

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Diverse Learner Supports and Services during COVID-19 School Closures

*Updated May 8, 2020*

During the state-mandated school closures in response to COVID-19, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS) is following the most up-to-date guidance issued by the [Illinois State Board of Education](#) (ISBE) and the [United States Department of Education](#). For the most up-to-date information regarding the district's response to COVID-19, visit: [cps.edu/coronavirus](https://cps.edu/coronavirus). If you would like to receive updates from ODLSS, complete this [form](#).

This document is organized by the following topics:

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### [Virtual Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) Meetings](#)

#### **Can we address my child's transition plan during a virtual IEP meeting?**

All sections of your child's IEP, including their transition plan, should be addressed and developed during virtual IEP meetings based on assessment data that is less than one year old. For additional transition-related assessment resources and best practices, please reach out to the ODLSS transition team at [ODLSStransition@cps.edu](mailto:ODLSStransition@cps.edu).

#### **Can parents and guardians participate in virtual IEP meetings via phone?**

Yes.

#### **How can I update my contact information with ODLSS?**

To leave updated contact information for the ODLSS team, please email [odlss@cps.edu](mailto:odlss@cps.edu).

#### **Can parents or guardians consent to virtual IEP meetings via phone or text?**

Yes. Parents and guardians can give verbal consent via phone or text message statement to the IEP team. School staff can then upload this picture as a PDF into the Student Services Management (SSM) system.

#### **Do parents or guardians need to provide consent for teletherapy?**

At this time, the district does not require additional consent for teletherapy, as parents have already consented to the provision of services.





#### **How should school staff proceed with student evaluations that cannot be completed due to school closures?**

Please refer to page 20 in the [special education guidance to remote learning procedures, standards, and instructional quality](#) for more information.

## Remote Learning

### **During class instruction via Google Meet, how can a paraprofessional communicate directly with their assigned student without leaving the Meet screen or interrupting the class?**

The paraprofessional and student can communicate via Google Hangout Chat, which students can view simultaneously with the Google Meet when using a desktop:

1. Open Google Hangout Chat as a new conversation using the plus symbol  and type or select the name of the person with whom you would like to create the chat.
2. Select the arrow that is pointing up and to the right which shows “pop-out” when hovered over .
3. Click on the Google Meet window, hover over the Chrome icon  in the Window Taskbar  at the bottom, side, or top of the screen, and select the Google Hangout Chat window.
4. The Google Hangout Chat window will open over the Google Meet window, allowing paraprofessionals and students to communicate directly.

### **When should school teams begin drafting [remote learning plans](#) for all students with IEPs/504s?**

School teams should start this work as soon as possible. If students have a scheduled IEP meeting prior to the end of the school year, their remote learning plan can be coordinated during the IEP meeting.

### **Should case managers send parents or guardians Notices of Conference (NOCs) for remote learning plan meetings?**

Yes. Case managers should send parents or guardians a NOC three days in advance of the remote learning plan meetings unless the parent gives verbal or written consent to waive the three-day notice or to not be in attendance at the meeting.

### **Can a parent or guardian approve of a remote learning plan without virtually attending a meeting?**

Yes, parents and guardians can provide verbal or written approval of a remote learning plan without attending a meeting with school staff. All written approvals should be uploaded into SSM.

### **Do teams need to make any changes to IEPs or 504s during remote learning?**

No, teams do not need to edit a student’s IEP or 504 during remote learning. Any change to the IEP/504 minutes or LRE grid requires an IEP/504 meeting.

### **How should school teams proceed if an annual review is impossible due to lack of data?**

School teams should move forward with annual IEP meetings by utilizing the data collected from September until mid-March as well as data collected during remote learning.

**Can school staff conduct virtual meetings with multiple students present?**

Yes, school staff can conduct a virtual small-group meeting with multiple students present. Teachers and related service providers can remind students about confidentiality, explain that the video feed is for instruction only, and anyone who views the video must respect the students' rights to confidentiality.

**Can parents or guardians be present during virtual meetings?**

Yes, parents and guardians may assist their child during virtual instruction.

**Can school staff work one-on-one with a student if a parent or guardian is present?**

Staff members can engage one-on-one with students when a parent or guardian or other staff member is present.

**How can school staff hold virtual group meetings with students?**

School staff must use Google Meet to hold virtual group meetings with students.

**Have there been any updates to the remote learning plan in SSM?**

Yes. Within the [remote learning plan in SSM document](#), the columns titled, "Will this goal be addressed during the Remote Learning period?" and "Frequency" will be removed and replaced with "Service Delivery Model" so that teams are able to document how services will be provided for each goal in the IEP during the remote learning. School teams should address the student's current IEP and outline the specific updates to the student's plan for remote learning.

### Digital Resources

**Can schools use docusign to obtain signatures?**

Schools can use docusign if the software has been purchased by the school via a business account. School staff cannot use personal software or accounts to gather parent signatures.

### Staff

**Should IEP teams still consider Extended School Year (ESY) during IEP meetings?**

Yes.

**Are related service providers protected from liability when providing remote services?**

Related service providers acting within the scope of their employment are afforded legal defenses and indemnification, and shielded from liability, consistent with the School Code and the Local Governmental and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act.

**How can teams meet a student's required IEP minutes and varying delivery models?**

School teams are expected to provide the supports and services identified in each student's IEP minutes. Service delivery models may vary during remote learning. For example, school staff may consider the following options for a student whose IEP requires 60 minutes per week of direct social work to address positive peer relationships:

- A service provider may facilitate a 30-minute activity covering social cues and appropriate responses prior to a virtual classroom meeting.
- A special education teacher may provide 60 minutes of direct special education services every week to support the student with making inferences in response to different scenarios or writing prompts. The special education teacher may also provide this service for 30 minutes followed by a 30-minute review and activity session with a related service provider.
- A special education teacher may meet with a small group of students before or after a virtual lesson with the whole class to support the general education curriculum.

**Does co-teaching count as direct service?**

Yes. Co-teaching is a research-based service delivery model. For more information, see page 12 of the [special education guidance to remote learning procedures, standards, and instructional quality](#).