Considerations for IEPs Fall 2020

Purpose

As students prepare to return to school, many questions and concerns surround those students and how to document services and supports in Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). This document seeks to illustrate how IEPs should be restructured for the re-opening of school Fall 2020 based on the latest guidance and planning available at this time.

General Considerations

Starting at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, districts will need to discontinue the use of Distance Learning Plans (DLPs), ensure that IEPs are in place with amendments, and complete a Form 5 (Individualized Education Program).

School teams were required to develop separate written documents/DLPs or draft IEP amendments for students during the period of remote learning as an emergency measure. Going into Fall 2020, however, the AOE is no longer recommending using the DLP as an amendment to an IEP; DLPs have not been consistently capturing IEP goals (academic and functional performance) and have been missing or inconsistently capturing IEP service details, which did not meet School-Based Health Service program requirements. As such, the AOE is strongly recommending IEP teams amend the actual IEP as appropriate in the fall and incorporate a service page section that details services and supports which will be provided in the event of a student's return to remote learning.

Service pages should reflect options for remote learning, in a similar format to the completion of a Service Page for Extended School Year (ESY) services. For example, if you include ESY services as a separate page, you should include remote/hybrid learning as a separate page which includes the services that would be used in remote or hybrid learning and the goals/objectives that are being addressed.

If the district is adopting a hybrid model (some in-person, some remote) for reopening in the fall, the IEP team must address the services and supports which are required for both in-person and remote learning. This can be accomplished by identifying remote/in-person services within the service pages and include supports for remote learning listed as a section on the Accommodations/Modifications page of the IEP. Additionally, the AOE strongly recommends including information about how IEP supports would be provided in a remote learning environment in the Accommodations/Modifications section of the IEP, in the event that a student participates in remote learning part or full-time. Details for a contingency plan can be listed, including what goals educators and professional staff will be working on during remote

Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document or would like additional information, please contact:

Jacqui Kelleher, Division of Student Support Services, at Jacqui.kelleher@vermont.gov

learning and the necessary accommodations/modifications to ensure access and equity for meaningful educational benefit.

The AOE is aware that IEP vendors will need to adapt their current forms to support inclusion of these contingency plans, and encourages the inclusion of the additional space to accommodate this change; possibilities include a fill-in section for Accommodations/Modifications, a text box with flexible applications or room to add accommodations for Remote Learning to an IEP's Service Plan section. Any one of these options would allow for a comprehensive IEP document that accounts for both in-person and remote services for the upcoming school year.

IEPs in Early Childhood Special Education (ages 3 through 5) are formatted differently. Early Childhood Special Educators have been instructed to amend or modify the educational environment section of their IEPs to reflect the possibility of a remote learning setting, and to include information about how specialized services would be delivered to reflect this change.

The AOE has provided an example of how this might be accomplished using a Form 5 document. Please see Individualized Education Program Template Including Remote Learning Strategies for a model that schools are encouraged to use when adding IEP content about how support services will be delivered in a remote learning environment. This template contains new fields reflecting remote learning additions indicated by highlights. Please contact Jacqui Kelleher with questions concerning this document.