

Helpful Reminders for 2020-21 School Reopening: Planning for Students with IEPs



The reminders included in this resource are intended to support school leaders in ensuring that the individual needs of students with disabilities are integrated into preparation for the 2020-2021 school year. Although this document highlights several general focus areas for consideration and corresponding resources, this is not an exhaustive list. Considerations within this document are based on information available at the time of publication and may be subject to updates. It is recommended that school leaders regularly access information from state and local county agencies for ongoing guidance in accordance with the needs of the LEA to make final determinations related to reopening.

Focus Area	Specific Considerations	Supporting Resources
General Considerations for Reopening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently revisit county public health guidelines and guidelines related to school reopening. • Maintain equity for all by ensuring that reopening plans are designed with ALL students in mind. • Anticipate how requirements related to reopening may impact students with disabilities and utilize the IEP process to address individualized needs based on your instructional model. For example, if your school requires masks to be worn by all students yet a specific student cannot wear a mask due to a disability (i.e. health, behavior and/or intellectual abilities) final decisions will require thorough consideration of all feasible options by those knowledgeable of the student’s needs; effectively balancing health and safety with the provision of a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). • Additional guidance for LA county schools, including the requirement of individualized health and safety plans for all students with IEPs, can be found HERE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CA Department of Public Health • CA County Monitoring • CA Framework for Reopening Schools • COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Schools • Stronger Together: Special Education
Child Find, Assessment and Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that IEP teams make good faith, reasonable efforts to meet evaluation timelines per IDEA requirements (Note: SB 117 allows for a pause of the 15-day timeline for <i>new initial assessment plans</i> until in-person instruction resumes). Obtain written parent/guardian agreement if an extension is required (EDC §56043(a)). • If completing in-person evaluations, ensure compliance with local health and safety guidelines. • If an IEP team is unable to obtain sufficient data to make a valid determination regarding eligibility, determine a plan to obtain the information needed to complete the assessment. This may include a formal request for extension, for which agreement should be clearly documented in writing with input from the parent. • Administer assessments in manner which they were developed and validated. • Utilize the professional discretion of the evaluator in determining whether a virtual evaluation is appropriate. • Remember that students’ academic performance and/or behavior during the school closure may not be typical for that student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPED Assessments: Considerations for Telepractice During COVID-19 • Telehealth: Virtual Service Delivery Recommendations • EDCOE Charter SELPA’s COVID-19 Resources and Guidance
IEP Considerations: General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss a plan to address the possibility of an increased number of IEP meetings upon reopening. Per CDE, “the duration and overarching changes to education delivery in many cases will warrant changes to students’ IEPs. This ensures that the IEPs account for the local delivery of education as school sites reopen, including contingencies for pivoting in and out of distance learning¹”. • Consider prioritizing IEP meetings for students who; have a clear new area(s) of need, were not engaged in learning during the school closure, appear to have suffered severe regression in critical skills, IEP was not timely reviewed or is due for annual review, or following parent request. • Utilize the tip sheet provided in the resources column to plan for effective virtual IEP meetings; continue to ensure meaningful parent participation in planning and convening virtual meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¹Stronger Together: Special Education • Special Education Guidance for COVID-19 • EDCOE Charter SELPA’s COVID-19 Resources and Guidance • Virtual IEP Meeting Tip Sheets

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make updates to the IEP document to reflect a student’s present level of functioning in all areas. Address updated area(s) of need via updated goals, accommodations, and services. • Review behavioral interventions based on current needs and instructional model. • Consider how needs associated with current IEP goals will continue to be supported. • Develop plans for communicating with families openly and frequently. 	
IEP Considerations: <i>Offer of FAPE and Service Delivery</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that IEP teams continue to develop individualized offers of services and placement that allow each student access to FAPE in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). • A <u>plan to address emergency conditions</u> shall be developed to describe the means by which the IEP will be provided under emergency conditions when instruction and/or services cannot be provided to the pupil either at the school or in person for more than 10 school days (SB 98 and EDC §56345 (a)(9)(A)). • Thoroughly consider how an offer of FAPE may be impacted by factors related to health and safety, and any potential harmful effects related to final determinations. • Consider whether activities to support transition from distance learning to the school setting will be needed. If so, document on the Offer of FAPE- Educational Setting page. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDCOE Charter SELPA’s COVID-19 Resources and Guidance • Stronger Together: Special Education • SB 98: additional information
Addressing Regression of Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the impact, if any, that the school closure had on the student’s present levels of performance, skills and current needs. Adjust services to match current needs and determine if additional services are warranted related to regression or extended recoupment of skills. • Consider <u>classroom-wide</u> screening measures for regression to establish a comparison between an individual’s regression and regression that occurred for most students. • IEP teams must make an individualized determination regarding whether compensatory services are required based on delay or inability to provide services due to school closures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Education Guidance for COVID-19 (CDE, 3/2020, Item 3) • EDCOE Charter SELPA’s COVID-19 Resources and Guidance
Matriculation and Graduation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider issues related to lost opportunities or important postsecondary transition services due to school closure. Prioritize IEP meetings for students who “aged out” during the school closure. • Additional information on matriculation and graduation can be found via the corresponding link. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matriculation, Graduation During COVID-19
Students with Significant Support Needs: <i>Behavioral and/or Medical</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain focus on health and safety concerns. • Plan for ongoing collaboration with public health experts, such as physicians and nursing staff. • If a student requires close physical contact, decisions regarding necessary and feasible health and safety precautions should be made on an individualized basis in collaboration with school nurses and other public health experts. • Consider collaborating with your LEA’s legal representation and/or insurance carrier to determine whether signed consent from parents acknowledging that staff will be in physical contact is needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Students with Significant Support Needs • Stronger Together: Special Education
Nonpublic Schools/ Agencies (NPS/As) and Residential Treatment Centers (RTC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEAs should work collaboratively with NPS/As to ensure continuity of services. • The CDE encourages LEAs to continue to use the services of NPS/As during school site closures, including distance learning options made available by NPS/As, so that NPS/As may continue to receive payment in accordance with pupils IEPs and the Master Contracts/Individual Service Agreements. • For students in an RTC placement: maintain frequent communication with RTC staff to monitor ongoing provision of FAPE and to ensure RTC compliance with CDC guidelines related to health and safety of students within treatment facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payments to NPS/A during the Pandemic • COVID-19 Guidance for Behavioral Health Residential Facilities • Out-of-state RTCs still accepting students