

Chapter 7

Appropriate Education and Individualized Education Programs

CASE 7.1 Thomas



Major issue: Transition

Secondary issue: Free appropriate public education (FAPE)

Characters

Ali Young, high school special education teacher

Thomas Ross, high school student with disabilities

Ali Young:

My annual reviews were scheduled for next week. I was responsible for writing the individualized education programs (IEPs) for 20 students at our high school and I was released from my teaching schedule for one day to prepare. I was almost finished, but I just wasn't sure how I would approach Thomas's IEP.

As I reviewed his file, I noted that Thomas had multiple moderate to severe disabilities. His primary disability was visual impairment, as he had a congenital condition that caused retinal degeneration in both eyes. He was legally blind and his vision was deteriorating. In addition, Thomas had a significant cognitive delay, central auditory processing disorder, speech and language delay, and occasionally had seizures.

I worked with Thomas one hour a day to support his placement in regular education classes. In addition to support from me in special education, Thomas had a full-time educational assistant and received services from the teacher of the visually impaired and the speech and language therapist. Thomas worked so hard and everyone who worked with him said he was a

joy to have in class. Thomas always displayed appropriate behavior and he seemed to have positive relationships with his peer group. Thomas earned A's and B's in most classes and his grades were mostly based on effort.

My real concern was that Thomas wasn't receiving appropriate services to help him become independent after he graduated from high school. His curriculum was completely tied to the general education academic curriculum and his parents were very supportive of this placement. I wondered how struggling through reading a novel written on a high school reading level would enable him to hold a job or to live independently. It seemed that Thomas was placed in the regular education classroom just because his parents wanted him to socialize with other students. The academic work had to be modified beyond recognition. For example, Thomas did not have the skill level to read *To Kill a Mockingbird* in his English class, so the book was read aloud to him and he was allowed to write partial answers to comprehension questions in Braille with support from the assistant.

As I reviewed Thomas's previous IEP, I wondered how it could be changed to better meet his needs. In part, his previous IEP included the following components:

Individualized Education Program

Name: Thomas Ross Grade: 9 Parent(s): Ms. Nancy Ross
 Address: 105 Blueridge Drive Date of IEP: May 15

PARTICIPANTS:

Ms. Young, Special Education Teacher
 (Ms. Ross was invited, but did not attend)

CURRENT LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE:

1. Academic: Thomas functions on a 2nd-grade level in reading (can read simple stories in Braille). He can write a 5-sentence paragraph with many spelling and mechanics errors using his Braille machine. He can add and subtract 2-digit numbers.
2. Social/emotional: Thomas has a high tolerance for frustration. He works well with other students and is well liked by both peers and adults. He is enthusiastic and motivated.
3. Independent functioning: Thomas needs the support of an adult at all times to help with academic tasks and to maneuver around the school building.
4. Speech/language/communication: Thomas has a central auditory processing disorder, resulting in difficulty processing language. His speech is difficult to understand.
5. Vocational skills: Thomas is not engaged in vocational activity.
6. Motor skills: Thomas can use the Braille machine to write. Gross motor skills are age-appropriate.
7. Other: Thomas has a degenerative condition causing retinal degeneration in both eyes. He is legally blind and uses Braille. He has a significant cognitive delay. Thomas has occasional seizures and takes medication to control them.

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ANNUAL GOALS

Goal type: _____
 Goal statement: _____
 Comprehensiveness: _____
 Implemented: _____
 Projected completion: _____

Monitoring Schedule

Daily _____
 Weekly _____
 Monthly _____
 Quarterly _____
 Grade period _____
 Other _____

Goal Type: _____
 Goal statement: _____
 with borrowed time: _____
 Implemented: _____
 Projected completion: _____

Monitoring Schedule

Daily _____
 Weekly _____
 Monthly _____
 Quarterly _____
 Grade period _____
 Other _____

General education supports for _____

Subject Areas (academic and nonacademic)

Cafeteria
 Movement through hallways,
 bus, restricted
 English

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ANNUAL GOALS:

Goal type: Annual Transition

Goal statement: Thomas will read a novel appropriate for high school students and answer comprehension questions using a Braille machine and assistance from the aide.

Implementer: Special education teacher/regular education teacher

Projected completion date: May

Monitoring Schedule	Evaluation Procedures	Criteria for Mastery
Daily _____	Tests <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	71%–81% accuracy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Weekly _____	Charting _____	81%–90% accuracy _____
Monthly _____	Observations _____	91%–100% accuracy _____
Quarterly _____	Daily log _____	_____ of _____ trials _____
Grade period <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other _____	Other _____
Other _____		

Goal Type: Annual Transition

Goal statement: Thomas will complete addition and subtraction problems using 3 and 4 digits with borrowing and carrying.

Implementer: Special education teacher/regular education teacher

Projected completion date: May

Monitoring Schedule	Evaluation Procedures	Criteria for Mastery
Daily _____	Tests <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	71%–81% accuracy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Weekly _____	Charting _____	81%–90% accuracy _____
Monthly _____	Observations _____	91%–100% accuracy _____
Quarterly _____	Daily log _____	_____ of _____ trials _____
Grade period <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other _____	Other _____
Other _____		

General education modifications/adaptations/supplemental aids and services and/or supports for school personnel:

Subject Area (academic and nonacademic)	Explanation of General Education Modifications/Adaptations/ Supplemental Aids and Services and/or Supports for School Personnel	Special Education Support Necessary? (If yes, specify.)
Cafeteria	Needs aide to assist with mobility	Yes: full-time aide
Movement through hallways, to/from bus, restroom	Needs aide to assist with mobility	Yes: full-time aide
English	Read tests aloud; allow Braille responses in writing; Braille textbooks; modify worksheets to simplify and write in	Yes: full-time aide

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Algebra	Braille; needs aide to assist in completing academic tasks, extended time, fewer assignments Read tests aloud; allow Braille responses in writing; Braille textbooks; modify worksheets to simplify and write in Braille; needs aide to assist in completing academic tasks, extended time, fewer assignments	Yes: full-time aide
Civics	Read tests aloud; allow Braille responses in writing; Braille textbooks; modify worksheets to simplify and write in Braille; needs aide to assist in completing academic tasks, extended time, fewer assignments	Yes: full-time aide
Biology	Read tests aloud; allow Braille responses in writing; Braille textbooks; modify worksheets to simplify and write in Braille; needs aide to assist in completing academic tasks, extended time, fewer assignments	Yes: full-time aide

Special education and related services:

Needed Service	Location of Service	Minutes per Day	Date of Initiation of Service	Anticipated Duration	Frequency of Service
Learning disabilities tutoring	Special education classroom	60	Sept. 1	May 30	Daily
Individual aide	Regular education classroom; mobility throughout building	360	Sept. 1	May 30	Daily
Services of teacher of visually impaired	Special education classroom	60	Sept. 1	May 30	Twice a week
Speech/language services	Special education classroom	20	Sept. 1	May 30	Twice a week

Extent to which student will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class and in nonacademic/extracurricular activities:

Thomas will eat lunch in the cafeteria and walk through the halls with assistance from the aide. He will participate in all general academic subjects. Parents want him fully integrated with nondisabled peers.

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TRANSITION PLAN:

Postschool vision (including employment, education, and living arrangements):
Thomas does not know what he wants to do when he leaves school. The parents want him fully integrated with nondisabled peers.

Course of study:

Year 1: Regular education academic program with support

Year 2: _____

Year 3: _____

Year 4: _____

Other: _____

Annual needed services:

Instruction: Yes No

Regular education academic courses with special education support

Community experiences: Yes No

Not needed at this time

Employment and other postschool adult living objectives: Yes No

Not needed at this time

As appropriate, daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation: Yes No

Not needed at this time

If appropriate, a statement of each outside agency's responsibility, or linkage before the student leaves the school setting:

Not applicable

PARTICIPATION IN STATE AND LOCAL ASSESSMENTS:

Grade placement of student: 9

The student will:

Participate in the entire state assessment with no accommodations.

Participate in the entire state assessment with accommodations.

Participate in part(s) of the state assessment (as specified below).

Not participate in the state assessment.*

Participate in the entire districtwide assessment with no accommodations.

Participate in the entire districtwide assessment with accommodations.

Participate in part(s) of the districtwide assessment (as specified below).

Not participate in the districtwide assessment.*

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If the student is completing the assessment(s) with accommodations, specify the needed accommodations:

Braille test

Use Braille machine for written responses that require short answer or essay

Read test aloud (except reading)

Extended time

Alternate setting (special education classroom)

*Rationale for decision: _____

After reviewing Thomas's recent IEP, I compared it with previous IEPs. I noted that the goals had not changed since 4th grade. I really think that we are not programming appropriately for Thomas. Instead of listening to his aide read *To Kill a Mockingbird*, he should be learning functional daily living skills. I don't think Thomas is really earning A's and B's based on his knowledge. Isn't this dishonest to give him above average grades? Shouldn't he really be placed in a special education program where his needs can truly be met?

Legal Issues

1. Did the school district comply with correct procedures in writing the IEP discussed in this case? What evidence supports your position?
2. Was Thomas's IEP reasonably calculated to provide educational benefits? How do you know? You may want to review goals, services, and the transition plan.
3. Was Thomas's IEP individually written to meet his needs? How do you know?

Other Issues

1. What potential effect did Thomas's performance on the state test have on whether or not the school met adequate yearly progress?
2. At what point should a student's purely academic curriculum (tied to the general education curriculum) be changed to a functional curriculum?
3. Do you agree with the position of the special education teacher? Why or why not?

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Activity

You are the special education teacher attending Thomas's next IEP meeting. Prior to the meeting, you are writing a draft of the proposed IEP for next year. Using the form below, complete an appropriate and legal draft IEP for Thomas:

Individualized Education Program

Name: Thomas Ross Grade: 10 Parent(s): Ms. Nancy Ross
Address: 105 Blueridge Drive Date of IEP: May 15

PARTICIPANTS:

CURRENT LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE (see IEP in case).
ANNUAL GOALS:

Goal type: _____ Annual _____ Transition _____

Goal statement: _____

Implementer: _____

Projected completion date: _____

Monitoring Schedule	Evaluation Procedures	Criteria for Mastery
Daily _____	Tests _____	71%–81% accuracy _____
Weekly _____	Charting _____	81%–90% accuracy _____
Monthly _____	Observations _____	91%–100% accuracy _____
Quarterly _____	Daily log _____	_____ of _____ trials _____
Grade period _____	Other _____	Other _____
Other _____		

Goal Type: _____ Annual _____ Transition _____

Goal Statement: _____

Implementer: _____

Projected completion date: _____

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Monitoring Schedule	Evaluation Procedures	Criteria for Mastery
Daily _____	Tests _____	71%–81% accuracy _____
Weekly _____	Charting _____	81%–90% accuracy _____
Monthly _____	Observations _____	91%–100% accuracy _____
Quarterly _____	Daily log _____	_____ of _____ trials _____
Grade period _____	Other _____	Other _____
Other _____		

General education modifications/adaptations/supplemental aids and services and/or supports for school personnel:

Subject Area (academic and nonacademic)	Explanation of General Education Modifications/ Adaptations/Supplemental Aids and Services and/or Supports for School Personnel	Special Education Support Necessary? (If yes, specify.)

Special education and related services:

Needed Service	Location of Service	Minutes per Day	Date of Initiation of Service	Anticipated Duration	Frequency of Service

Extent to which student will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class and in nonacademic/extracurricular activities: _____

TRANSITION PLAN:

Postschool vision (including employment, education, and living arrangements): _____

Course of study:

- Year 1: _____
- Year 2: _____
- Year 3: _____
- Year 4: _____
- Other: _____

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Annual needed services:

Instruction: Yes No

Community Experiences: Yes No

Employment and other postschool adult living objectives: Yes No

As appropriate, daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation: Yes No

If appropriate, a statement of each outside agency's responsibility, or linkage before the student leaves the school setting: _____

PARTICIPATION IN STATE AND LOCAL ASSESSMENTS:

Grade placement of student: 10

The student will:

Participate in the entire state assessment with no accommodations.

Participate in the entire state assessment with accommodations.

Participate in part(s) of the state assessment (as specified below).

Not participate in the state assessment.*

Participate in the entire districtwide assessment with no accommodations.

Participate in the entire districtwide assessment with accommodations.

Participate in part(s) of the districtwide assessment (as specified below).

Not participate in the districtwide assessment.*

If the student is completing the assessment(s) with accommodations, specify the needed accommodations: _____

* Rationale for decision: _____

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