

## Purpose of Document

This document is intended to assist families of students with disabilities in understanding how special education instruction and related services may be delivered within the context of the three learning models in which students may be participating during the 2020-21 school year:

1. **Full In-School:** in-person/in-school instruction.
2. **“Hybrid”:** a combination of in-person/in school instruction and remote instruction.
3. **Full Remote Learning:** instruction is delivered remotely.

Parents also have the temporary choice to voluntarily **Opt-Into Remote Learning**. This is not the same as homebound or hospitalized services, or homeschooling. Additional information is provided in Addendums 1 and 6 in the *Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut’s Plan to Learn and Grow* document.

Parents and families should read this document in conjunction with the following guidance documents regarding school reopening in Connecticut:

- [Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut’s Plan to Learn and Grow](#) (August 3, 2020)
- [Addendum 1. Temporarily Opting Into Voluntary Remote Due to COVID-19](#) (July 27, 2020)
- [Addendum 3. Fall Reopening Resource Document for Students with High Needs](#) (July 28, 2020)
- [Addendum 6. Reopen Guidance for Educating Students with Disabilities](#) (August 12, 2020)

The Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC) will provide training for parents and families of students with disabilities to support their understanding of the CSDE’s guidance related to instructional and service delivery models for school reopening.

## School District and Family Communication

As Connecticut schools plan to reopen, it is important that parents and educators maintain positive and productive relationships, communicate regularly, and work collaboratively to ensure a successful start to the school year.

Two-way communication between families and the school district is critical to:

- Provide input on and understand how the school or district plans to deliver special education and related services.
- Ensure that parents understand how students’ individualized education program (IEP) services are being provided within the context of current health and safety requirements.
- Provide feedback to the administrators and teachers as to the student’s experience, progress, growth and challenges.
- Receive explanations of how decisions will be made relative to health and safety issues as they arise during the 2020-21 school year and how special education and related services will be provided differently as a result of changes in the overall learning environment associated with any of the three models described.

## Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan Form

Student IEPs will be implemented whether the school opens under a Full In-school, Hybrid, or Full Remote Model. The delivery of services, however, may be different in each model. If services are different than the IEP indicates, it will be documented on the [Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan form](#), which includes the following information:

- Specialized Instruction or Related Service Area.
- IEP Goal(s) addressed.
- Description of the Model, Mode, and Manner of specially designed instruction and related services.
- Frequency/duration of the services and implementer of the services.

It is permissible but not required to discuss The Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan during a planning and placement team (PPT) meeting.

**Planning and Placement Team Meetings**

PPTs will be convened regardless of the learning model that the school is operating under. PPT meetings can be held in-person or remotely.

Parents are encouraged to work with the school district to resolve disputes. Additionally, parents can contact CPAC or the Bureau of Special Education for assistance with understanding their conflict resolution options. Parents retain their right to access the dispute resolutions options available pursuant to the IDEA if they believe a free appropriate public education (FAPE) is not being provided to their child under any of the instructional delivery models.

**Considerations for Families of Students with Disabilities based on School Reopen Model**

<p><b>Full In-School (in-school instruction)</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication should occur between district staff and families to assist students with disabilities in transitioning back to the school building.</li> <li>• Special education and related services will be delivered as designed within the IEP for most students. However, if adjustments are needed, they would be documented in the <a href="#">Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan Form</a> (e.g., providing services remotely within the school building).</li> <li>• Least restrictive environment (LRE) will be considered within the context of public health requirements.</li> <li>• Classroom assignments and service delivery schedules should be carefully developed for students with disabilities so that they receive services consistent with their IEPs in the LRE.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hybrid Model (combination of in-person and remote learning)</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication should occur between district staff and families to assist students with disabilities in transitioning back to the school building.</li> <li>• Students with high needs should be prioritized for in-person instruction in school under this model.</li> <li>• Special education and related services will be delivered as designed within the IEP for some students. However, many students will need adjustments to the service delivery, which will be documented in the <a href="#">Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan Form</a>.</li> <li>• Any differences in LRE should be justified on the <a href="#">Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan Form</a>.</li> <li>• Remote instruction or services may be provided in a variety of formats including but not limited to telephone, video conferencing, and pre-recorded lessons, which may require adult/parent support based on student need.</li> </ul>

### Full Remote Learning During School Closures

- Communication should be provided to families to develop plans to assist with transitioning IEP instruction and services to full remote learning and, when applicable, back to the school building.
- Special Education and related services will be delivered differently for most students and adjustments will be documented in the [Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan Form](#).
- Remote instruction or services may be provided in a variety of formats including but not limited to telephone, video conferencing, and pre-recorded lessons, which may require adult/parent support based on student needs.

### Temporary Voluntary Parent Opt into Remote Learning (During full-school reopen or Hybrid)

- In collaboration with the school district, parents who decide to opt into temporary voluntary remote learning will also be expected to supervise and engage their children to fully and effectively access the remote learning programming that is offered through the public school district.
- School districts should make every effort to provide a comprehensive remote learning experience, while also making sure parents are aware of any limitations that apply.
- All school districts will be expected to track attendance on a daily basis for students who opt-into remote learning.
- The IEP is developed as if the student is attending school full time on-site.
- School districts must continue to provide all IEP services remotely to the greatest extent feasible.
- The school district will present the special education and related services it is prepared to deliver within the school's current learning model and will develop a [Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan Form](#), which will also include information on any limitations to receiving special education and related services remotely as a result of this voluntary choice by the parent to opt-into remote learning.
- Voluntary remote learning programming may not result in matching instructional hours 1:1 with an in-person learning model.
- Since this is a voluntary, unilateral choice made by the family, school districts are not required to, but not precluded from, providing in-person special education and related services in the school or in the home.
- Parents will be expected to make students available for in-person assessments in school as part of a special education evaluation, unless the assessment can be administered remotely or the student is unable to participate in person due to health reasons.
- Students participating in remote learning programming will be expected to access statewide assessments in-person, unless the assessments are available remotely or the student is unable to participate in person due to health reasons.
- Parents can change their mind and may choose to send their student back to the Hybrid or Full In-School Model by contacting the school district. Please understand that due to health and safety protocols and necessary arrangements, the school district will need a reasonable amount of time to prepare prior to the student returning to school.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

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All of CPAC's Services are **FREE** for Families