

Questions and Answers at the End of the Webinar

1. Carole – when you were covering children with a developmental delay transitioning from Preschool to First Grade, you mentioned that supports could be provided via “MTSS” until an evaluation can be completed. Can you explain what MTSS is?

MTSS stands for Multi-tiered Systems of Support. It is a framework for schools to adjust their supports based on student needs beginning with standards aligned instruction. There are tiered supports for students with academic, behavioral, and social/emotional needs that begin in the general education classes that become increasingly more targeted as student needs become greater. This may be an option for the EI transition as well as any student that may be in the evaluation process that was delayed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic until they are able to complete the in person assessments to determine eligibility .

2. You also mentioned that if IEPs need to be adjusted due to various models of instruction, IEP teams should follow “local policies for amending and changing an IEP” – can you elaborate about that?

IDEA contains provisions relating to review and revisions to IEPs. for example the regulations indicate that reviews must be made periodically, but not less than annually and revisions must be made as appropriate. However, there are certain local processes, in addition to the provisions set forth in IDEA, that directors might put into place, for example: how the attempts for meetings are documented, if a meeting invitation needs to be mailed or sent via email, or local if there is protocol for locating an interpreter or translator.

3. We have been getting questions from families about students with IEPs who turned 21 and missed the last 3 months of their education. Are there ways that schools can address the potential needs of these students?

USDE has provided: “where, due to the global pandemic and resulting closure of schools, there has been an inevitable delay in providing services – or even making decisions about how to provide services – IEP teams must make an individualized determination whether and to what extent compensatory services may be needed when school resume normal operations.” Because students that aged out were entitled to FAPE during the period of school closure, LEAs must make an individualized determination re compensatory services consistent with USDE’s guidance.

PDE Guidance: For a student who has aged out during the 2019-20 school year, the IEP team should meet within a reasonable time period to determine whether and to what extent the student needs CCS and how those services should be delivered. The IEP team is not prevented from meeting to discuss CCS after a student receives a regular high school diploma.

4. We know that each IEP team makes a decision about how much time a student with a disability spends in general education with typical peers. Clearly, the shift to virtual instruction and the various models of education that are being considered can impact the Least Restrictive Environment conversation. Can you talk a little more about Least Restrictive Environment?

LRE refers to educating students with disabilities together with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate. The least restrictive environment must be appropriate and based on each student's needs. To what extent a student with disabilities should be educated with his or her non-disabled peers is for an IEP team to decide. Any decision involving a change in LRE must be made by the IEP team. During the presentation I had mentioned that attending general education classes virtually is the same LRE as attending general education classes in school buildings. If schools are adjusting classroom structures based on social distancing requirements, schools need to be mindful of the LRE of all students and if there is a need of a student to adjust the LRE, it should be made through the IEP process based on student need.

5. Finally – In reviewing the questions and concerns of families, there continues to be a need for training for families – for using virtual platforms and devices, in effective strategies to support their child's learning and behavior, and other areas. The PEAL Center and many of our co-sponsors provide training for families but can you share information about other options?

PaTTAN Website for parent resources, Together@Home: Back2School Conference, August 19, 2020 5:30-8:00; PBS, and PEAL, HUNE, Arc, and many other websites or locations have supports for parents.....having said that Parent training is a type of related service. Therefore, an IEP team may decide to include parent training as a related service in a child's IEP as part of the child's provision of FAPE. Training could be about understanding the special education needs of their child or child's development, and probably the most relevant in the current environment, is helping parents to acquire skills to support their ability to support the implement their child's individualized education plan.