



Frequently Asked Questions SPED Extended Learning

The following is based on guidance from the Council of Administration in Special Education, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the US Department of Education, and the Office of Special Education Programs.

Q: Is an LEA required to continue to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities during a school closure?

A: When schools are closed and educational services are not provided to the general student population, then no services will be provided to students with disabilities during that same period of time.

When educational opportunities are provided to the general student population during a school closure, students with disabilities will also have equal access to the same opportunities, including the provision of FAPE. To the greatest extent possible, each student with a disability will be provided the special education and related services identified in the student's IEP developed under IDEA.

Q: How will students be provided with special education and related services if school attendance is virtual or off-campus?

A: When school attendance is virtual, students on IEPs will be provided with materials in the same manner as general education students and have access to instruction via a variety of technological (Zoom, Google Hangout, on-line instructional tools and resources) and traditional options (paper-pencil). Modifications and accommodations, as noted in the student's IEP will be provided to the extent possible and necessary, based on the type of instruction.

Specific materials will be provided, as appropriate, for making progress on IEP goals.

Related service providers will provide materials where possible. Some students will require services to be made up upon return due to the nature of the services.

Q: How will you provide special education services if the school closing causes a shortage of special education teachers or education providers (i.e. if your special education teachers or providers are unable to provide services due to an illness)?

A: If staff attendance impacts services for students, staff will be asked to make up services or staff in attendance may be asked to assist in providing services to students. If the state forgives any non-attendance days, this will be applied to making up services as well.

Q: How will IEP goals be measured if a student is out of school for an extended period of time?

A: Depending on the ability to address a goal remotely for students, progress will continued to be measured and reported when possible. If the school closure continues throughout an entire quarter, teachers will complete progress monitoring when school resumes and will communicate progress and regression due to the closure to the IEP team. This data will help the IEP team to determine compensatory services once school is back in session.

Q: How will special education evaluations be closed within legal timelines if schools were to be cancelled or closed?

A: If your child's evaluation is due during the school's closure, your student's case manager will be in contact with you to discuss. Efforts will be made to arrange schedules and assessments to meet timelines. In the event that timelines are exceeded due to school closure, similar procedures will be followed as we would for cancellations due to inclement weather.

Q: How will annual IEPs be reviewed during a closure?

A: The case manager will be responsible for reaching out to parents and discussing a draft IEP in order to meet timeline requirements. The case manager will then be responsible for contacting all other IEP team members to discuss the draft IEP. IEPs will be reviewed once the school reopens.

Q: May an IEP Team consider a distance learning plan in a child's IEP as a contingency plan in the event that requires the school's closure?

A: Yes. The IEP team may, but is not required to include distance learning plans in a child's IEP that could be triggered and implemented during a selective closure. Such contingent provisions may include the provision of special education and related services at an alternate location or the provision of online or virtual instruction, instructional telephone calls, and other curriculum-based instructional activities, and may identify which special education and related services, if any, could be provided at the child's home. Creating a contingency plan before a closure occurs gives the child's service providers and the child's parents an opportunity to reach an agreement as to what circumstances would trigger the use of the child's distance learning plan and the services that would be provided during the dismissal.

Further questions can be guided to:
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