 

# CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS CHECKLIST

## Date:

## Team Members:

**Purpose:**

The Illinois State Board of Education has stated that “in successful districts and schools, there is a collective commitment to collaboratively identify, plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and communicate changes necessary to continuously improve student learning for **all** students.”

Further, it is essential to ensure that students with IEP’s have opportunities to benefit from high-quality instruction, to reach the same standards as all students, and to leave school prepared to successfully transition to post-school learning, living, and working. *The Critical Components Tool for Special Education Programs* was developed as a result of an extensive literature review to assist school leaders in facilitating conversations, reviewing, and improving the quality of special education programs, services, and supports as a key component of continuous improvement efforts as both the District/Cooperative/School level.

*The Critical Components Tool for Special Education Programs (Critical Components Tool)* offers guidance to educators and administrators when developing, implementing, and evaluating quality programs and services for students with IEP’s. *The Critical Components Tool* identifies twelve domains to consider for effective programs. Under each domain is an indicator and below that are descriptors of the indicator that define quality school experiences with the goal of improving post-school outcomes for all students with IEP’s. *The Critical Components Tool* is designed to assist Districts/ Cooperatives/ Schools to review practice and to identify and act on areas where improvement is desired or needed and should not be interpreted as policy or regulation.

*The Critical Components Tool is meant to be used in conjunction with a continuous* District/ Cooperative/ School improvement process that reviews multiple measures including a variety of data and other assessment tools. It can be utilized in conjunction with the Illinois Quality Framework as a companion tool to look deeper into the area of special education and special education programming. The team may choose to complete the *Critical Components Tool* in its entirety, select specific domains on which to focus, or complete the screener. Action plans resulting from this analysis should be integrated with the District/ Cooperative/ School improvement plan.

In summary, the purpose of the Critical Components Tool for Special Education Programs is to assist Districts/ Cooperatives/ Schools with the following goals:

* Identify a site’s current implementation level (baseline analysis)
* Identify areas that are effective and those in need of improvement
* Support the development of goals and action planning in critical areas of special education programming

**Instructions for Administration:**

Identify a team to complete *The Critical Components Tool for Special Education Programs.* This team should include a variety of stakeholder representative of both general and special education (e.g. administrators, teachers, support personnel, parents, students, a school board member etc.). This team could be an existing District/Cooperative/School leadership team, or an ad hoc team developed for this specific purpose.

Prior to meeting as a team, each team member must review the *Critical Components Tool* and independently rate each item on their copy of the *Critical Components Tool*. It should then be submitted to the facilitator for aggregating the scores identifying areas of agreement and disagreement. Each team member should think about evidence which would support their rating. Should an item not be used within the District/Cooperative/School, the team member and team should insert N/A in the evidence column the *Critical Components Tool*.

After each member has reviewed the *Critical Components Tool* independently, schedule approximately one to two hours to meet as a team to discuss individual responses and reach agreement on the rating that best represents the current status of implementation at the identified site. A team member should be identified as the notetaker to record the ratings for each item, supporting evidence, and team discussion. A facilitator to support administration of the *Critical Components Tool* should also be identified.

Complete the *Critical Components Tool*. The facilitator will identify each item and ask team members to indicate their individual rating by a show of fingers. (Not implementing = 0, Emerging = 1, Implementing = 2, Exemplary = 3) If everyone is in agreement, the notetaker will record that rating. If team members have varying responses, discussion will be held until a consensus regarding the rating is reached. Discussion will be documented in the notes section. Record evidence supporting the ratings of “Implementing” and “Exemplary” only.

Use the completed *Critical Components Tool for Special Education Programs* to analyze the results, identify areas of strength, and challenge. Prioritize areas of challenge and select items for further analysis and/or action planning. Develop goals to improve identified areas. Goals and action planning from your review should be integrated with the District/Cooperative/School improvement plan.

## Rubric for Evaluation:

The following definitions describe each rating utilized on the *Critical Components of Special Education Programs Checklist:*

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| **Not Implementing (0)** | No evidence of implementation |
| **Emerging (1)** | Inconsistent evidence of implementation |
| **Implementing (2)** | Implementation is occurring but requires ongoing support, professional  learning, and/or further development |
| **Exemplary (3)** | Implementation is occurring consistently in all settings without support and is a part of the district/school culture |

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| **VIII. TRANSITION-SELF ADVOCACY** | | | | | |
| **Indicator and Descriptors** | | | | | |
| **8. Special Education personnel engage students in self-advocacy, determination of their own educational goals/plans, opportunities for career development, participation in work-based learning and identification of necessary adult services and supports.** | **Not Implementing** | **Emerging** | **Implementing** | **Exemplary** | **Evidence** |
| a. Students attend their individualized education program (IEP) meetings. |  |  |  |  |  |
| b. The student actively participates in his/her IEP by providing input regarding decisions. |  |  |  |  |  |
| c. Students facilitate their own individualized education program (IEP) meetings. |  |  |  |  |  |
| d. Students provide in put regarding the development of academic and social goals as well as reporting on progress toward those goals. |  |  |  |  |  |
| e. Transition planning and exploration of postsecondary opportunities begins when students are 14 and one half. |  |  |  |  |  |
| f. Students and their families actively participate in the transition planning process. |  |  |  |  |  |

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| **Indicator and Descriptors** | **Not Implementing** | **Emerging** | **Implementing** | **Exemplary** | **Evidence** |
| g. Students provide information on their choices, preferences, and interests during planning processes for the development of goals for adulthood. |  |  |  |  |  |
| h. Students engage in career planning, age appropriate transition assessments, work-based learning opportunities, and the selection of courses of study to prepare them for post-secondary living, working, and learning. |  |  |  |  |  |
| i. Students with IEPs have the opportunity for community-based instruction and work experiences that are linked to the general curriculum and classroom instruction. |  |  |  |  |  |
| j. Students with IEPs and their families are provided early and clear information on graduation requirements and education to 22 years of age. |  |  |  |  |  |
| k. Students are provided instruction to develop lifelong learning skills such as self-advocacy, social-emotional skills, higher order thinking, employability skills and consumer and life skills. |  |  |  |  |  |
| l. Schools provide timely student and family connections to post-secondary supports and services through local and state agency programs and services. |  |  |  |  |  |
| m. Community agencies and post-secondary schools are invited to actively participate in IEP meetings, as appropriate for individual students, in which transition services are discussed. |  |  |  |  |  |
| n. Staff and students develop a summary of performance document that is distributed to necessary adult providers that outlines needed services and supports, as well as, current abilities. |  |  |  |  |  |
| o. There is evidence of enrollment in postsecondary education or training, employment, and independent living. |  |  |  |  |  |

TEAM DISCUSSION NOTES

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| **TRANSITION-SELF ADVOCACY**  **Special Education personnel engage students in self-advocacy, determination of their own educational goals/plans, opportunities for career development, participation in work-based learning and identification of necessary adult services and supports.** |
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