Special Ed Connection®

Checklist of steps districts should take before schools reopen to students with disabilities

○ Communicate early and often with parents about the process for reopening and any individual student issues that may need special attention.

○ Review school facility plans for ensuring social distancing and make sure those plans are ADA compliant. Take individual student circumstances, such as wheelchair use, into consideration when planning for new flow patterns around a school.

○ Determine if efforts for cleaning and disinfecting school buildings may have ill effects on certain students with disabilities (e.g., students with chemical sensitivities).

○ Determine if the use of a face mask will have an adverse impact on a student with disabilities.

○ Review and revise budgets due to fiscal changes from the COVID-19 outbreak.

○ Determine what professional development is needed for new and returning special education teachers.

○ Plan for staffing for different types of instructional delivery systems, including all-person classes, all online classes, or a hybrid.

○ Identify any staffing shortages due to sickness or need to care for a sick family member.

○ Help educators understand policies for teacher certification, especially if licensure waivers expire.

○ Coordinate with school counselors, community mental health experts, and others on an action plan to assess, monitor, and respond to students' and staff members' mental and emotional health.

○ Review IEPs to determine if transportation-related services need to be updated or added. Make a plan for the safe transportation of medically fragile students.

○ Decide if and how schools will issue diagnostic assessments to determine if learning loss occurred. Decide how to respond to those diagnostic results.

○ Provide support to IEP teams seeking guidance on amending IEPs, if needed.

○ Plan to deliver compensatory services on an individual basis, if needed.

○ Determine the process for conducting evaluations and reevaluations if those were put on hold due to extended school closures.

○ Work with nonpublic schools regarding education plans for students placed in private schools by the public school system.

○ Prepare for distance learning in case schools must close again for in-person classes.