



# Early Adopters IEP Improvement Update

January 2024

Earlier last year, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released a new Individualized Education Program (IEP) form to be used in school and districts across the state beginning sometime over the next two years.

The new statewide IEP form will offer several benefits to you and your child. Some of the key advantages include:

- Enhanced Collaboration
- More Clarity and Consistency
- Comprehensive Documentation of the Program

# dese Forms

## Team Vision

*This step provides IEP Team members an opportunity to share their hopes and dreams for the student and to utilize their unique perspectives to collectively develop a short-term and longer-term vision that informs what progress should look like. Ultimately, we want all students with disabilities to live independent and productive lives, therefore, as students get older, transition goals and planning should be considered and embedded into the vision statement. The age of the student will also determine other considerations such as transition from preschool or middle school. Considerations for younger students or those with limited speaking skills should include the use of communication strategies and devices in order to allow the student to express their ideas about vision. Although we encourage you to collectively express one team vision, it is important to acknowledge varied perspectives of team members, if applicable. This step is critical to identifying the skills the student will need to achieve their goals and should inform the later steps in the IEP development.*

## TEAM VISION

<b>Student's Vision (ages 3 – 13)</b>	
This year, I want to learn:	
By the time I finish (elementary or middle school) I want to:	
<b>Student's Vision/Postsecondary Goals (required ages 14-22, or earlier if appropriate)</b>	
While I am in high school, I want to:	
For education and training, after I finish high school, I plan to:	
For employment, after I finish high school, I plan to:	
For independent living, after I finish high school, I plan to:	
<b>Team's Vision for the Student (including parent/caregiver)</b>	
This year, we:	
In five years, we:	
(If appropriate) For education and training, employment, and independent living, we:	

## Consideration of Special Factors

*IEP Teams are required to consider certain special factors for each student when developing the IEP. We have included those factors into this portion of the IEP. If any of the special factors apply to the student, please answer the associated questions. In most cases, we ask that you indicate where further information about the special factor can be found in the IEP.*



# Student and Parent Concerns



## Massachusetts DESE Individualized Education Program (IEP)

### STUDENT AND PARENT CONCERNS

(For the purposes of special educational decision-making, “parent” shall mean father, mother, legal guardian, person acting as a parent of the child, foster parent, or educational surrogate parent appointed in accordance with federal law.)

What concern(s) do you want this IEP to address?

### STUDENT AND TEAM VISION

<b><i>Student’s Vision (ages 3–13)</i></b>	
This year, I want to learn:	
By the time I finish (circle one: elementary or middle school), I want to:	
<b><i>Student’s Vision/Postsecondary Goals (required for ages 14–22, may be completed earlier if appropriate)</i></b>	
While I am in high school, I want to:	
After I finish high school, my education or training plans are:	
After I finish high school, my employment plans are:	
After I finish high school, my independent living plans are:	
<b><i>Additional Team Vision Ideas</i></b>	
In response to the student’s vision, this year:	
In response to the student’s vision, in 5 years:	



## WHY IS A VISION STATEMENT IMPORTANT?

*The Department of Education (DOE) states that the intent of the **IEP** Vision Statement is:*

*To reflect the thinking of the entire IEP Team (including the parent and the student).*

- *To look forward to future goals of the student, to represent high expectations and dreams for the student.*
- *To be reflective of federal requirements for transition aged youth.*





# Parent Vision Development

---

- *Goal is to increase parent input into the IEP and engage families in development from the beginning.*
- *Forward think to long term goals that improve quality of life, not just focus on curriculum gaps.*
- *Process*
  - *Use Charting the Life Course form as a guide and resource to focus on increased independence and autonomy over life domains, and to prepare for life-long learning.*
  - *Informal conversation with Associate Director of Education and parent occurs prior to meeting.*
  - *Reviewed and shared with internal team in IEP planning meetings **before** goal development is considered.*
  - *The vision guides the goals for the IEP rather than an afterthought.*



# Charting the Life Course

LIFE DOMAIN	DESCRIPTION	MY VISION FOR MY FAMILY MEMBER'S FUTURE	PRIORITY
	<p><b>Daily Life &amp; Employment:</b> What do I think my family member will do during the day in their adult life? What kind of job or career might they want?</p>		
	<p><b>Community Living:</b> Where and with whom do I think my family member will live in their adult life?</p>		
	<p><b>Social &amp; Spirituality:</b> How will they connect with spiritual and leisure activities, and have friendship, and relationships in their adult life?</p>		
	<p><b>Healthy Living:</b> How will they live a healthy lifestyle and manage health care supports in their adult life?</p>		



# Tools for Developing a Vision

	<p><b>Safety &amp; Security:</b> How will my family member be safe from financial, emotional, physical or sexual harm in their adult life?</p>		
	<p><b>Advocacy &amp; Engagement:</b> How do I think they will have valued roles, responsibilities, and control of how their own life is lived as an adult?</p>		
	<p><b>Supports for Family:</b> What supports does our family unit need now or will need in the future?</p>		
	<p><b>Supports &amp; Services:</b> What supports and services might my family member need in the future to lead the kind of life they want as independently as possible?</p>		





# Assessing Preferences of Minimally Verbal or Non-Speaking Students

---

All students have preferences for different ways to occupy their time and how they communicate these needs to staff. Some students may have clearly defined items that are highly preferred (i.e., iPads, books, cards, toys, sensory items, etc.) For other students, it may include being left alone, having time to sit quietly at their desk, or simply looking out a window.

For many of our students, they can 1) **verbally** express their preferences (i.e., tell you what they want), or 2) **nonverbally** indicate their needs (i.e., pointing or gesturing toward a preferred item).

For other students, we need to use our observational skills to determine preferences and what may be most consistently motivating. These guidelines are intended to help determine preferences for students who do not verbally or gesturally communicate their preferences. Assessing preferences in this manner can also help develop programming to support **leisure skills** as a core life skill.



# How to Do It

---

- The overall goal is to notice and understand the activities someone chooses to engage in when there is free access to all potential items in their environment or setting.
- We assume that the more time spent with an activity, the more preferred the item.
- You can do this in the student's natural environment with the items that are already presently available, or create a contrived environment with newly presented, unfamiliar materials.



# What to Look For & Data to Collect

- What items or activities does the student approach or show interest in?
- What items or activities does the student engage with, and do they assist with specific steps?
- How long does the student spend with different items?
- If the student does not directly engage with presented materials, what do they do instead?

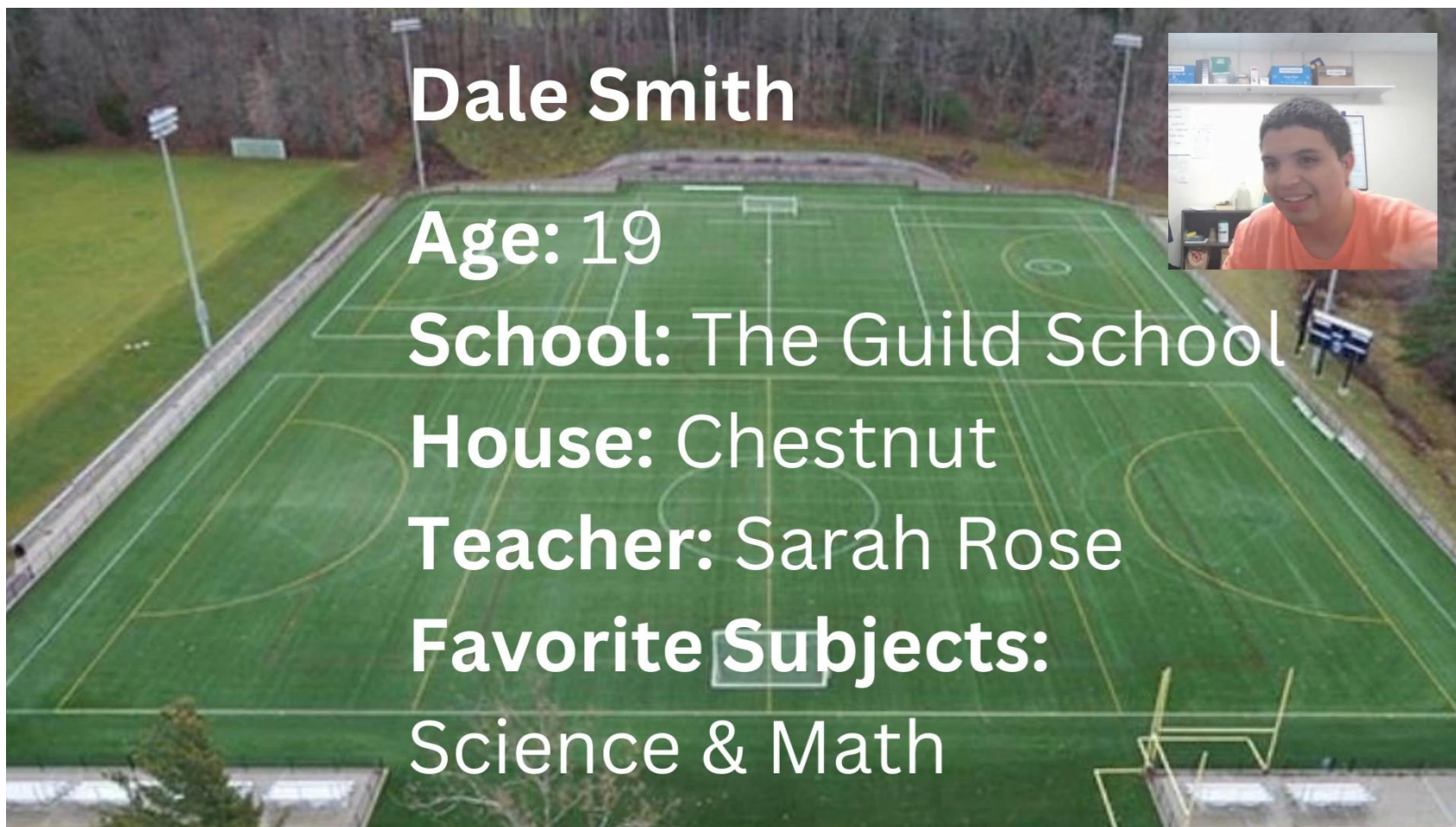
What do you want to do for fun in the future?



# Vision Example

## Verbal Student

---



# After a full year what have we noticed?

---

- Students visions statements are being heard by the Team.
- IEPs are student centered and more meaningful.
- Some visions carry on from one year to the next and only need small updates. Showing continuity of support from year to year.
- You must be creative. It's not always easy to gain and
- Charting the Life Course tool is unique and different from one student to another. Priorities may shift from year to year.
- Setting aside time to meet allows for collaboration between a parents/guardians and school.
- If at first you don't succeed, try again.

