



Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D., Commissioner

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Dear Families and Parents of Students with Disabilities,

The Nebraska Department of Education is committed to supporting both School Districts and Families during this sudden Covid-19 epidemic. During this time there are some important things to remember. Any actions taken by a district or school regarding closures are for the safety of all students and school personnel working with students. As districts and schools are determining the most appropriate steps to ensure student and staff safety, we want to take this time to provide guidance relating to students with disabilities and their services. It is extremely important for families and schools to collaborate and communicate regarding services for students with disabilities at all times but especially in these times.

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

The Nebraska Department of Education's Commissioner has recommended that school districts move to an alternate learning environment for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. With this recommendation, each public school district is required to submit a "Continuity of Learning Plan." This plan will describe the temporary actions that support the continuation of teaching and learning for all students during this interruption of normal school attendance center operations. A district's "Continuity of Learning Plan" will address two questions:

How do you plan to serve students?

How do you plan to serve students with disabilities?

It is the recommendation of the Nebraska Department of Education that school districts continue to provide educational opportunities for all students and create a sense of normalcy in a very abnormal time.

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. Students may need additional services or extended school year services to make up missed services.

If annual IEP reviews or eligibility reviews are due during a school closure, please work with your school closely to meet through alternate means, such as video or audio conference calls or as soon as school is back in session.





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

If a district has extended school closures but continues to provide educational services to all students, the district will remain responsible for the free appropriate public education (FAPE) of its students eligible for special education services with an individualized education program (IEP).

Districts should be communicating with parents and guardians prior to, during, and after a school closure regarding their child's IEP services. Districts and schools will work to ensure that all students receive services to the most appropriate extent possible. Although special education or related services may need to be adjusted, IEP teams should work to ensure that a student on an IEP receives services comparable to all other students. Services might include schoolwork packets, online learning, or some other learning adapted to the student's needs and location.

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. Students may need additional services or extended school year services to make up missed services.

If annual IEP reviews or eligibility reviews are due during this time, please work with your school closely to meet through alternate means, such as video or audio conference calls or as soon as school is back in session.

What will happen to my child's services if school remains open but my child is sick and sent home?

Students who are sick and who need to stay at home for more than ten days or may be unable to participate in the alternate learning environment, may need to receive homebound instruction. The IEP team must meet to determine how to provide services for your child. This may include schoolwork packets, online instruction, or some other type of learning adapted to the student's needs and location.





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Additional guidance

Nebraska Department of Education: www.education.ne.gov/sped

Office of Special Education Program:

https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/qa-covid-19-03-12-2020.pdf?utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_name=&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=.

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