Special Education Management, Service Documentation, and Medicaid Reimbursement
Case Study

The Client
School District of Philadelphia

The Project
- Special Education Management System (EasyIEP™)
  March 2003 – Present
- Special Education Service Documentation (EasyTrac™)
  March 2003 – Present
- Pennsylvania Statewide Medicaid Vendor
  July 2012 – Present

The Opportunity

To ensure effective, compliant delivery of special education services across its schools, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) sought an experienced partner to support the implementation of a system that improved district-wide processes and procedures, enhanced compliance monitoring, and provided timely access to data. Nearly 3,000 educators from SDP had been writing all of their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) by hand – approximately 24,000 IEPs each year – without the benefit of a consistent, district-wide system. SDP needed a web-based, user-friendly system that was robust, customized, and aligned to District best practices – and that could easily guide educators through the complex process of completing a compliant IEP.

In 2012, nearly a decade after SDP first partnered with Public Consulting Group (PCG) for EasyIEP, the PA School-Based ACCESS Program (SBAP) was audited by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which resulted in significant changes to the SBAP program. As a result of its longtime partnership with SDP, PCG was well positioned to support SDP in implementing and addressing the new Medicaid requirements. Mandated program changes required for the 2012-13 school year included:

- Elimination of previously reimbursable services, specifically, IEP Meetings and Collateral services in the fee-for-service area.
- Replacing the previously voluntary time study approach with a mandatory Random Moment Time Study methodology to meet Federal requirements.
- Replacing annual budgeted cost data with actual cost data, captured quarterly, as the basis for determining each district's eligible cost reimbursement from Medicaid for Administrative Claiming (MAC).
- Requiring all participating schools to complete an Annual Cost Settlement process, which was new to PA.

The PCG Approach

In March 2003, SDP partnered with PCG to administer a thorough special education review and gap analysis, as well as provide best practice organizational recommendations. PCG conducted a complete special education business process review that resulted in a set of standard process workflows. These workflows were incorporated into EasyIEP's customized interface, producing a district-wide 'best practice' special education system, using a single technology platform, with high levels of consistency and IEP compliance. The SDP EasyIEP system was customized and aligned with federal, state, and district-identified best practices. PCG facilitated and delivered the professional development trainings for the new district-wide system.

The Result

PCG drew from successful experience with consulting methodologies in large scale implementations to ensure that all of SDP's project deliverables were met on time. The first SDP IEPs were written with EasyIEP in the Fall of 2004 and by December 1, 2005, the District completed full integration of EasyIEP into its full electronic document framework. Today, 100 percent of IEPs are written using EasyIEP.

Snapshot of SDP's EasyIEP usage

Number of Schools: **806**   Number of Active Students: **146,398**
Number of Users: **7,056**   Number of IEPs Created: **345,446**

After the transition to PCG as the Statewide Medicaid vendor, SDP's Medicaid reimbursement nearly doubled in the first year with PCG, and has resulted in approximately $25 Million to-date. During the 2015-16 school year, SDP implemented two new PCG system modules – Easy504 for students with 504 plans and our Gifted module – allowing for individual plans to be developed for high performing students. This process included data migration, system configuration and training and support. Additionally, SDP is moving forward to implement our advanced Progress Monitoring tools for special education students. This will allow SDP to monitor progress, or lack thereof, on a daily basis.