



### **Training Program Description & Logistics**

Long-time special education legal expert Julie Weatherly, Esq. and long-time educational leader Dr. Timothy S. Havard co-developed LEArn & LEAd in 2014. This one-day training program was initially designed to train IEP Team “LEA Representatives,” including local school building administrators, on their important legal and professional job duties as an IEP meeting’s “process leader.” Over time, the program has been attended by many educators who find themselves sitting at an IEP Team meeting table.

This interactive, information-packed training day provides LEA Representatives (and other IEP Team members) with suggested meeting aids and strategies, including a video demonstration of their use. The strategies will assist LEA Reps to effectively:

- Fulfill their roles and responsibilities as the IEP meeting’s “process leader” in support of the Team’s “content leaders;”
- Ensure that all IEP Team members, including parents, are provided the opportunity for meaningful participation and input into decision-making;
- Use visual aids, checklists and other strategies to help prepare for and guide IEP meeting process, keeping it on track, and ensuring that it remains properly focused on relevant data regarding the individual student’s educational needs;
- Use communication and conflict prevention and management strategies to respond to difficult behaviors and conversations that may occur during meetings;
- Assist IEP Teams in reaching consensus in decision-making and to appropriately respond when consensus cannot be reached; and
- Ensure that organized, efficient and legally compliant IEP Team meetings occur.

It is the LEArn & LEAd goal that participants walk away with immediate strategies for improving their IEP meetings with the knowledge and skills to support collaboration between parents and school staff in making legally defensible decisions, while also avoiding misunderstandings, distrust and anxiety that can often lead to special education legal disputes.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Before and after the training, participants are surveyed to assess how they view their skills and knowledge as LEA Representatives, and the data is subsequently analyzed. Data from hundreds of sessions conducted since 2014 reflect that over 95% of participants report a significant increase in their knowledge and feel more confident and satisfied with their ability to appropriately serve as the IEP meeting’s process leader after having been trained. Data collection and evaluation results are provided after each training session.

### **Program Logistics & Training Room Set-up**

The LEArn & LEAd program is a full-day session (generally from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. or 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.). Whether in-person or virtual, participants should expect to be actively engaged and prepared to interact with others in the session’s activities.

### **Number of participants per session**

LEArn & LEAd sessions (in-person or virtual) are typically limited to a total of up to **60 participants** in order to facilitate effective small and large group interaction.

### **Checklist for training room set-up and other requirements**

#### **In-person/on-site training sessions**

When held in-person, the ideal training room size is at least 40' x 60' and set up as follows:

- ✓ **Tables** (preferably round) **set for no more than 5 participants at each table;**
- ✓ Pens, highlighters and small post-it notepads on each table;
- ✓ One worktable and two chairs for trainers (set to the side at the front of the room);
- ✓ Two easels at the front of the room with large chart paper tablets (preferably those that are self-stick and can be posted on the wall) with different-colored markers;
- ✓ Power point capabilities with a projector and screen set up to be viewed by all participants with capacity for good sound/video replay for IEP meeting video demonstration;
- ✓ Two microphones for the trainers, if needed (depending on room size/acoustics); and
- ✓ Snacks/water/coffee for participants, as appropriate.

**Lunch Break:** Host district/agency typically provides lunch or encourages participants to bring their lunch, depending upon the circumstances. Participants may also leave and come back from the lunch break but are expected to be back promptly. (Note: the time for the lunch break will be determined by the host district/agency but is typically an hour).

#### **Virtual training sessions**

While in-person training is preferred, virtual LEArn & LEAd sessions were developed in 2020 in response to COVID circumstances and continue to be provided upon request via the Zoom meeting platform. All participants are individually provided a link to enter the session via the Zoom desktop app on their individual devices, as well as instructions for participation. Although the program is virtual, Zoom features such as reaction and answer buttons, group break-out rooms, polls and the chat box are utilized so that the session is engaging and interactive. Participants are asked to individually download the Zoom desktop App and use the most updated version when they individually sign on and participate. Participants enter into the session from a waiting room based upon a list of registrants provided by the participating agency/district and an agency/district representative will be made co-host for that purpose.

### **Training Manuals and Daily Schedule**

LEArn & LEAd Training Manuals are printed and delivered to the host district/agency. A detailed Daily Schedule for trainees to follow during the day are also emailed to the district/agency contact ahead of time, as well as the Pre- and Post-Survey forms to be used for collecting participant feedback.

### **Pricing**

The all-inclusive cost of the one-day session includes all time and cost related to preparation, travel (if required) and presentation of one trained, experienced educational leader/IEP meeting process leader and one trained, experienced special education attorney, as well as the printing and delivery of the training Manuals. Obviously, the cost will depend upon whether the session is virtual or in-person and other relevant costs and considerations. For more information, please contact Julie Weatherly at 251-607-7377 or JJWesq@aol.com.