

# STUDENT-CENTERED PLANNING

A Person-Centered Approach to Plan for a Student with Extensive Support Needs



## The MAPs Planning Process

(McGill Action Planning System aka Making Action Plans)

### What is MAPs?

MAPs is a process to plan a future for an individual who needs support from others. The Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education (MCIE) has adapted the MAPs process to design supports for a student with extensive needs so they will participate in general education instruction and settings as a successful and valued member of their school community. It can be used for any student who is being included for the first time, who is transitioning from a more restrictive setting to an inclusive setting, or when a school team wants to improve participation, membership, or performance in social and academic areas.

When used as a planning process for the *initial* inclusion of a student with disabilities, the MCIE recommends that the MAPs process occur over two sessions.

**The first meeting** (or “MAPs 1”) is **to gather information and identify supports** that will be useful in planning the IEP goals and specialized services, as well as the practical strategies to increase school participation and success.

**The second meeting** (“MAPs 2”) is **to develop the action plan and strategies to promote participation**. In this meeting MCIE recommends the use of various planning templates for instruction, school settings, and social relationships, based on the student’s needs.

### Assumptions of the MAPs Process:

- ✓ **Inclusion:** Planning is for successful participation **in general education classes** and other settings within the neighborhood school
- ✓ **Individualization:** The team focuses on the **unique gifts and support needs** of the student across all activities in the school day and year.
- ✓ **Teamwork and Collaboration:** This begins or expands upon a structure for various educators and service providers to work as a team for creative solution finding.
- ✓ **Flexibility:** Initial plans may need to be modified as the student **adjusts** to the school, the team learns more about the student’s abilities, and peers are engaged as partners in the social and academic life of the school.
- ✓ **Competence:** The team assumes that regardless of the student’s apparent abilities, it is less dangerous to assume that the student is competent and provide access to grade level content, than to presume incompetence and limit educational opportunities.

If a student has previously had a full MAPs meeting, and is transitioning to a new school, teams may want to conduct a “mini-MAPs” (see Section 3).

## Section 1: MAPs 1 - The Initial Planning Meeting

### Who Should Attend?

- ✔ The **family** (parents, siblings, grandparents, and whoever the family wants to bring).
- ✔ **Sending faculty** (from the current/recent school placement: usually the administrator and two staff members who know the student well).
- ✔ **Receiving faculty** (administrator, classroom and special educators, and other support personnel who may be involved in delivery of instruction and supports).
- ✔ The **student** (the family may choose to have the child present for the full meeting or only for certain questions).
- ✔ **Friends** of the student (*other students often have valuable input and may be present for part of the MAPs 1 meeting to state their hopes for their friend, strengths, and supports that are age appropriate; the family usually decides if and who may attend based on the relationships and experiences of neighbors and students in the school*).
- ✔ **Two Facilitators** (individuals knowledgeable in the MAPs process), one who leads the questions and one who records the input from the team.

### The Meeting Setting

The participants are arranged in a half-circle, preferably **without a table**. The facilitators stand in the front of the group. Large chart paper is posted around the room with the key questions on top; one facilitator leads the discussion, while the other facilitator records responses. The MAPS 1 meeting usually takes about 2 hours.

### The Facilitation Process

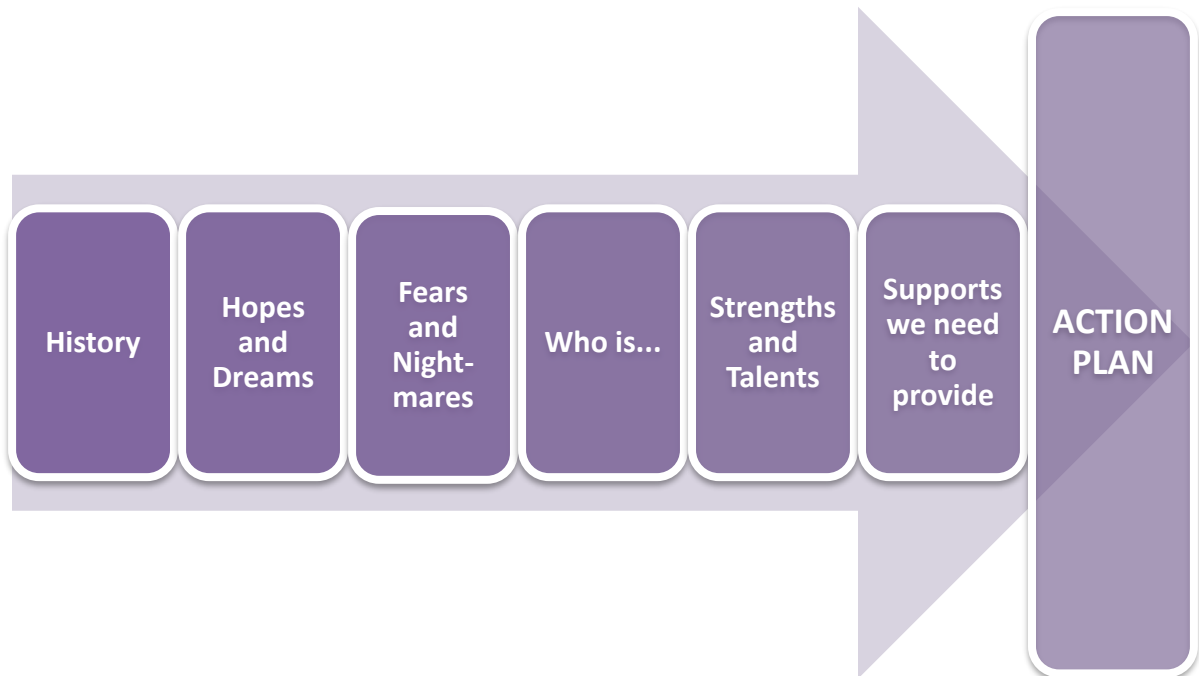
**Opening:** The facilitator reminds the participants that the meeting is for information gathering only, not for debate or for detailed problem solving. It is not a time for debate; rather it is a time for discovery and the responses on the chart paper will be summarized for distribution to all participants. Everyone is asked to participate and to listen; participants should not read assessment reports or take their own notes.

**Questioning Process:** The facilitator poses the questions first to the family and then encourages all who know the child best to contribute. Initially, the receiving faculty may be listeners, but as they become comfortable with the process and familiar with the student, they may have contributions to make. The facilitator keeps everyone focused and contributing and monitors the use of time.

## The Questions

The following sequence of questions generally works well to guide the discussion. The facilitator may vary the order of the questions or construct a similar set of questions to suit the individual situation. The “fears/nightmares” question may be omitted if the student is present, or it may be framed as a “barriers” question to identify issues to be addressed.

- What is \_\_\_\_\_’s **history**?
- What are your **Hopes and Dreams** for \_\_\_\_\_ over the next year and into the future?
- What are your **Fears/Nightmares** for \_\_\_\_\_ over the next year and into the future?
- **Who is** \_\_\_\_\_? (personality, motivators, likes, dislikes)
- What are \_\_\_\_\_’s unique **strengths, gifts and talents**?
- What are \_\_\_\_\_’s **support needs** for successful participation?
- What do we need to do to make this happen? (**Action Plan**)



The Facilitator is responsible for summarizing the MAPs 1 meeting input and distributing to all participants.

The Action Plan component may be reserved a **“MAPs 2” meeting**, held after the IEP is developed, and the placement is established. See next section.

## Section 2: MAPs 2 - Developing an Action Plan

**Part 1** of the MAPs process creates a picture of who the student is what supports need to be put in place to empower the student to be an active learner and participant in the general education classes and in the school community.

**In Part 2** of the MAPs process, teachers and other service providers plan specific ways to implement the student's IEP, provide supports across the school day, and promote positive peer relationships. Prior to this second planning meeting, the Facilitators and members of the planning team review the following documents: MAPs 1 summary, IEP, and class/grade schedule. If the student is transitioning from a segregated to a general education setting, the MAPs 2 is usually held after the IEP meeting.

### Who Should Attend?

- ✔ **Receiving faculty** (administrator, classroom and special educators, and other support personnel who may be involved in delivery of instruction and supports).
- ✔ **One Facilitator** (individuals knowledgeable in the MAPs process), one who leads the questions and one who records the input from the team.
- ✔ **Others who MAY attend:**
  - Paraprofessional support person for the classroom
  - Related services providers

*If it is not possible for direct service providers to attend, then the action plan will include strategies to communicate the plans and provide coaching for other adults responsible for implementation.*

### Before the Meeting

Working with the school administrator or designated school staff, the Facilitator will:

- Identify** the student's schedule and who will be the classroom teacher(s)
- Observe** (if possible) instruction in proposed class(es)
- Conduct** (if necessary and appropriate) a discussion with future classmates about how the student could be supported by peers
- Draft an IEP/curriculum matrix**, with current IEP objectives and the schedule/environments in which the student will participate

## The MAPs 2 Meeting

- ❑ **Have available:** The summary of the MAPs 1 meeting and IEP, a list of supports drafted from these documents and observations, the IEP matrix with the student's objectives and schedule filled in, and a blank or draft form for the action plan. Having the matrix and other forms on a computer attached to a projector or other electronic format where all the team members can view them simultaneously.
- ❑ **Review and finalize the IEP matrix.** Complete the matrix (where the IEP goals will be met). Discuss any issues related to implementation and evaluation (e.g., who will adapt, who will instruct, how progress will be evaluated and reported and who will be responsible, etc.).
- ❑ **Complete the Planning for Participation matrices.** If the student will need substantial modifications, adaptations, and supports to participate in instructional and other classroom/school activities (lunch, transitions, etc.), the Instructional Participation form should be completed using information from each teacher about classroom/school expectations. Other Participation forms (Routines and Social Interactions) are optional based on need.
- ❑ **Review plans for disability acceptance/social participation.** If activities for the student's classmates and for all students in general are needed to promote positive peer relationships, then a plan for what will be done and by whom should be developed. What is the activity? Who will lead it? What are the expected outcomes? How will the family be involved? This may include general information to promote acceptance, or specific plans for the student and a group of peers.
- ❑ **Identify the instructional team and how they will collaborate.** Decide who will be the members of the instructional planning team, when they will meet, how accountability will be determined, how communications with the family should occur, and how to involve the family as contributors in evaluating the child's program.
- ❑ **Complete the Action Plan form.** Sometimes there are actions that need to be taken to support overall participation in school settings, but may not be on the IEP. Examples are: an alternative locker lock that's easier to open than a combination lock, support for transitioning from class to class or learning how to get around the school, a special bus stop, etc.
- ❑ **Establish steps for positive behavior planning if needed.** If the student has or will need a preventive approach to challenging behavior, the team identifies roles/responsibilities, steps for gathering data, etc.

## Section 3: Mini-MAPs

### Planning for Class or School Transition

If a student has had a MAPs meeting in previous years, and has been included, another such meeting is usually not necessary, especially as teachers and service providers become more proficient at including the student in a meaningful way. However, if a student is transitioning from one school to another, staff will often benefit from a “mini” version of this process to ensure a successful transition to the new school placement.

#### Who Should Attend?

- ✔ **Sending faculty** (classroom and special educators, and other support personnel who have been involved in delivery of instruction and supports)
- ✔ **Receiving faculty** (administrator, classroom and special educators, and other support personnel who may be involved in delivery of instruction and supports)
- ✔ **One Facilitator** (individual knowledgeable in the MAPs process)
- ✔ **Parent or guardian** (optional)
- ✔ **Student** (optional)

#### Before the Meeting

Working with the school administrator or designated school staff, the Facilitator will:

- Identify** the student's schedule and who will be the classroom teacher(s)
- Observe** (if possible) instruction in proposed class(es)
- Conduct** (if necessary and appropriate) a discussion with future classmates about how the student could be supported by peers
- Draft an IEP/curriculum matrix**, with current IEP objectives and the schedule/environments in which the student will participate

*Follow the process for a MAPs 2 meeting (page 5).*



Vandercook T, York J, Forest M. (1989). The McGill Action Planning System (MAPS): A Strategy for Building the Vision. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*. 1989;14(3):205-215. doi:[10.1177/154079698901400306](https://doi.org/10.1177/154079698901400306)