



## FOCUS AREA 1

### Program Models: Face to Face, Virtual, Blended

As districts make decisions to move forward with opening schools for students, many factors come into play when determining what instruction should look like for students with disabilities who are working towards their goals and objectives. Many families may decide to not send their children back as they don't feel comfortable as a result of the compromised health status of their student. Because instruction may look very different than in the past, there will need to be discussion about the roles of staff members and how learning will be assessed. When determining the services to be provided, districts will need to be sensitive to disability discrimination issues as well as FAPE issues.



## EQUITY CONSIDERATION

- During these difficult times, it is important to recognize that each family has different needs and solutions.

Therefore, it is important for LEAs to recognize that although it requires effort, it is essential to take the course of action needed to establish contact with each family in order to ascertain their needs.

- Be sure to provide a translation of materials into other languages, and to communicate with the deaf and hard of hearing.
- Keep a key eye on your most challenged students and use personnel to ensure contact is established and maintained for *ALL* students.
- It is also crucial to use progressive monitoring tools to support learning targets and to developing actions steps to support academic growth.
- We should ensure that schools sites are not over identifying specific students groups without evidence based practices by implemented, supported, and modified as needed. They should also provide evidence of multiple measures attempted before referrals are presented for assessment.

## 1. ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What does instruction look like for 2020-21?

### Implementation, Recommendations, and Considerations

The following are examples of possible instructional models to serve the needs of students with disabilities and their families. With all of the models, it will be important to identify existing teachers with a desire to teach virtual and blended programs. Regardless of the model to be implemented, there should be no need to increase staffing as the caseloads would be dispersed amongst the model. It is imperative to address the language and translation issues that may arise whenever there are virtual and/or in-home services to ensure communication between the parents and staff.

### Face to Face Model

Students would come to school in the traditional format for a full day incorporating the social distancing and all safety measures outlined by Public Health and the district's own safety, health, and wellness plans. Addressing the concern of parents who are afraid to send their students to school or on the bus within close proximity to others will be significant with this model. Districts will also need to address and determine the role of staff members who may have compromised health issues, or are at the age of concern regarding their fear of returning to the classroom or riding the bus.

### Virtual Model

Provide all students with virtual lessons as a group. Setting up video conferencing for the class as a whole and then provide small group or individual lessons for specific goals and objectives. Related services staff will work with the classroom teacher to set up teletherapy during non-instructional classroom time.

### Hybrid Model

Students will be staggered to physically attend on predetermined days. For example, some students will attend Monday/Wednesday and the remaining students will attend Tuesday/Thursday with virtual instruction on Fridays. In SDC programs, whole class activities should be live streamed so students in physical attendance and those at home can participate. During center rotations, a dedicated center for virtual participation in which a teacher/aide will run the center using video conferencing so students not in physical attendance can participate. The virtual center will consist of the same activities that are being run in other centers.

### Blended Model

For SDC classes, the hybrid model could satisfy their needs. For RSP, send a survey to all RSP student families to gauge interest in a virtual model. Once the number is confirmed, RSP students district-wide will participate in a virtual model, identify a sufficient number of RSP teachers willing to take a virtual caseload, and assign those students to a virtual caseload. The RSP teachers would then be responsible for delivering SAI through both synchronous and asynchronous methodologies.

To provide related services, identify service providers that are interested in teletherapy. Shift caseload numbers over to the teletherapy providers and move their traditional caseloads to providers not providing teletherapy. Streamline caseloads to either be traditional or virtual. There could also be consideration of live streaming service sessions so that students can participate remotely.

### Blended Model with Home Services

In addition to providing classroom and virtual services, the addition of providing services within the home for the more involved students may also be an option. Using a format similar to home hospital, providing the necessary services needed for students who may be too compromised to attend school and the virtual distance learning model may not meet students' needs. In order for this model to be implemented, it is imperative to ensure both staff and families have the appropriate PPE and strict procedures are enforced on the number of students seen per day.

### Resources

- [Equity, Access, and Innovation Supporting Students' Distance Learning Guide](#)
- [High Leverage Practices for SWD](#)
- *El Centro Elem. Sch. Dist.* (SEA CA 2013) 11 EC LRP 38

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**2. ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** What does FAPE look like and how do we document it within each model?

### Implementation, Recommendations, and Considerations

Upon re-opening schools for instruction, a system of assessment, and intervention to determine regression and recoupment of skills would provide additional information regarding goals, services required, and placement for students. New goals can be addressed within the various models through the IEP process. If FAPE within the least restrictive environment cannot be implemented in the current model, a prior written notice can be developed for the services to be provided with discussion of services upon change of educational environment. Keep the lines of communication open with the family and interact often to discuss the students' needs within the structure of the educational model. Section 504 and the IDEA can both interact in making decisions concerning a student if the student is on an IEP.

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**3. ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** What does the day look like for the staff, teachers, and/or paraprofessionals in their roles and how are they held accountable?

### Implementation, Recommendations, and Considerations

In a virtual model, SAI teachers and related service providers will organize their day for planning, providing large and small group instruction as well as individual instruction on students goals, documenting interactions and preparing, scheduling, and holding IEP meetings. Face to face and blended models would be similar but would include instruction in the classroom with the addition of video conferencing components. The home instruction model would also require travel time and may include the use of the classified staff to assist within the home model. With a continual virtual component, discussions of the role of the classified staff will need to take place to determine the necessity of each position.

**4. ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** How are instruction and assessment validated and how is there assurance that all students have access to online instruction?

**Implementation, Recommendations, and Considerations**

Documentation is key to track services and interactions with students. Coaching for parents may need to take place to assist parents in helping their student as opposed to telling them or doing activities for them. Once students are back for face to face instruction, additional assessment may need to be implemented to validate the learning that has taken place. Districts may choose to survey all families to ensure access to devices and the internet. As a result, they may need to provide devices and internet connections for families as well as training to parents/students in order to fully participate. Discussions will be needed regarding budget and costs for providing 1:1 devices and internet connections for students will need to take place and determine which funds will be used.

**5. ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** How do we address FERPA/ confidentiality concerns when working virtually with more than one student and/or family on video conferencing?

**Implementation, Recommendations, and Considerations**

Provide parents a waiver/permission form including a confidentiality clause to participate with their child on video conferencing that may discuss or review goals of students while other adults are on the call.



**FOCUS AREA 2**

**Compliance: Legal Issues, Addressing Regression, Late IEPs and Assessments**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the stay at home order by the Governor as well as the school closures through Public Health, special educators have been unable to provide the services to special education students as written in each IEP. In this unprecedented situation, the USDOE has not given any relief in regards to IDEA requirements although the State Special Education Director has encouraged districts to do the “best we can” in providing services. That said, districts will need to review the regression of each special education student and prepare to provide “make-up” services. Because many assessments and IEPs were put on hold during this time, planning must take place to complete assessments and hold IEP meetings to become as close to compliant as possible. Teams must address services in the least restrictive environment.

**1. ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** How do we manage the backlog of assessments (including Part C to Part B and Pre-K to Kinder) and IEPs as well as stay compliant with current cases?

**Implementation, Recommendations, and Considerations**

Planning is a major component to ensure that assessments and IEPs are coordinated and held in a timely manner. Scheduling past due IEPs within the first 30 days of the new school year to the greatest extent possible, will assist in keeping the district closer to timeline compliance.

To manage a backlog of make-up services and assessments, districts may begin offering make-up services over the 2020 ESY/Summer School time frame and continue to offer these services during school breaks throughout the 2020–21 school year. It is recommended to anticipate families be seeking these supports to help plan for additional make-up services. Keep the lines of communication open with the family and interact openly and often to discuss the students’ needs and concerns. If the county and state health guidelines allow, resume open assessments over the 2020 summer to reduce the assessment burden during the 2020–21 school year.

**2. ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** How do we determine service and hours as well as provide the “Comp Ed”/Make-Up requests?

**Implementation, Recommendations, and Consideration**

Districts will need to develop guidelines to support IEP teams in determining “comp-ed”/make-up services for students once schools re-open. This will ensure IEP teams are prepared for the discussion and can address “comp-ed”/make-up concerns when brought up in the meetings. The make-up services are not offered minute for minute as written on the IEP. The decision should be made on a regression and recoupment model once students are receiving consistent services and interventions and determined on an individual basis.

**Resources**

- Consultation with an attorney for litigation-related issues.
- Guidance from the United States Department of Education earlier this year noted:
  - » “If a child does not receive services after an extended period of time, a school must make an individualized determination whether and to what extent compensatory services may be needed, consistent with applicable requirements, including to make up for any skills that may have been lost.”

**FOCUS AREA 3**

**Staffing and Professional Development**

As instruction shifts to a variety of models, staff will need support in moving forward with how to teach students. Districts will need to have consistent professional development to assist all staff members in learning to do their job in a different way. Discussion regarding staffing and roles will be important as districts move forward with their instructional models.

**1. ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** What does staffing look like in 2020–21 and what are the roles?

**Implementation, Recommendations, and Considerations**

Districts will need to provide opportunities for teachers and related service providers to hone their skills with technology. Having conversations with staff and asking for volunteers to develop and implement the virtual model for their caseload will allow teachers to build on their skills and be a part of the solution. This is the time to work closely with the union representatives to get their input and ideas regarding the upcoming changes in working conditions.

**2. ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** How will contract language be addressed for changing work conditions?

**Implementation, Recommendations, and Considerations**

Changes in working conditions in the short term may only require an MOU. However, as this “new normal” sets in, contract language may need to be amended to address the new instructional requirements. Work closely with the union representatives to get input, options, and the changes in working conditions.

**3. ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** What professional development will teachers need to be efficient in their new roles?

**Implementation, Recommendations, and Considerations**

Professional development offerings will assist in moving staff forward as new instructional models are implemented. Since there may be different options of services for students, there may be more opportunity to provide PD for staff through a virtual model as opposed to in-person. This would reduce the need for substitutes since there tends to be a shortage. If districts are unable to provide these PD opportunities, they may look into consulting with outside agencies to provide support. Some of the areas include:

- Compliance issues
- Technology
- Instructional platforms adapted for special education students
- Instructional strategies for teaching face to face, virtual or in blended models
- Virtual IEP meetings