



## Division of Special Education Update

### Status on Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meetings

During this global pandemic LAUSD and the Division of Special Education continues its commitment to holding IEP team meetings on time. With the implementation of remote learning assessments and in-person assessments, as of April 2, 2021 LAUSD has conducted approximately 61,058 IEP team meetings during the 2020-21 school year. Parents are encouraged to participate in IEP team meetings virtually and/or via telephone, and if there are any questions on how to do so, please reach out to your child's case carrier or administrator. The District is continuing to send text message reminders to parents regarding scheduled IEP team meetings and reminders on returning the consent page (either in agreement or disagreements to all or part of the IEP). Parents will now be able to use the Adobe sign feature to electronically sign IEP documents such as the consent page and notification to participate in IEP team meeting form. In addition, the "Virtual IEP Team Meeting Informational Video for Parents" is available in English and Spanish on the Division of Special Education – Resources for Families During Distance Learning webpage at <https://achieve.lausd.net/Page/17242>.

### HYBRID RE-OPENING STARTS APRIL 12, 2021

72 elementary schools and early education centers are opening as hybrid models on Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. About 1,400 parents of students with disabilities have signed up for their children to return to school this week. As all schools gradually open over the following weeks, an anticipated 20,000 students with disabilities will be returning to campus. School sites will be staffed with additional credentialed staff to support students, parents, teachers, and administrators during the reopening.

### PHYSICAL REOPENING OF SCHOOLS: INFORMATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

- Services and supports consented to in a student's IEP will be provided during hybrid instruction, including transportation. Students will be required to follow safety and social distancing protocols and wear appropriate PPE (i.e., masks) while on the bus.
- Students participating in the hybrid model will have related services provided in-person and virtually, as appropriate. Students participating in the virtual model will continue to receive related services virtually.
- IEPs will continue to be offered in a virtual environment. For families requiring devices and internet connectivity to participate, school sites will make space available at their school in order to provide supports. There may be an opportunity to hold in-person IEP meetings if there are few participants and the school can accommodate physical distancing in adherence to current County guidelines.
- Special Education classes with multiple grade levels will select a start time based on the least impacted staggered start time.
- All Special Educators will be provided PPE as appropriate to their job duties, such as face shields, clear face masks, medical grade masks, gloves, and gowns.

For more information, please see our FAQs:

English: <https://achieve.lausd.net/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1220/FAQs%20Re%20Return%20to%20School%20%2003-18-21.pdf>

Spanish: <https://achieve.lausd.net/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1220/FAQs%20Re%20Return%20to%20School%20%2003-19-21Spanish.pdf>



### **Parent Resources/News**

- World Autism Awareness Day, April 2nd, and Autism Awareness Month are events that are celebrated globally. In support and recognition of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), the Division of Special Education promotes awareness of ASD during the month of April and provides an opportunity for educators, students, and parents to learn more about autism.

#### UDL FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

<https://youtu.be/rTiOlyt5Qtc> (UDL - English)

<https://youtu.be/hepDHOjfadY> (UDL - Spanish)

#### AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER RESOURCES

<https://youtu.be/tu2CuvFJsrc> (ASD - English)

<https://youtu.be/wlhX-NLB028> (DEA - Spanish)

- 42ND ANNUAL VERY SPECIAL ARTS FESTIVAL

The Music Center's 42nd Annual Very Special Arts Festival Goes Virtual on April 16, 2021 from 10:00am-11:00am. This annual inclusive event celebrates the artistic achievements of students with all abilities. The festival features student and professional performances, visual and performing arts workshops, and a student art exhibit created around the theme. This year's theme is Seeds of Kindness. This virtual format offers students and teachers an opportunity to experience dance and musical performances and still be able to participate, via Distance Learning, in lots of art workshops. For more information, visit the Music Center's website: <https://www.musiccenter.org/education/Very-Special-Arts-Festival/>

### **Parent Portal**

As a friendly reminder, we highly encourage all parents to access the Parent Portal where various special education documents (i.e., IEP) and reports (i.e., service tracking) are available. To access the Parent Portal, visit:

<https://parentportalapp.lausd.net/parentaccess/>

### **Phone Numbers**

LAUSD General Hotline: 213-431-4300

Division of Special Education School and Family Support Services: 213-241-6701

LAUSD School Mental Health Hotline: 213-241-3840

Technology Access: 213-443-1300

### **Websites**

Division of Special Education: <https://achieve.lausd.net/sped>

General Resources During School Closure: <https://achieve.lausd.net/resources>

Office of Parent and Community Services (PCS): <https://achieve.lausd.net/pcss>



SELPA/CDE Information

**U.S. Department of Education Approves California's Assessments Plan**

Source: CDE Website, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr21/yr21rel26.asp>

**Tony Thurmond — State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**Thursday, April 8, 2021**

SACRAMENTO—The U.S. Department of Education notified California this week that the state's request for relief from certain federal testing, accountability, and reporting requirements has been granted.

In a letter to State Superintendent Tony Thurmond and State Board President Linda Darling-Hammond, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs Ian Rosenblum said he was "pleased to approve" California's request. "The intent of these accountability waivers is to focus on assessments to provide information to parents, educators, and the public about student performance and to help target resources and supports," Rosenblum wrote. "This is particularly crucial this year, due to the COVID pandemic."

In February, the State Board of Education voted to seek a waiver that would give schools the means to account for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in their ability to assess students. The Board's action was in response to federal guidance allowing states to seek flexibility given that most students have yet to return to in-person instruction either part- or full-time.

The state also discussed its plan to give schools permission to report data from standards-aligned interim or diagnostic tests they have been using where it is not viable to administer the state summative assessments due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unlike last year, the U.S. Department of Education did not invite states to apply for blanket waivers that would allow states to opt-out of annual testing altogether, citing the role testing data plays in supporting students.

As granted, California's waiver:

Decouples state assessments from federal accountability requirements, as applicable. Instead, any data collected will be used to inform local educators, parents, and the public and align resources to student supports.

Waives federal penalties for student testing participation rates of less than 95 percent on the state's Smarter Balanced English language arts and math. Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, all states that receive federal funds for low-income students and English learners must assess annual learning progress in math, language arts, science, and English learner language proficiency, as applicable.

At its November meeting, the State Board voted to approve shortened blueprints of the Smarter Balanced assessments in English language arts and math in order to administer shorter tests in these subjects during the 2020–21 school year.

The Board also extended the window by which schools must complete test administration to July 30 for the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), the English Language Assessments for California (ELPAC), which measures English learners' progress toward language proficiency, and the California Science Test (CAST).

In a separate letter received this week, Rosenblum said California need not apply for another waiver, which the Board contemplated, because California is administering all of its required assessments and expecting they will be used except in cases where local conditions make the administration of the tests not viable.



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With many of the state’s students still engaged in distance learning, both CDE and State Board staff have advised districts—as the federal guidance states—that students should not be brought back to in-person instruction solely for the purpose of standardized testing.

And in some cases, students still in remote learning may not be able to access the state’s summative tests because they lack secure browsers on their computers or sufficient bandwidth to meet the demands of the tests. In such a case, student assessment data could be provided through a high-quality interim or diagnostic test that meets Board-approved criteria.

“We remain committed to supporting all States in assessing the learning of all students,” Rosenblum wrote. “Obtaining data on student learning includes high-quality statewide assessments, which can help identify where opportunity gaps are persistent and have been exacerbated—particularly during the pandemic—and, along with other data, can help States direct resources and support to close those gaps.

“At the same time,” he continued, “we must also recognize that we are in the midst of a pandemic that requires real flexibility...In cases where students are unable to take the statewide summative assessment, we hope that States and districts use other assessments to measure student learning and progress and to provide information to parents and educators. These interim, diagnostic, or formative assessments do not replace statewide summative assessments, but they can serve to provide valuable information to meet our goal of maximizing the number of students for whom we have quality data this year.”