

*On June 8, 2020 DESE provided guidance concerning in-person instruction over the summer for special education students. It was noted that schools should be aiming to begin offering limited in-person instruction to their most vulnerable students by July 6<sup>th</sup>. Additional full guidance is still coming from DESE. Until the full guidance is provided, in-person instruction cannot begin.*

*While July 6<sup>th</sup> is the intended start date for in-person instruction, DESE made clear each individual program must make a determination of their ability to safely provide in-person services. It was suggested by DESE that the following 5 categories be in place in order to provide in-person services. If your program is unable to address all 5 steps for summer services, remote learning must continue. If it will take your program longer to implement these suggestions, you may need to begin in-person instruction at a date later than July 6<sup>th</sup>.*

*We have provided additional considerations and suggestions to the 5 steps provided by DESE as a more comprehensive resource for ensuring safe and effective in-person instruction.*

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## **Steps for Implementation and Preparation for In-Person Summer Instruction**

1. Identify high-priority students most at need for in-person summer services and communication with families.
  - a. *NOTE: Based on this new guidance from DESE, if you've already sent out notice that you are continuing to provide remote learning this summer, it is suggested that you now send new notice about determining your ability to provide in-person summer services.*
  - b. Send out parent survey to get preliminary idea of how many parents want their children to receive in-person instruction
  - c. Establish criteria for high-priority students – document rational/reasonable basis for decision. Factors to consider in your determination:
    - i. Students with most significant disabilities
    - ii. Student demonstrating substantial regression
    - iii. Students receiving multiple related services
    - iv. Students that will require more time to learn new procedures to increase success for reentry in the fall
  - d. Additional considerations
    - i. Can only take 25% of building capacity
      1. Residential students are not included in 25%
      2. Day and residential students will remain separated
    - ii. Can only have 10 students maximum in class and 12 individuals maximum, including students and staff

- iii. Some parents may not want their child to attend
  - 1. A Doctor's note is not required to excuse the child
  - 2. Remote services must continue for that child
  - 3. Document all communication around services and options provided to family
- iv. Parents may discuss their desire for in-home services rather than having their child attend school. DESE suggested this as an option but we strongly suggest considering all the implications of providing services in this manner:
  - 1. If in-home services are an option for your program or can be contracted for, consider whether this can be safely offered to students.
  - 2. There are many unknowns and challenges
    - a. Is the home environment cleaned and disinfected properly?
    - b. Do family members have COVID-19?
    - c. Do family members have underlying health issues?
    - d. Are family members following guidance-remaining home, socially distancing, wear masks, etc.
      - i. How can we ensure they are providing reliable information about these factors?
    - e. Will staff be required to travel to multiple homes? How do we ensure safely doing so?
- e. Plan for a mix of remote and in-person services
  - i. Make certain each student has a plan around the services they will receive this summer
  - ii. Determine which services are integral for in-person instruction
  - iii. Give clear expectations to student and parent around their new schedule for in-person and remote
- f. Communication with parents around identifying students for in-person instruction.
  - i. Inform parents if their child is considered high priority (use appropriate language for this determination) and can receive in-person instruction.
    - 1. Document communication and remain consistent with reasonable determination and criteria that led to this decision
    - 2. If child is determined to fit high priority and parents agree to in-person instruction, discuss with parents the mix of in-person and remote instruction that will follow.
  - ii. Inform parents if it was determined that their child will continue with remote services for the summer.

1. Document communication and remain consistent with reasonable determination and criteria that led to this decision
  - iii. Discuss with parents if in-home services are available or an option for their child.
    1. BUT see above for important considerations
  - iv. For students with high-risk medical conditions, encourage parents to consult with their child's health care provider to discuss appropriateness of receiving in-person instruction.
  - v. Discuss with parents the potential risk that is created by child coming to school or having in home services.
    1. Address their need to fully understand these risks and requirement that they sign a liability waiver prior to allowing any in-person services
2. Identify, hire, and onboard appropriate staff to meet the needs of students. Determine staffing necessary and spacing required.
  - a. Programs must have adequate levels of staffing available based on number and needs of students that will be attending and receiving in-person services
  - b. Ratios
    - i. Program must meet DESE approved ratio for student-to-licensed educator and/or aide
      1. If unable to maintain, contact liaison
  - c. After determining the amount of students/staff, appropriate distancing must be considered
    - i. Group size
      1. Maximum of 10 students
      2. Maximum of 12 individuals including students and staff
    - ii. Room size and layout
      1. Large enough to have at least 6 feet distance between all students and staff
        - a. Adjust amount of students/staff to meet ratio and space as needed
      2. Layout must accommodate the most effective means of social distancing possible
      3. Desks should be separated as much as possible
    - iii. Building
      1. Classrooms must be appropriately spaced in building to allow for adequate social distancing
        - a. Keep space between occupied classrooms to reduce potential exposure
        - b. Students should remain in the same general area to reduce potential exposure

- c. Limit passing by other students who are not in the same classroom
    - d. Keep in mind need for additional staffing in close enough proximity in case of behavioral intervention/support
  - 2. Consider making use of alternative spaces that are larger to accommodate more distance between students
  - d. Create schedule with coverage/relief in a number of scenarios
- 3. Identify and purchase necessary protective equipment.
  - a. Schools must purchase and procure appropriate protective equipment. All direct services providers must be provided with appropriate PPE.
  - b. What PPE is appropriate and quantity
    - i. The following are suggested items:
      - 1. Gloves- appropriate sizes
      - 2. Gowns- appropriate sizes
        - a. Difference between disposable gown and gown/layers/coveralls
          - i. Disposable gown cannot be reused and must be disposed of at the end of use.
          - ii. Gown/layers/coveralls machine washable, can reuse after cleaning.
      - 3. Face masks- Appropriate for the person (staff/student) and situation
        - a. Shields
        - b. Goggles
        - c. N-95
      - 4. Hand soap
      - 5. Hand sanitizer
      - 6. Paper towels
      - 7. Tissues
      - 8. Disinfectant wipes/cleaners
      - 9. No-touch trash cans
  - c. Keep track of costs related to purchasing PPE
  - d. Keep track of how quickly PPE is being used up
  - e. Staff must wear masks unless an exception applies
  - f. Students that are able to tolerate wearing a mask must wear one
  - g. Staff should wear appropriate PPE for the situation/specific interaction they are having with students
    - i. DESE provided a chart with more specific guidance on what should be worn in specific situations

4. Develop new protocols/policies/procedures.
  - a. Anticipate and plan for situation-specific protocols that are necessary
  - b. Modify existing health and safety plans and/or school protocols as needed
  - c. Suggested areas for new policies/procedures/protocols:
    - i. Social distancing
      1. Where possible there must be a 6-foot distance between all students and staff
      2. Where a 6-foot distance is not possible, staff and students must wear masks, staff should make best efforts to reduce amount of time within close proximity to student
      3. Where it is not possible for students to wear masks, staff must wear a mask and other PPE as needed, staff should make best efforts to reduce amount of time within close proximity to student
      4. Identify situations where distance is attainable
      5. Identify situations where distance is not attainable
        - a. In these situations, identify what PPE is required
    - ii. Infection control
    - iii. Classroom activities
    - iv. Classroom/building design/layout
      1. Barriers
      2. Spacing
      3. Taping
      4. Visual guides
      5. Use of hallways
      6. Use of bathrooms
      7. Staggered time outside of classroom
    - v. Meals/snacks
      1. Cleaning and disinfecting before and after eating
      2. No sharing between students
      3. Considerations for students who need to be fed or need assistance while eating
      4. Keep students in their same classroom instead of moving to cafeteria/other location for eating
    - vi. Cleaning and disinfection
      1. High touch areas
      2. Frequency
      3. Step by step method
      4. Create signage with specifics with easy to follow instructions
    - vii. Utilization of PPE
      1. Proper techniques for putting on and taking off
      2. Proper disposal techniques

3. Guidance about what PPE is necessary at what times and in what situations
4. System for tracking how much PPE is used, practicality of use, challenges or need for different PPE

viii. Toileting

1. Create specific PPE requirements as well as cleaning and disinfecting procedures
  - a. Toileting and diapering areas must be cleaned and disinfected after each use
    - i. Clean- physically removing dirt, debris, sticky film by washing, wiping and rinsing
    - ii. Disinfect- kill nearly all germs on hard, non-porous surface with recommended chemical to remove bacteria
  - b. Disinfecting must be done when students are not in the area
  - c. Place signage in bathrooms or other changing area with easy to follow steps
  - d. Students and staff clothing must be changed when soiled with secretions or bodily fluids
  - e. Staff must be trained on proper removal of PPE and handwashing before donning and after removing PPE
  - f. Staff should assemble all necessary supplies or they should be available in changing area/bathroom before bringing the student to be changed or use the bathroom
  - g. Students hands must be washed after toileting/diaper change
  - h. Staff must thoroughly wash their own hands after toileting/diaper change

ix. Physical intervention and restraint

1. Consider how to best protect all involved in a restraint and provide realistic guidance for safely doing so
  - a. Students will likely feel anxiety when approached by staff with PPE or seeing staff begin to put it on- use student-centered approach and offer reassurance
  - b. Limiting risk of infection prior to restraint
    - i. Ensure staff is wearing disposable gloves, disposable masks, face shields and long sleeves to maximum extent possible
      1. Plastic protective gowns/disposable gowns are not advised
    - ii. Only staff required in safely restraining a student should be involved

- iii. One additional staff should monitor and address PPE as needed (provide more, adjust, etc.)
  - c. Limiting risk of infection during restraint
    - i. Keep hands clear of eyes, mouth and nose of self and others involved
    - ii. First responders should be relieved ASAP if they are not wearing proper PPE
    - iii. As always, but even more important with the risk of COVID-19, try as best possible to avoid long and extended restraints
  - d. Limiting risk of infection after a restraint
    - i. Remove/dispose of/clean protective equipment immediately in manner trained
    - ii. As soon as is possible, wash hands.
      - 1. Avoid touching face and limit contact with hard surfaces before washing hands
    - iii. Clean and disinfect areas that may have been touched
    - iv. Staff should have a change of clothes available if clothes become contaminated
    - v. Once all health/safety issues have been addressed, follow debriefing/reporting procedures for the restraint
- x. Transportation
  - 1. Districts and schools should work with families to determine their ability to transport their child
    - a. If parents are unable, districts must coordinate and provide transportation. Communicate with parents around district coordination.
    - b. If parents are able, communicate with them new procedures for pick-up/drop-off
  - 2. Procedures for when students arrive and enter school
  - 3. Procedures for when students leave school
  - 4. Staggered timing of drop off/pick up
    - a. Consider which students are receiving transportation services
    - b. Consider which students have their parents transporting them
- xi. Communication with parents and districts around COVID-19 and new practices
  - 1. Provide clear and timely communication with all parties about COVID-19 new policies/procedures/protocols.
  - 2. Ensure there are open lines of communication

3. Allow parents the opportunity to discuss safety concerns or questions they have
4. Provide information through several means of communication (call, email, mail, posting on website, posting on portals, etc.)
- xii. Attendance for both students and staff
  1. When to stay home
  2. Symptoms to be aware of
  3. Exposure at home/outside of school
  4. Exposure at school
  5. Testing positive
  6. Returning after recovery
- xiii. Informed consent
- xiv. Liability waiver
- xv. Plans for reassessing, monitoring effectiveness of all that has been implemented
  1. Create team to meet frequently and discuss new policies/procedures/protocols
    - a. What is working
    - b. What is not working
    - c. What needs to be changed to address issues
    - d. How can changes be implemented
    - e. What materials are needed
    - f. Impact on all students
    - g. Impact on all staff

## 5. Education and training.

- a. It is essential that all staff are trained properly before in-person instruction can begin
- b. Students must also be educated and trained on health and safety and new routines that may be required.
  - i. Begin presenting these changes through remote services for better adaption in-person
- c. Training plan
  - i. Identify who will need to be trained and what each training will address
  - ii. Identify who will provide the training and what materials are needed to do so
  - iii. Develop a timeline for training
    1. Trainings that must be done before in-person instruction
    2. Trainings that must be provided on an on-going basis
  - iv. Develop a system for monitoring staff completion of trainings and identify the person(s) responsible for ensuring all staff are trained



- v. Consult with vendors or affiliated health/safety organizations to determine training resources available
  - vi. Consult with districts, collaboratives, other approved special education schools to share resources
  - vii. Develop a mechanism for staff to communicate need for more training
  - viii. Determine what training may be need for families
  - ix. Develop monitoring system/supervision for staff to ensure they are implementing newly trained procedures, policies, skills, etc.
- d. Staff training
- i. Must be provided by qualified professionals
  - ii. Must include all staff who come in contact with students
    - 1. May include educators, support and related services staff, administrators, clerical staff, custodial staff, food providers, etc.
  - iii. Training should include but is not limited to:
    - 1. Safe and effective use, disposal and cleaning or protective equipment
    - 2. General information about COVID-19 from CDC/DPH
      - a. How does it spread
      - b. How to prevent spreading
      - c. What are symptoms
      - d. When to seek medical assistance for students/staff who exhibit symptoms
    - 3. Proper cleaning and disinfecting techniques
    - 4. Restraint/behavior intervention with COVID-19
    - 5. Communicating with parents during this time
    - 6. New policies/procedures/protocols listed above
    - 7. Communication and assisting children during this time
  - iv. Student education
    - 1. Students should be provided with training through direct instruction and/or embedded content in lessons/activities, as developmentally appropriate.
    - 2. Training must include:
      - a. General information about COVID-19
      - b. Information to ensure they and their families understand changes to regular school practices
        - i. Routines for entering/exiting school
        - ii. Snacks/meals
        - iii. Assembling
        - iv. Passing in halls, walking through the building
        - v. Transportation

- vi. Staggered time moving through the building, transportation
- vii. Remaining in same space
- viii. Accessing bathrooms
- ix. Staff using PPE
- x. Students using PPE
- xi. Cleaning/disinfecting
- xii. Processing all that is happening/changing
- c. Students must be explicitly trained on how to use PPE, as appropriate.
  - i. How to put it on
  - ii. How to take it off
  - iii. How not to use it
  - iv. How to dispose of it
  - v. Where it should be placed if can be cleaned
- d. Social stories, visual cues and other appropriate developmental strategies should be used to reinforce

Guidance for specific populations.

- e. Medically high-risk children
  - i. Parents should be encouraged to consult with child's health care provider to discuss appropriateness of students with high risk medical conditions attending in-person instruction
- f. Students who are deaf or hard of hearing
  - i. Consider needs of students who must see lips of speakers and how close this requires speaker to be
  - ii. Purchase clear masks or shields
  - iii. Account for interpreter in classroom for numbers
  - iv. Determine logistics of social distancing for interpreter