COVID-19 Guidance for Parents/Guardians of Students with IEPs – FAQs

UPDATE: Monday April 6, 2020

Question: How will TUSD special education services be provided during the school closure?

Answer: During the school closure that has resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic, Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) teachers and staff have been working to identify ways to provide special education services for our students. Due to social distancing requirements, services for academic instruction and related services, including speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and counseling, are currently being provided through the Zoom application, over the phone, or by individualized work provided to the family by the students’ service providers. Services being offered through Zoom, and any other online format, will be provided to students in small groups. If you have questions about the methodology of service delivery for your child during the school closure, please contact your child’s case carrier or related service provider.

UPDATE: Monday March 30, 2020

Question: What if my child has speech, occupational/physical therapy, or school based counseling services on their IEP? How will these be provided during the school closure?

Answer: We are working with companies who provide remote access through online platforms so that your child’s regular TUSD provider can coordinate the related service(s) stipulated on your child’s IEP. You should be contacted by these providers by April 3, 2020.

Question: What work will my child be provided if they are in a self-contained special education classroom or require significantly modified work? Will I have contact with my child’s teacher?

Answer: You will be contacted by your child’s special education teacher to determine what remote access you have at home, e.g. computer/tablet and wifi. If you don’t have either of these capabilities at home, then your teacher will work with you to suggest other resources that can be used and/or provide some of those materials for you to pick up from your child’s school. Your child’s teacher will be making contact with you via telephone or email (if no other contact methods are available) regularly throughout the duration of the school closure.

Question: What if my child is below grade level? Can I pick up a workbook for a different grade than what they are enrolled in?

Answer: Please work with your child’s special education teacher to determine what materials they will be providing aligned with your child’s IEP. All students are to access the general education curriculum with accommodations and/or modifications provided by the special education teacher as identified in the IEP.

The special education teacher will contact you shortly after classes resume at school sites to discuss the individual needs of your child and the IEP team may convene to determine any needed changes in programming.
**Question:** Who do I contact if I have more questions?

**Answer:** Please contact your child’s special education teacher. If you need further assistance, you can reach out to the Exceptional Education Department at 225-6610. Please leave a message with your child’s name and the school they attend. You will get a phone call from the Assistant Director assigned to your child’s school.

You can also view all parent updates (for parents/guardians of students with IEPs) throughout the school closure on the TUSD COVID-19 web page at http://www.tusd1.org/COVID-19 (on the left side of the page under “COVID-19 FAQs”-“FAQs for Families” and on the Exceptional Education Department’s webpage at http://www.tusd1.org/Departments/Exceptional-Education under “COVID-19 Updates for Parents/Guardians.”

**Friday March 20, 2020**

**Question:** Will my child continue to receive IEP services during the school closure?

**Answer:** TUSD is currently developing a plan for continued instruction for all students during the school closure. If/when students begin online instruction, or if work is sent home for students, every effort will be made to provide appropriate instructional programming for students with IEPs.

**Question:** What if we had an IEP meeting scheduled during the fourth quarter?

**Answer:** If an IEP meeting is currently scheduled, the meeting could be held through a conference call through a landline, cell phone, or computer. You should be hearing from your student’s case carrier/special education teacher about scheduling a meeting remotely. Currently, meetings will not be held in person per guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) on the importance of social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the parent/guardian of a student with an IEP, you have the right to request that the IEP meeting be postponed until after students return to school. Please contact your child’s case carrier/special education teacher through email (available through ParentVue) if this is your request. The current IEP will be implemented upon the student’s return to school and until the IEP team convenes.

**Question:** Does the IEP need to be changed due to the school closure?

**Answer:** Per the Office of Special Education Programs, the federal organization that oversees special education services, the provision of an alternate mode of instructional delivery, such as online learning, during a school closure does not require an IEP amendment.

If your child receives special education services, the IEP case carrier/special education teacher, will contact you shortly after classes resume at school sites, to discuss the individual needs of your child.

**Question:** What if my child was being evaluated by the school psychologist or speech language pathologist?

**Answer:** If the assessments have been completed, then the school psychologist or speech language pathologist will be reaching out to schedule a meeting remotely through a phone or video conference. Currently, meetings will not be held in person. The psychologist may request a 30-day extension due to the school closure.

If the assessments have not been completed, the school psychologist will be reaching out to request a 30-day extension. Every effort will be made to complete the evaluation in a timely manner given COVID-19 social distancing guidance.