



COVID-19 and Special Education: Division Updates

**Advisory Commission on
Special Education
June 17, 2020**

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State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

Initial Response

- Acknowledged the urgent need for information
- Engaged state and national partners in collaborative discussions
- Ensuring safety and wellness as primary
- Responded to Governor Newsom's March 13, 2020 Executive Order N-26-20 to develop guidance
- Analyzed and disseminated guidance documents from the United States Department of Education



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Federal Guidance

- Federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) March 12, 2020 guidance titled *“Questions and Answers on Providing Services to Children with Disabilities During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Outbreak”*
- Federal Office of Civil Rights March 16, 2020 guidance on protecting students’ civil rights
- OSEP’s March 21, 2020 guidance titled *“Supplemental Fact Sheet Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Schools While Serving Children with Disabilities”*



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State Guidance

- California Department of Education's (CDE) webpage Special Education Guidance for COVID-19
- CDE's webpage for Coronavirus Response and School Reopening Guidance



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Special Education Guidance for COVID-19

Some of the areas addressed in CDE's guidance include:

- Must all Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) be amended to reflect the change to distance learning?
- Is a Local Educational Agency precluded from providing services to students with disabilities in-person or in the home for the purpose of supporting the student in accessing the alternative options for learning being offered?
- What is considered equitable access for students with disabilities?



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Moving Forward

- Many questions remain
- Considerations for students with disabilities as schools plan to reopen
- Future guidance from OSEP
- Continued collaboration with parents, schools, service providers, and other critical partners



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Innovative Solutions Webinars

- Initiated by Superintendent Thurmond to provide practical guidance to teachers and administrators in order to support students and families in the shift to distance learning
- Hosted by Supporting Inclusive Practices, Kristin Brooks and Kevin Schaefer
- Practices and solutions provided by parents, teachers, service providers, administrators, agencies, professional associations and other stakeholders



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Innovative Solutions Webinars Continued

- Webinars were broadcast on every Thursday in April
- Topics included:
 - Distance Learning
 - Supporting Families and Parents
 - Secondary Transition
 - Related Services
 - Mental Health and Behavior
- Webinars are available on the CDE website at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/covid19webinars.asp>



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Innovative Solutions Workgroup Background

- The CDE convened an ad hoc workgroup
 - The purpose of the workgroup was to assist educators and families across the state of California with distance learning as the new format for education during the coronavirus pandemic by developing solutions and resources that can be used to help support students with disabilities.



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Innovative Solutions Workgroup Members

- The workgroup consisted of stakeholders throughout California
 - Over 130 participants
 - Included parents, teachers, service providers, administrators, representatives from professional organizations and other stakeholders
- Meetings were facilitated through a collaboration of staff from the CDE Special Education Division and WestEd
- Dona Meinders (WestEd), Monica Pecarovich and Aaron Christensen (CDE) led the project



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Innovative Solutions Workgroup Meetings

- Meet one hour every Friday from late March through the end of April
- At the meetings, participants would break into subgroups: Administration, Behavior and Mental Health, Early Childhood, Mild/Moderate Support Needs, Extensive Support Needs, Low Incidence, Nonpublic Schools/Agencies, Parent and Family, Related Services, Transition



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Innovative Solutions Workgroup Subgroups

- Discuss the current issues they were encountering, the solutions they were seeing in the field, and review resources they had found, or that had been submitted by the field
- Each subgroup created a resource document to
 - Outline the areas of concern
 - Discuss or list considerations
 - Provide examples of practice or solutions
 - Provide resources

Public Comment

Conference Dial-in Number: (712) 432-0075

Participant Access Code: 651905#

Press *6 then 1 to be placed in the queue.

Prior to making public comment, speakers should make sure the volume on their computer is muted to avoid echoing or feedback sounds during the call.