



CUSTOMER CONNECTIONS

CHULA VISTA, CALIFORNIA INCREASES ACCURACY AND COLLABORATION WITH IEPPLUS.



SCHOOL DISTRICT PROFILE

- Public School district south of San Diego, CA
- Urban and suburban area
- About 27,400 total students
- 44 elementary schools

“With **IEPPLUS**, everyone has a stronger voice in the development of an IEP. It allows our staff to focus on true learning and instructional outcomes.”

LOWELL J. BILLINGS, Ed.D,
Superintendent, Chula Vista, CA Elementary School District

BENEFITS

- Validates entries for proper compliance.
- Fosters collaborative spirit among team members.
- Helps create child-focused IEPs.

IEPPLUS PROFILE

- Demographics
- IEP Development
- Meeting Scheduler
- Contact Management
- Goal Assignment
- Plan Generation and Validation
- Medicaid Billing
- Regulatory Reporting



The goal of a successful Special Ed program is to provide a positive, child-focused learning environment while staying on top of complex compliance requirements. Chula Vista Elementary School District does both with the help of **IEPPLUS** from SunGard Public Sector.

Positive learning environment

The system helps the district create an affirmative environment right from the start. When a new student qualifies, the IEP team creates the plan together. “With **IEPPLUS**, everyone has a stronger voice in the development of an IEP. It allows our staff to focus on true learning and instructional outcomes,” said Lowell J. Billings, Ed.D., Superintendent of the Chula Vista, CA Elementary School District.

Centered on the student

The system also guides the staff through the creation and implementation of plans that are aligned with state standards.

Prompts built into the system help the team meet its goals in a student-centric manner. “The language of the documents in **IEPPLUS** are child-focused,” said Lead Psychologist Tom Simpson.

Ensuring compliance

The system has helped the district improve data accuracy, which in turn insures proper funding. “Special Ed is highly regulated. This software keeps everyone completely compliant,” said Billings. **IEPPLUS** validates entries as soon as they’re entered and even offers explanations when incorrect information is provided.

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A funding tool

Maintaining data accuracy for regulatory reporting and funding is of vital importance to all K-12 Special Ed programs. **IEPPLUS** helps Chula Vista stay confident that its data is correct and its funding levels are appropriate. "We know everything is accurate to meet state requirements," said Dr. Deborah L. Wenbourne, Director Special Education and Pupil Services.

"We consider **IEPPLUS** a funding tool," said Programming Manager Maria Grabowski. "If we miss kids, we're not going to get funded for our case load." The district must report to the state the number of children it serves and the specific programs it provides.

Because **IEPPLUS** offers real-time data recording, even if a new student enters the system the day a state report is due, the district is confident that child will be included. "We know, to the date, who we are providing services for," said Grabowski.

Precise data to aid budget decisions

Like all California public school districts, Chula Vista is facing deep budget cuts. At this fiscally stressful time, the district appreciates the **IEPPLUS** database. "The district is demanding accountability," said Simpson. "This system makes our data more accurate and up to the minute. When we have greater precision in our data, then the budget decisions—whatever they are—can be made with more accurate information."

Clean data and teaching moments

Before the district implemented **IEPPLUS**, Chula Vista stored student data in several different databases and spreadsheets. The staff spent hours integrating the information and trying to make sure it was consistent.

But now all data is centrally stored in a single, district-wide database. Student data, such as birth dates, are automatically populated throughout the system, freeing teachers and psychologists from the time and effort of seeking, entering, and verifying the details with every entry.

IEPPLUS also validates every IEP entry electronically. The system actually helps correct errors—and provides explanations for proper form and content. "Not only is the data much cleaner, but using the system becomes a teaching moment," said Simpson.

Saving hundreds of hours

So far, **IEPPLUS** has saved Chula Vista hundreds of hours on data cleanup and tracking. "Twice a year we used to spend weeks hounding for bits of information if a teacher forgot a piece, or if they got the dates wrong. Now we can't lock or finalize an IEP unless it's correct," said Simpson.

Before, when inaccuracies or holes were found in IEPs, an administrator had to search for the details. The staff member was usually not directly involved in the case,

so making the correction was like performing a scavenger hunt. "Our office administrators were not at the meetings, so they would have to call folks to track down the information," said Grabowski.

A cooperative first meeting

IEPPLUS has also helped improve teamwork at Chula Vista. When a child becomes eligible for special ed, everyone involved—including a psychologist, any service providers, one or both parents, the parent advocate, and the school principal—meets to determine the student's goals and objectives.

The team projects the **IEPPLUS** framework onto the wall, slideshow style. This format helps make the initial meeting a cooperative work session instead of a critique. It sets a positive tone for the child's whole experience and ensures he or she will receive appropriate services and placement.

New team dynamic

"We ask the parents and team to agree on the goals first, then begin to talk about the services to meet those goals," said Simpson. Instead of getting mired in details, the team discusses the broader questions, such as whether the goals are appropriate in light of the assessment results. "It creates a more participatory feeling for the whole team by taking the burden off a single person," said Simpson.

Wizards built into **IEPPLUS** auto-select much of the required information, so the team can concentrate on the unique elements of each case. It's a flexible format, so every statement reflects distinct needs of the student. When the IEP is complete, the system checks for consistency and compliance.

Central database

Once the IEP is complete and signed, the spirit of cooperation continues. The staff can collaborate easily using the system's web-based forms. "One of the extremely beneficial elements of the software is its basic design as a central database," said Superintendent Billings. Data is available immediately to all stakeholders. "You can slice and dice the data in ways that are meaningful to each administrator," said Grabowski. "You can look back and do data mining."

Truly data driven

All members of the IEP team can follow the progress of their ongoing IEPs directly from the central database. As children grow and change, stakeholders can track their overall educational development. Demographic information, placements, evaluations, and test scores over time are all available with a few mouse clicks.

"**IEPPLUS** is truly data driven," said Grabowski. "You are not just filling in a template. A user can quickly view the service history for a student and make appropriate educational decisions based on the data."

Connect the Community 

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