California Department of Education
Official Letter

September 29, 2023

Dear County and District Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, Special Education Local Plan Area Directors, Administrators of County Offices of Education, Nonpublic School Administrators, and Local Educational Agency Special Education Directors:

Important Changes in the Collection of Data for Students with Disabilities in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System

The purpose of this notice is to provide notification to local educational agencies (LEAs) regarding important changes in the collection of data for students with disabilities (SWD) in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) for the 2023–24 academic year.

Legacy Special Education and Special Education Services Files

Since the collection of data for SWD was transitioned from the California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS) into CALPADS in the 2019–20 academic year, LEAs have submitted two files up to CALPADS for purposes of state and federal reporting:

- Special Education (SPED) File
- Special Education Services (SSRV) File

To improve data quality and simplify data validation and reporting, staff in the Special Education Division and Education Data Management Division CALPADS Operations Office have developed a new model for collecting the data required for state and federal reporting for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This new model takes data that were previously collected in the SPED and SSRV files and splits the data into four new files, based on specific state and federal reporting requirements:

- Students with Disabilities Status (SWDS) File—The state of a student's eligibility and participation in special education
- Special Education Meetings (MEET) File—Timeliness of statutorily required evaluations and meetings for SWD
- Special Education Plan (PLAN) File—Reporting of the least restrictive environment (LRE) components of the student's special education plan
- Special Education Services (SERV)—Services prescribed in a student's special education plan

Beginning September 19, 2023, the legacy files (SPED and SSRV) will be retired and CALPADS will only accept the new file types from special education data systems (SEDS).

California Department of Education (CDE) staff have worked closely with all SEDS vendors (e.g. Special Education Information Sysytem [SEIS], SIRAS, WebIEP, Welligent, Synergy, Powerschool, SpedEX) over the last 18 months to ensure that they understand the changes and many of these changes will be transparent to users in these systems; however, LEAs will be required to change some local processes as a result of the changes. Most notably:

- The new redesign allows LEAs to submit records indicating that a statutorily required meeting has occurred, even if the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team has not yet reached consensus on the student's special education plan; and
- That a statutorily required meeting (initial evaluations, annual plan reviews, and eligibility reevaluations) that is overdue is pending, and why the meeting is delayed

The Special Education Division began a series of in-person and virtual roadshows in August to train LEAs on these upcoming changes. A recording of one of these trainings can be found on the California School Information Services (CSIS) YouTube Channel at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNARorilIAl (Video; 02:17:35). For copies of the meeting materials (e.g. the slide deck), contact the Data, Evaluation and Analysis Unit at speddatasupport@cde.ca.gov.

Vendor and Local Educational Agency Readiness for Redesign

Many of the changes that have been made will be transparent to users of the SEDS, therefore, it is imperative that SEDS vendors have correctly implemented the business logic to generate these four new files from the SEDS. If a vendor has not correctly implemented the business logic and LEAs are not able to generate the necessary files from their SEDS, this could impede the LEA's ability to certify data required for the CALPADS Fall 1 submission. The Fall 1 Submission in CALPADS includes not only data required for federal IDEA reporting but also includes data required for the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) first principal apportionment. Failure to certify Fall 1 data by the first certification deadline of December 15, 2023, would affect the LEA's first apportionment of the academic

year. Failure to certify Fall 1 data by the close of the amendment window on January 26, 2024, would mean that not only would the LEA be out of compliance for IDEA, but it would also impact the LEA's second principal apportionment of the year.

Select LEAs were asked to participate in user acceptance testing (UAT) of the new file types beginning in April and that testing continued through September 15, 2023. Although we expect the transition to go smoothly, as with any major data system change, we anticipate some issues and defects to arise once all LEAs begin submitting these new file types. The CDE will address the defects, particularly those related to validations, as soon as possible.

New Functionality—Online Maintenance for New File Types

As part of this redesign effort, additional functionality has been added for local special education staff to manually add, edit, and delete records for each of these new file types directly in CALPADS though the Online Maintenance interface. Although we have made this functionality available, the CDE strongly prefers that LEAs submit special education data directly through their local SEDS so that the source system is always consistent with CALPADS. Should LEAs choose to use the Online Maintenance functionality for the four new file types, they should ensure that:

- Only users who are **authorized by the LEA to submit special education data** and are authorized users in the local SEDS have the specific roles (SPED Edit and SSRV Edit) needed to submit special education data through Online Maintenance; and
- Any special education data submitted directly into CALPADS is consistent with what is **legally documented** in the student's special education plan (IEP, Individualized Service Plan [ISP], or Individualized Family Service Plan [IFSP]) document in the SEDS.

Availability of Monitoring Reports 16.7 and 16.8

Because the redesign will use new file types, the Monitoring Reports *16.7—Students with Disabilities— Plan Review and Reevaluation Monitoring Counts* and *16.8—Students with Disabilities—Monitoring Student List* are being retired and will not be available when the new redesign goes live on September 19, 2023. New monitoring reports with new numbers are currently in development and will be available in CALPADS shortly after the system goes live (exact date to be announced).

Because LEAs will not have visibility of these reports in CALPADS when the system goes live, the Focused Monitoring and Technical Assistance Teams (FMTAs) will not extract "late meeting data" until the new reports have been implemented. During this time LEAs are still expected to monitor late meetings in their local systems and record delay reasons where necessary.

Removal of Data Discrepancy Extract

Since 2019–20 CALPADS has provided LEAs the SPED Discrepancy Extract. This extract was an informational extract that identified student demographic data that are captured in the SEDS that are DIFFERENT than the demographic data being sent to CALPADS by the student information system (SIS). This extract was provided to assist LEAs in correcting these discrepancies in the local systems to make them consistent with each other. With the new redesign, the new file types do not collect any student demographic information stored in the local SEDS, therefore, we are retiring this extract, and it will no longer be available.

A New Pathway to a High School Diploma for Students with Disabilities

Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), states now have the option to offer a state defined alternate diploma to eligible students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and to count students receiving that alternate diploma as graduates in the state's four-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR).

In California, the new alternate diploma is established in *Education Code* (*EC*) Section 51225.31, which requires LEAs to exempt eligible students from graduation requirements that are additional to statewide course requirements, and to award an alternate high school diploma to those students *beginning with students who entered ninth grade in the 2022–23 school year.*

LEAs will report students receiving the alternate diploma using School Completion Status code, 102—*Pathway Diploma for Students with Disabilities*, which is defined as:

"An alternate diploma given that is: (1) is standards-based, and (2) aligned with the State's requirements for the regular high school diploma. This diploma is given to an eligible student with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and only if the student's individualized education program team has deemed the pupil eligible to take the state alternate assessments, as described in subdivision (k) of Section 60640."

Because this new diploma can only be issued to SWD meeting the eligibility criteria and who were enrolled in ninth grade in 2022–23 or after, the School Completion Status Code 102 may only be used for students meeting the alternate diploma high school graduation requirements in the 2023–24 academic year or after (to account for students who may graduate early.).

Many LEAs have been inquiring about how to report the courses these SWD are taking that are part of this alternate pathway to CALPADS. Because the content of these courses is required to align to the California Academic Content Standards, LEAs will continue to select from the existing State Course Codes in CALPADS; however, LEAs must be sure to

designate a value of 700—Special Education in field *9.22—Instructional Strategy Code*, which indicates that the course is specifically designed for SWD and all of the students in the class are SWD.

For further guidance on this new alternate diploma, refer to the letter from the Interim State Director of Special Education regarding this new pathway to a high school diploma, located on the Special Education Director's Official Letters web page at https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/lr/om082523.asp.

Student Degree of Support

In the 2024–25 academic year, LEAs will be required to populate two new data elements for SWD in the PLAN File:

- 23.16—Disability 1 Degree of Support—A coded value representing the degree of support needed to support a student's primary disability (Disability 1).
- 23.18—Disability 2 Degree of Support—A coded value representing the degree of support needed to support a student's secondary disability (Disability 2).

Each of these fields will have to be populated with one of the two following values:

Code Value	Code Name	Code Definition
MMSN	Mild/Moderate Support Needs	A student with one of the following disabilities: autism, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, and traumatic brain injury requires mild to moderate instruction and supports in one or more of the following domains: academics, communication, gross/fine motor, social-emotional, behavioral, vocational, learning environment access skills The supports may also include health, movement and sensory support.

| ESN | Extensive Support Needs | A student with one of the following disabilities: autism, deafblind, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, and traumatic brain injury requires intensive instruction and supports in two or more of the following domains: academics, communication, gross/fine motor, social-emotional, behavioral, vocational, adaptive/daily living skills

The support also often includes health, movement and sensory support. |
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These data are being captured to provide to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing's (CTC) California State Assignment Accountability System (CalSAAS) for their annual assignment monitoring cycle which uses the following data from CALPADS:

- Statewide Educator ID (SEID) of the teacher of record
- State Course Code
- Attributes of students enrolled in the course if the course is identified with an Instructional Strategy Code of 700—Special Education* in CALPADS field 9.23—Instructional Strategy Code. These attributes include:
    - Primary Disability
    - Secondary Disability
    - Student Degree of Support Disability 1(beginning in 2024-25)
    - Student Degree of Support Disability 2 (beginning in 2024-25)

The data from CALPADS are then compared against the teacher's credential and authorizations (stored in CalSAAS) and determines if the teacher is appropriately assigned to teach that course given the data that were reported to CALPADS.

The Special Education Division is working with a team of state Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) representatives to develop guidance for LEAs in determining the Student Degree of Support for students. The first draft of this guidance is expected to be disseminated in January 2024, in preparation for the Fall 1 2024 data submission.

*Instructional Strategy Code 700—Special Education means that the course is taught to a class where all students are SWD, and the curriculum was specifically designed for SWD.

Resources and Support

Beginning October 9, 2023, and through the end of November, the Special Education Division will hold weekly office hours on Mondays from 3 to 4 p.m. to provide updates on current issues and defects related to the redesign, as well as provide answers to any

questions. You will need to register for these office hours at
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NfdChQQvTM2VCuuZ2rupUA 🗗.

Additionally, the CALPADS System Documentation page has been updated with the most recent file specifications and code sets at https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sp/cl/systemdocs.asp and the CALPADS Frequently Asked Questions page has been updated with information relevant to the redesign at https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sp/cl/calpadsfaqs.asp.

Should there be any questions related to the above information, please contact the Special Education Division, Data, Evaluation and Analysis Unit via email at SPEDDATASUPPORT@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Shiyloh Duncan-Becerril, Interim Director
Special Education Division

SDB:bj

cc. CALPADS Administrators

Last Reviewed: Tuesday, October 03, 2023