



 University of Connecticut

Simplified SOP Guide for Parent's

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IDEA 2004 Requirement

Summary of Performance (SOP) is a requirement of IDEA 2004

For a child whose eligibility terminates under circumstances described in 34 CFR 300.305(e)(2), a public agency must provide the child with a summary of the child's academic achievement and functional performance, which shall include recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting the child's postsecondary goals. (34 CFR 300.305(e)(3))

CT SOP Definition for Parents

Existing Connecticut Instructions to parents:

“Before your child graduates high school with a regular diploma or completes the school year in which your child turns 21, the school district must provide your child with a summary of his or her academic achievement and functional performance. This Summary of Performance (SOP) must include recommendations on how to assist your child in meeting his or her post-high school goals. The SOP must be completed during the final year of your child’s high school education.”

Source: State of Connecticut, 2007, p. 10.

SOP Usage

- Lack of specific direction from Federal government makes consistent formatting challenging.
- SOPs are for students
- Parents help students learn self-advocacy
- Difficult to self-advocate if unaware of what you should target for self-advocating.
- Role of parent and students in development of SOP.

Improving the SOP Process

- School Districts prepare SOP.
- School Districts generally react only to enforcement from state, or federal sources or parental demands.
- State and federal sources do not appear to be pushing improvement in SOP implementation practices.
- Without a governmental push – only parents and students are left to SELF-ADVOCATE.
- Providing SOP information should:
 - give useable understanding of SOP construction processes may give parents and students tools for self-advocacy
 - provide adequate knowledge for parent's to demand IDEA rights or at least ask questions
 - highlight the need for students to participate in developing THEIR SOP and teach self-advocacy skills
- Change will only come when beneficiaries insist on quality SOPs that the student can use in their after high school life.

Simplified SOP Guide

Flesch Reading Scale for Slide 2 (IDEA 2004
language for SOP) = 26.5

Flesch Reading Scale for Slide 3 (Existing SOP
Parent Instruction) = 36.8

Flesch Reading Ease Scale

Reading Ease Score	Meaning	Grade Level
90 to 100	Very Easy	5
80 to 89	Easy	6
70 to 79	Fairy Easy	7
60 to 69	Standard	8.5
50 to 59	Fairly Difficult	10.5
30 to 49	Difficult	12
Below 30	Very Difficult	18

Simplified Guide to the SOP

- Existing guides need the parent and student to have a high school education with English as the first language.
- Documents written for 8th grade level or below are easier to understand for those with English as a second language.
- English is not the first language of many parents of the children who get SOPs.

Two Examples

This project proposes producing a guide on Summary of Performance (SOP) for parents of students in special education written with a Flesch reading ease score of no lower than 65. This proposed guide may allow both parents and parents of students with disabilities to advocate more knowledgeably for the student. **The previous two sentences have a Flesch reading scale score of 37.**

The following restatement of these sentences has a reading ease score of 78.

This book can help you know what your child's teachers mean when they speak or write about after high-school life for your child. Your child may need help to work, go to college, or live on their own. The school district will give your child a paper called a Summary of Performance that will tell others about help your child may need to do well.

This project proposes this reading ease level for the guide.

Information in CT's Existing Guide to SOP

- The 2007 Connecticut Parents Guide Handbook provides one page on post high school transition.
- This page gives a definition of SOP but no discussion as to its importance or use.
- The brevity of information is not surprising as the emphasis of the handbook is transition through the IEP process.

Role of SOP

In my opinion, despite Connecticut's leadership in national and regional discussions of how to implement IDEA 2004 SOP requirement, there has been little progress in placing SOP in its proper place as the zenith of special education documentation for students with disabilities.

Method

Project will use ED365 (Connecticut SOP Form) as the base for explanation by:

- Obtaining and including feedback from parents of special education students about the Guide.
- Providing simply worded examples of what a parent or student should expect to see (i.e., School District—some may not understand the organization of CT's public school system). An easily readable statement could provide new information to parents and students.

Project Importance and Potential Outcomes

This project producing a simpler language explanation to parents of the SOP important because:

1. The proposed guide may lead to more informed parents better able to interact with public schools about the SOP.
2. This in turn may lead to districts preparing user-friendly documents.
3. Finally, simpler language makes translation to other languages easier.

Feedback Results

- Three requests for feedback were sent to 20 LEND Family Faculty members.
- Requests were sent by email.
- One Family Faculty member asked a support group of high school aged parents for their opinion
- **RESULT:** 24 responses were received.

Feedback Results

- Suggestions for improvement
 - Great idea. What if child is not able to complete Part 5?
 - Add in where to find state SOP resources. Correct typo's.
 - What we need and are looking for.
 - Add in technical examples.

Brochure

- **All suggestions were implemented**
- A single sheet (8.5 inches x 14 inches) tri-fold brochure was created.
- The two slides are the brochure.

Summary of Performance (SOP)

The school district will give your child a report called a Summary of Performance during the last year of high school. This report tells others about how to help your child do well after high school. This brochure can help you know if your child's SOP gives good information to schools, employers, or government agencies so they can help your child.

This report is part of federal law. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 is the name of this law.

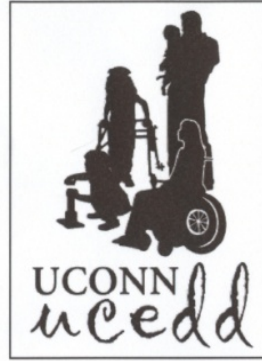
Your child should ask teachers about this report and ask to write their part of the report.

If the report is wrong, contact the school or the Connecticut Department of Education.

Connecticut's Education Department uses Form ED635 to provide special education students their SOP. This form has five parts:

1. Student information;
2. Student's postsecondary goals;
3. Summary of Performance;
4. Assistance recommendations;
5. Student input.

The actual form is found at:
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=320730#IEP>



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Leadership Education in
Neurodevelopmental
and Related Disabilities
Program (LEND)

Parent and
Student
Simplified Guide
to the
Connecticut
Department of
Education
Summary of
Performance
Document



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What to look for in the SOP

Part 1: Student Information

- Is the student's name spelled right?
- Is the student's first language given?
- Is there a date for the SOP?
- Is the main disability given?
- Are other disabilities given?
- Is the formal finding date for the disability or disabilities given?
- Are copies of current disability tests attached?

IF ANY OF THIS INFORMATION IS MISSING, CONTACT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT at (860) 713-6912.

Part 2: Postsecondary Goal(s)

- Is this what the student wants to do after high school?

IF THE GOAL IS WRONG OR THERE IS NO GOAL CONTACT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT at (860) 713-6912.

Part 3: Summary of Performance

The boxes for **Academic Content** should not be blank. Examples of data that should be given are:

- Present Level of Performance is the student's grade level performance. It might look like:
"8-6" means (Grade 8 – Month 6).
- Essential Accommodations list the helps the student received in high school. Was the student course of study different from others?
- Accommodations might be a note taker or use of a computer to take notes. If the student had other helps like a magnifying glass or Velcro strips these should be written in the box.

The boxes for **Cognitive Areas** should have writing in them. This information could be how energetic was the student in academics. How long would they concentrate on a subject?

The boxes for **Functional Areas** should not be blank. Information in these boxes is about how the student acted in school.

Transition information published by the Connecticut Education Department is found at:
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=320730#publications>

Part 4: Recommendations

This is the school's suggestion for what the student needs to do well after high school.

- Accommodations should be listed. These help the student do what they have the ability to do.
- Assistive technology helps the student work. These might be hearing aids, glasses, or wheelchair.
- General supports could come from the state and federal government. Two of the agencies are the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and the Social Security Administration.

Part 5: Student Input

The student should fill this out. If they cannot fill out the form, you should fill it out using their words.

IF ANY OF THIS INFORMATION IS MISSING, CONTACT THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT at (860) 713-6912.

Your child should ask at the beginning of their last year in high school to fill out Part 5.