent team member to share information from the parent surveys; solicits input from team members who may be less vocal)		
	k. When applicable, reviews roles and responsibilities each team member will take during the parent focus meeting 2.k.1. checks on numbers of agendas and brochures available and assigns a carrier 2.k.2. checks on presence of sign-in logs and assigns a carrier 2.k.3. assigns a team member(s) to be the official recorder		
	l. answers all questions asked by team members		

Reviewer Comments:

Initial Team Assignments (First Day)		Yes	No
3	The team leader		
	a. provides each team member with the instruments needed to conduct on-site activities (e.g., interview protocols, Teacher Support Team log, record review forms, building/provider specific information)		
	b. gives clear and specific instructions including: 3.b.1. to which location each team member is assigned 3.b.2. to which hypothesis(es) data to be collected by team members is related 3.b.3. who is to be interviewed 3.b.4. which data to request and review (e.g., student records, discipline records, service provider/service coordinator logs, evaluation reports, Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs))		

	3.b.5. what services should be observed (when applicable)		
	c. based on the initial hypothesis(es), reviews the interview and record-review protocols with the team and designates specific items that should be included in the investigation and those that should be eliminated		
	d. discusses the use of follow-up questions to clarify responses to protocol questions		
	e. identifies which specific areas of documentation should be targeted when conducting record reviews		
	f. asks each person if he/she has questions about his/her assignment		
	g. asks each person if he/she has needed materials		
	h. shares logistics for end-of-the-day team staffing, including time and location		
	i. asks each team member to provide contact information to enable team members to reach one another during the day		
	j. reminds team members to come to the team staffing prepared with daily summary sheets completed (or determines, as a team, that daily summary sheets will be completed during the team staffing together at the end of day)		

Reviewer Comments:

ON-SITE VISIT

	<i>Parent Focus Meeting (if applicable)</i>		
4	The team leader	Yes	No
	a. ensures the meeting room set-up, sign-in sheets, and other arrangements are in order prior to the scheduled start of the meeting		
	b. welcomes parents/caregivers (including family members, surrogate parents, personal care attendants, etc.) as they arrive		
	c. ensures the overall context of the meeting is clear and that participants understand how information will be used		
	d. redirects the discussion to the focus area (when necessary)		
	e. ensures that questions from parents/caregivers are handled appropriately		
	e. during the meeting, makes an observable effort to monitor team members who are recording input received from parents/caregivers		
	f. verbally expresses appreciation to the parents/caregivers attending the meeting for their presence and willingness to share information		
	<i>Availability</i>		
5	The team leader	Yes	No
	a. informs team members of his/her location each day		
	b. provides team members a method for contacting him/her (e.g., cell phone number)		

	c. contacts each team member daily to determine whether additional guidance is needed and that sufficient progress is being made		
	d. addresses each team member's questions or concerns		
	<i>On-Site Activities With Central Administration</i>		
6	The team leader	Yes	No
	a. conducts an on-site introduction/orientation with district/program central office administration (e.g., superintendent, director of special education, program director, coordinator)		
	b. interviews key administrators to investigate the focus area		
	c. arranges for time and location of exit interview with district/program administration (if applicable)		

Reviewer Comments:

	<i>Daily Staffing (This section completed for each full day of the focused monitoring visit)</i>		
7	The team leader	Yes	No
	a. convenes the team staffing at the end of each day		
	b. asks team members to report out the positive finds/strengths		
	c. reviews hypothesis(es) from pre-staffing meeting		
	d. asks each team member to write down evidence (potential noncompliance) related to the focus area from their daily activities on their daily summary sheet		
	e. asks team members to report out the evidence (potential noncompliance) related to the focus area		
	f. summarizes finding after each member reports		
	g. quantifies the types of evidence and numbers of supporting records, interviews, and/or observations		
	h. summarizes input from parents to review each initial hypothesis		
	i. redirects team members to the focus area when findings and evidence presented and discussed are not related to the focus area		
	j. records the evidence to support/modify the <u>initial hypothesis(es)</u> result of team member daily findings (e.g., newsprint on the wall, LCD projecting screens from computer)		
	k. records the evidence to support/modify any <u>additional hypothesis(es)</u> as a result of team member daily findings (e.g., newsprint on the wall, LCD projecting screen from computer)		
	l. uses data collected by a team member(s) to make a decision about what additional data/information is needed to be collected the next day OR determines there is enough data to support a finding of non-compliance for at least one hypothesis(es)		
	m. makes an observable effort to engage every team member in the discussion (e.g., round robin reporting)		

	n. facilitates discussion leading to identification of areas of noncompliance based on state statute/rules, IDEA regulations, or state policy manual		
	o. asks team members to write down positive finds (strengths) related to the focus area on their daily summary sheet when strengths are factual and specific to the focus area		
	p. provides each team member with additional instruments needed to conduct on-site activities for the following day		
	q. based on the existing hypothesis(es), reviews the interview and record-review protocols with the team to designate specific items that should be included in the investigation and those that should be eliminated.		
	r. addresses each team member's questions or concerns.		
	s. sets time and location for the following end of the day team staffing.		
	t. uses time effectively in the team staffing.		

Reviewer Comments:

<i>Exit Interview With Central Administration (when applicable)</i>			
8	Team leader conducts brief exit interview, at which time he/she:	Yes	No
	a. introduces team members, if present		
	b. expresses appreciation for the cooperation and efforts of the district/program personnel		
	c. provides a brief overview of the reason for the visit		
	d. presents district/program data on the specific focus area		
	e. provides general description of the methods used for the on-site visit (e.g., interview, observation, record review)		
	f. shares general information related to the findings that are likely to be made, pending further analysis of the data and information collected		
	g. explains sequence of activities and timelines (e.g., report writing, development of the CAP/IP, presentation of findings to Board)		
	h. explains any required dissemination of the report		
	i. provides the name and contact information for state technical assistance personnel who will assist the district/program following the on-site visit, if known and available		

	j. reminds the district/program that correction according to the CAP/IP must occur as soon as possible but no later than within 12 months of the date of the final report to the district/program		
	k. addresses district/program personnel's questions		

Reviewer Comments:

POST-VISIT

	Report Writing		
9	The team leader	Yes	No
	a. drafts a monitoring report based on the data collected by the team during pre-visit review and on-site activities, which includes strengths, areas of noncompliance with supporting evidence, corrective actions, and required evidence of correction related to the focus area (demonstrating “starting with the end in mind”)		
	b. when required by monitoring procedures, submits a draft report to the State Office according to the timelines established for the focused monitoring process		
	c. responds to State Office feedback and finalizes the contents of the report		
	d. submits a final report within the timelines established for the focused monitoring process.		
	e. submits all required supporting documentation to the State Office (e.g., completed protocols, district/program documents)		
	Follow-up Visit (when required by monitoring procedures)		
10	The team leader	Yes	No
	a. returns to the district/program to facilitate development of the corrective action plan/improvement Plan (CAP/IP)		
	b. reviews progress reports submitted by the district/program		
	c. provides feedback to the district/program, including offering further technical assistance when progress by the district/program is insufficient		
	d. conducts a final review to determine whether the district/program meets all required evidence of change and required evidence of correction		
	e. makes a recommendation to the State administration about whether the district/program has met the required evidence of change criteria (release from CAP/IP) or whether further review will be necessary		
	Training		
11	The team leader	Yes	No

	a. meets as requested with State staff.		
	b. participates in each day of all trainings related to the focused monitoring process, which are conducted during the year by the State		
	c. provides verbal and/or written comments to the State concerning needed improvements to the state's focused monitoring model.		

Reviewer Comments:

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Appendix B
Monitoring Report of On-Site Visit

MONITORING REPORT OF ON-SITE VISIT

<i>Feature of the Report</i>	<i>Documented</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<i>Follows clear methodology</i>		
Methodology is described in report		
Content of the report illustrates that methodology was followed and/or explains rationale for any deviation from planned methodology		
Description includes explicit data for each method used (e.g., 12 parent interviews, 31 parents attending focus group, 23 records reviewed, 11 interviews, etc.)		
<i>Maintains focus on focus area</i>		
Primary content of the report is related to an investigation of compliance in the focus area on which the program was selected		
The majority of the findings of noncompliance and areas for program improvement stated in the report are related to the focus area		
<i>Links quantitative data to investigation</i>		
Data on focus area are thoroughly analyzed and discussed		
Evidence derived from monitoring processes are quantified when appropriate		
<i>Triangulates evidence leading to a finding</i>		
Noncompliance is determined through several sources of evidence derived during the monitoring process		
All citations of noncompliance are based on a minimum of two different sources of evidence		
<i>Makes clear findings of noncompliance</i>		
All findings of noncompliance in the area of focus are specified		
Systemic noncompliance (evidence of policy, procedure, or routine practice that when applied to individual students with disabilities results in a violation of requirement/entitlement (applicable to large numbers of students) is described		
Systemic noncompliance is differentiated in terms of policies, procedures, or practices		
Child-specific noncompliance (evidence of a violation of procedural or other requirement/ entitlement specific to a child) is described and personally identifiable		

information is included as an appendix to the report to facilitate correction		
Findings of noncompliance not related to the focus area, when detected by the monitoring process, are specified in the report		
All findings are referenced to state and federal requirements		
<i>Describes related areas for program improvement</i>		
Areas for program improvement noted during the monitoring process, but not specific findings of noncompliance as determined by triangulation of evidence, are explicitly described in the report		
Areas for program improvement are based on a discrepancy between what was observed and research-based or preferred practices		
<i>Specifies requirements for correction of noncompliance</i>		
Specifies Evidence of Correction		
Specifies Evidence of Improvement		
<i>Optional: Specific strengths are based on sound information and data related to focus area</i>		
Strengths are specific and well-described		
Strengths are based on research-based or preferred practice		
Strengths are related to focus area		

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Appendix C
Corrective Action Plan/Improvement Plan
(CAP/IP) Checklist

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN/IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CAP/IP)		
<i>Feature of CAP/IP</i>	<i>Documented</i>	<i>Suggestion(s)</i>
CAP/IP explicitly addresses findings of noncompliance in the report		
CAP/IP (or separate agreement) explicitly addresses individual findings of noncompliance in the report		
CAP/IP addresses areas of program improvement (not specific to noncompliance) in the report		
Activities are designed to correct the cited noncompliance and contribute to Evidence of Correction		
Numbers of activities are strategically limited to promote maximal change with available resources		
Activities are planned in a logical sequence that supports ongoing change		
Plan explicitly addresses collaboration between general education and special education and describes responsibilities of each in implementing the plan		
Description of rationale (Why) links activity to expected Evidence of Correction and Improvement		
Specific persons are identified as responsible for implementation of activity		
Specific persons are identified as responsible for supervision of implementation		
Resources include fiscal resources and personnel, both internal resources and external to the system		

Documentation of Implementation is measurable		
Timelines are specific reasonable, and allow review that informs technical assistance		
Evidence of Correction and Improvement are objective and measurable		
Evidence of Correction and Improvement describe criteria for determining correction of noncompliance and/or significant program improvement		

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