

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Reopening Plan Mandatory Requirements

- The school reopening plan, whether services are provided in-person, remote, and/or through a hybrid model, must address the provision of FAPE consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those providing special education and services.

The School District will provide each student with a disability with FAPE while protecting the health and safety of students with disabilities as well as for those providers of the special education supports and services. Health and safety precautions will be maintained at all times as per the recommendations of NYSED, NYSDOH, NCDOH, and the CDC. IEP mandates will be provided to the greatest extent possible whether provided in-person, remotely, or via a hybrid model.

- The school reopening plan must address meaningful parent engagement in the parent's preferred language or mode of communication regarding the provision of services to his/her child to meet the requirements of the IDEA.

The School District reopening plan includes communication with parents/guardians regarding their child's special education needs via letters and documents sent electronically, through the mail, and via the District website. The Pupil Personnel Services department maintains communication with the District SEPTA on an ongoing basis where input is received regarding the needs of both the students and the families during the closure and the reopening process. Parent training/support sessions are planned for the coming school year to address these and other anticipated needs. Propio Language services are utilized for purposes of interpretation into the parents' preferred language as well as the use of Google Translate for documents. Parent concerns, whether received via email or phone conversation, are considered and addressed in a timely manner on an ongoing basis. Parent surveys and subsequent analysis of results assists in providing informed decisions regarding the provision of special education supports and services during the closure and in planning for the reopening in the Fall.

- The school reopening plan must address collaboration between the committees on preschool special education (CPSE) and committees on special education (CSE) and program providers representing the variety of settings where students are served to ensure there is an understanding of the provision of services consistent with the recommendations on individualized education programs (IEPs), plans for monitoring and communicating student progress, and commitment to sharing resources.

The Committees of Special Education and of Preschool Special Education communicate all expectations, NYSED and DOH/CDC recommendations and mandates to all providers of special education supports and services including District Employee, outside vendors and agencies, and out of district state approved day and residential programs. Direction is provided in delivery of services, documentation, and progress monitoring.

- The school reopening plan must ensure access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of students.

All providers of special education supports and services adhere to Chapter 408 of the regulations. Professional development opportunities, articles, information and resources are provided to all staff and providers regarding implementation of accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services including assistive technology to meet the unique needs of individual students in all modes and manner of IEP implementation. With improved access to and familiarity with

technology, creative and innovative methodologies are being employed via human and environmental resources to adapt the instruction in the various learning environments including in-person, remote and/or a hybrid model of implementation. The District has increased utilization of paraprofessional and consultant support for the online and in-person instruction provided by teachers. District employees and outside consultants are supported to be mindful of the unique and individual needs of each student with a disability and are encouraged to recommend modifications to be considered by the CSE and/or CPSE to best support the student's needs.

- The school reopening plan must address how it will document the programs and services offered and provided to students with disabilities as well as communications with parents, in their preferred language or mode of communication.

The District utilizes electronic documentation of programs and services through Frontline IEP along with related service logs, medicaid logs, and online electronic progress monitoring of IEP goals and objectives. This information is shared with parents in their preferred language via interpretation services including Propio Language Services and Google translate. The District website can translate into parent/guardian's preferred language as well. All special education providers and teachers will keep detailed records including services provided, dates, frequency, ratio, and duration. During the closure of Spring 2020, all annual reviews were conducted, virtually, with parent/guardian input and appropriate recommendations were made and documented in the best interest of the needs of the student(s). All IEPs and PWNs were sent to families via secure encrypted emails and/or hard copies in the mail. Parents receive progress reports at the same time and frequency as report cards are issued.

Considerations for Reopening Plans

- The school reopening plan encourages CPSEs/CSEs to prepare contingency plans to address students' remote learning needs in the event of potential future intermittent or extended school closures.

The District is planning for three scenarios: in-person, remote, and hybrid provision of instruction and implementation of IEPs. During the summer of 2020 for the implementation of the ESY program, all 3 models were utilized. In-person programming was phased in to monitor utilization of precautions, continue ongoing communication with families, and to ensure safety of students and staff. Similarly, plans for September will incorporate best practices for IEP implementation with ongoing communication with families and staff, professional development and parent education and support, to improve the efficacy and individualization of remote learning to all students and for our students with disabilities in particular. We will therefore be ready at any moment to switch to remote learning if the situation requires doing so for either a portion of or all the student population.

- The school reopening plan considers in-person services a priority for high-needs students and preschool students with disabilities whenever possible.

The School District considers in-person services a priority for our youngest and high needs students. Reopening plans include bringing all K - 5 students in person every day to the buildings. All of their IEP mandated services and supports will be provided in-person. To maintain the health and safety of students and staff to the maximum degree possible, students may be hand scheduled into "pods" with common support services to avoid contact with high numbers of people during the day. Push in services will be utilized when appropriate. When necessary students may be pulled out into smaller groups within the "pod" which will continue to shrink class size throughout the day as well. On the secondary level, general education students

will attend in-person on alternate days yet all ENL students, students in special classes, and students with extensive special education supports such as those receiving numerous Integrated Co-Teaching program classes, will receive daily in-person services and instruction. Related services and support services will be provided in person for those attending daily in-person classes and a combination of in-person and remotely for those students attending in-person on alternate days. CPSE recommendations include programs that are conducting in-person services whenever possible and requested by parents. Details plans for remote and/or hybrid provision of instruction will be in place to ensure a smooth transition to remote instruction if necessary at any time.

IEP Implementation Documentation

- Schools must determine how they will process and maintain the additional documentation regarding changing student needs due to the period of remote instruction and a return to a traditional classroom environment after a lengthy period away from in-person instruction. Special education teachers and providers will assess any change in needs early on in the return to the classroom and/or learning environment by taking baseline data on all IEP goals. The CSE can meet to consider any additional goals or change in needs. If and when appropriate, goals can be amended via an amendment agreement no meeting.

- Schools must determine how documentation will be maintained on the instruction and services that were provided to each student so that it may be communicated to the CPSE/CSE for consideration when making any individualized determinations of subsequent student needs, including transition services.

Prior to convening of any CSE or CPSE meetings, documentation regarding the provision of services provided during the school closure will be gathered for review and consideration at the meeting.

- Schools must consider how formative assessment and ongoing monitoring of student progress will be documented and maintained and how that documentation will be available to the CPSE/ CSE and parents, in their preferred language or mode of communication.

Teachers and providers will maintain accurate records of all data collected regarding student performance and progress monitoring which will be shared with all CSEs and CPSEs for consideration at meetings. Such information will be shared with all Committee members, including parents, and translated into their preferred language.

- Schools must maintain documentation of collaboration with parents to develop any contingency remote learning plans that may be implemented during a school closure.

Parent input will be elicited, reviewed and considered when developing contingency remote learning plans for all students including those with special needs. Input will be received through surveys, meetings, emails and phone conversations. Information sharing meetings, discussions and parent training sessions will be provided in collaboration with the District's SEPTA and the District Reopening Task Force. Strategies and supports to address students' unique needs will be developed collaboratively, with parents, to be implemented remotely.

- Schools must document the ongoing provision of compensatory services to individual students upon the reopening of schools. Documentation will then be available to parents, CPSE/CSE and other relevant parties, in their preferred language or mode of communication.

Amendments to IEPs and/or CSE Program Review meeting IEPs will document the provision of any and all compensatory services provided to students and will be translated into parents' preferred languages as appropriate.

Referral

- Before referring a student for special education, school districts should take into consideration all factors that may have influenced the student's progress during school closures due to COVID-19. If the school district suspects a student of having a disability, it must refer the student for an initial special education evaluation and obtain parent consent for the evaluation. However, a referral may not be warranted if the reason for underperformance is due to school closures and a change in the provision of education. All parent referrals and request for referrals by school staff should be considered as usual per the procedures in Commissioner's Regulations section 200.4(a).

The building ISTs and PPTs will meet on a regular basis to monitor at risk students. Data will be collected, assessments conducted, and interventions will be implemented and progress monitored through the MTSS for academic and emotional concerns. All referrals to the CSE will be considered as usual per the procedures in the Commissioner's Regulations section 200.4(a).

Initial Evaluation and Re-evaluation

- Reopening plans must ensure that special education evaluations (i.e., initial and reevaluations) are conducted whether in-person or remotely within required timelines.

All evaluations will be conducted within timelines whether remotely or in person unless permission for evaluation has been rescinded by the parent/guardian. Record reviews will be utilized, when appropriate, for re-evaluations when in person or remote evaluations are not possible or appropriate.

- The use of technology should be considered to meet timelines for evaluations and reevaluations that must be conducted remotely. CPSEs/CSEs should review records to determine which students are due for an initial evaluation or reevaluation and have a plan to address any backlog of evaluations.

During the summer of 2020, listings will be created through Frontline IEP of any and all incomplete evaluations, upcoming evaluations and reevaluations scheduled for the 20-21 school year. Outside providers will be contracted to perform evaluations that can not be completed by District Employees as per timelines.

- Schools should continue to follow OSE's March 27, 2020 and April 27, 2020 guidance for conducting evaluations and reevaluations during the COVID-19 pandemic to meet the special education timelines.

Each evaluation and reevaluation shall be considered individually in terms of appropriateness to be conducted in person and/or remotely. District Psychologists participated in in-service trainings regarding administration of remote evaluations. The District is purchasing Pearson Q Interactive to support the safe administration of various standardized measures.

Accommodations and Modifications

- Schools must review their instructional practices to plan for the necessary accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities to progress in the general education curriculum. Accommodations are alterations in the way tasks and/or assignments are presented. Modifications are changes in what students are expected to

learn. Both accommodations and modifications ensure equity and access to the general education curriculum in consideration of a student's unique disability related needs. Teachers and providers will participate in professional development to improve their understanding of matching students' unique needs identified in IEPs with the specific learning environment whether in-person or remote so that the student can best access and progress in the general education curriculum.

Technology

- Schools should be aware of the students with disabilities requiring assistive technology that is used to increase, maintain, or improve their functional capabilities. Consideration needs to be given to ensure students have access to their working technology and any accompanying programs. Protocols detailing availability of an assistive technology service are necessary to directly assist a student in the selection, acquisition or use of an assistive technology device. Schools should consider providing parents and families with a list of individuals, including their contact information, available to respond to questions and concerns regarding the assistive technology device and/or service for their child(ren). Teachers, providers and/or case managers will distribute technology and pertinent contact information to families to communicate any questions or concerns. Teachers, providers and consultants should review to discuss and consider if current recommended assistive technology and services can appropriately meet the needs of students and consider any changes that should be made to increase accessibility, as well as the level of support and or training the student, teacher and parent may need to effectively utilize the technology. The CSE can meet to consider any change in needs. If and when appropriate, goals can be amended via an amendment agreement no meeting. Assistive technology evaluations and trials will be conducted for students not previously recommended for the use of assistive technology and for whom it is suspected that the use of technology will improve functional capabilities.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND WORLD LANGUAGES

Qualifying schools that reopen using in-person or hybrid instruction will be required to complete the ELL identification process within 30 school days of the start of the school year for all students who enrolled during COVID-19 school closures in 2019-20, as well as all students who enroll during summer of 2020 and during the first 20 school days of the 2020-21 school year. After this 20 day flexibility period, identification of ELLs must resume for all students within required 10 school days of initial enrollment as required by Commissioner's Regulations Part 154.

- Elementary: ENL teachers will continue to participate in the August/Early September Kindergarten screening process. The team will follow the process outlined in CR. Pt. 154 and identify possible ELLs to further screen with the NYSITELL.
- Elementary ENL teachers will also review HLQ of newly registered grades 1 to 5 students to identify students who need to possibly be tested with the NYSITELL.
- Secondary: ENL teachers will review the HLQ of newly registered students and screen those students. Teachers will invite possible ELLs during a three day testing window to administer the NYSITELL.