



March 19, 2020

Dear Families,

As we are determining the most appropriate steps to ensure student and staff safety, we want to take this time to provide guidance relating to supporting students *with disabilities and their services, because of closures and dismissals related to COVID-19.*

As a reminder: any actions taken by a school district regarding closures are being taken for the safety of all students and school personnel working with students. That said we are aware that closures and dismissals are disruptive, and that they raise questions for parents about the supports and services that will be provided to their children.

The guidance below seeks to answer some of those questions, with the understanding that impacts on educational practice will vary from district to district. Because of this variation, it is important for families to collaborate and communicate with their students' case manager regarding approaches for the delivery of services for students with disabilities.

What will happen to my child's services when school is closed for all students due to COVID-19?

1. If a school closure causes educational services for all students to stop, then the school/district is generally not required to provide services to students eligible for special education services during that same period. This is especially true in cases where the school district will still provide the required minimum of school days, after school is reinstated.
2. During the period of school closure, a school district may provide supplemental enrichment materials to prevent loss of learning or loss of skills. However, any such supplemental enrichment materials must be made accessible for students with disabilities. These enrichment materials are optional for parents to use.
3. After an extended closure, districts are responsible for reviewing how the closure impacted the delivery of special education and related services to students eligible for special education services. Schools may be required to provide additional services or extended school year services to make up missed services.

4. If annual IEP reviews or eligibility reviews are due during a school closure your school's special education case will conduct meetings through alternate means such as video or audio conference calls.

What will happen to my child's services when a school is dismissed but educational services continue to be provided to all students through remote methods?

1. If a school district has dismissed on-site educational services but continues to provide educational services to all students through the provision of educational packets or remote learning opportunities, the district will remain responsible for ensuring the Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) of its students eligible for special education services with an individualized education program (IEP), during the dismissal period.
2. We will be communicating with parents and guardians prior to, during, and after a school dismissal regarding modifications and accommodations to support the continuation of their child's IEP services. We will work to ensure that all students continue to receive services *to the most appropriate extent possible*.
3. Although *special education or related services may need to be adjusted*, IEP teams will work to ensure that a student on an IEP receives services comparable to all other students. Services might include schoolwork packets, online learning, instructional phone calls, or some other learning adapted to the student's needs and location.
4. After an extended closure or dismissal, districts are responsible for reviewing how the closure impacted the delivery of special education and related services to students eligible for special education services. Schools may need to provide additional services or extended school year services to make up missed services.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

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