

Remote School Based IEP Team Functions

On this page...

1. [Open Cases](#)
2. [Assessment Planning](#)
3. [Referrals and Consent](#)
4. [IEP Meetings](#)
5. [The IEP Process](#)
6. [Prior Written Notice Guidance can be found here.](#)
7. [Placement or Initial Provision of Services](#)

Clinicians should refer to the SOPM as needed for further detail throughout the evaluation and IEP process. This guidance supplements the SOPM during the COVID-19 pandemic, and will be updated as needed.

Open Cases

For all open cases (including IESPs), eligibility determinations should not be based on any single method or measure. IEP teams should review historical trends of performance, current measures of academic skills, previous curriculum-based and norm-referenced measures, as well as understand cognitive processes, social emotional functioning and oral language, as applicable. Indirect sources of data, such as parent reports and teacher progress reports, are essential components of the evaluation process.

For initial evaluations and reevaluations, the student's teachers must provide the case manager and parent with relevant, up-to-date information regarding the student's functioning, performance, and behavior prior to the IEP meeting. [See SOPM page 45 and 53.] This information must include (but is not limited to) data and comprehensive information regarding literacy skills.

If the student has been served by a literacy coach, IEP teacher, or speech literacy teacher, among others, those teachers should make available information concerning the student's literacy skills. Others who deliver additional supplemental instruction (e.g., AIS and RTI providers), and/or student support services (e.g., guidance, counseling, attendance and study skills), should also make relevant information available prior to the IEP meeting, regarding the student's functioning, performance, and behavior.

- For reevaluations, the teachers should provide the most recent progress reports, if any exist from the last 6 months. They should also report updated information regarding the student's functioning, performance, and behavior during this period of school closure.

For initial evaluations and reevaluations for which there are no recent progress reports, each of the student's teachers should compile relevant information regarding the student's functioning, performance, and behavior, including up-to-date information regarding the student's functioning during the period of school closure in addition to using the [elementary](#)(Open external link) and [middle/high school teacher report form](#).(Open external link)

The case manager must notify the teacher(s) at least 15 days in advance of the IEP meeting that this written information or progress report is required. The teacher(s) should complete the written information or progress report and provide the report to the case manager with enough time that the report can be provided to the parent at least 7 days before the IEP meeting.

- As part of the assessment process, school teams should conduct social history interviews, gather teacher progress reports, and assess students as needed using remote web-based assessment scales and observations of live remote learning sessions to make informed decisions in IEP meetings, in

addition to any other assessments that can be conducted remotely as agreed upon by the DOE and UFT.

- The school psychologist must submit a comprehensive report, integrating information gathered through assessments and data collection that describe the student's developmental, learning, behavioral and other personality characteristics. This report should be uploaded to SESIS using the psychoeducational assessment template.

If additional assessments are needed and they cannot be completed remotely, the team should inform the family that an IEP meeting will be held to consider the currently available evaluative information.

If, at the IEP meeting, there is not sufficient evaluative information to make a program or services recommendation in a traditional, comprehensive manner, the IEP team should determine the student's eligibility and recommend any programs and/or services that can be appropriately recommended based upon the evaluative information available.

Clinicians should consider appropriate classifications based on the evaluative information available. As additional testing becomes available, the team should revisit cases and determine whether the student meets the criteria for a classification that was considered, as well as the modification of services, but for which sufficient data was not available.

The set of assessment procedures being used to determine eligibility, make service recommendations, or develop instructional/behavior plans, should be described in a comprehensive written report by the school psychologist. It is best practice to use the psychoeducational template in SESIS.

The IEP team should also:

- Inform all team members (including the parent) that, while recommendations can always be revisited, failing to make recommendations now will delay provision of appropriate programs and services;
- Provide the school with intervention options and strategies that will address the student's learning, behavioral, physical and/or management needs pending completion of the evaluation; and
- Note in the Present Levels of Performance section that additional testing will be completed once in-person assessments can continue.

The remaining assessments required as a part of the evaluation must be conducted once in-person assessments resume.

There may be times that at the IEP meeting the IEP team will determine that no appropriate programs or services can be recommended based on the evaluative information available. In those rare cases, the IEP team should not finalize a determination that the student is ineligible. The IEP team must record an event in the SESIS Events Log specifying that there is insufficient evaluative information to make an eligibility determination. The team should provide the school with the intervention options and strategies that will address the student's learning, behavioral, physical and/or management needs pending completion of the evaluation process. The case should not be closed. In no case may any DOE staff request or advise that a parent withdraw a referral or consent. Consult with your supervisor if you think it is necessary to take this action.

Assessment Planning

To the greatest extent possible, school psychologists should use remote web-based assessment scales to support the assessment process of all open cases, in addition to any other assessment tools that may be used remotely (as agreed upon by the UFT and DOE). If a special education evaluation requires a face-to-face assessment or face-to-face observation, that assessment or observation should be

delayed until school reopens. The Supervisor of Psychologists may assist in making these determinations through individual case consultation and will consider whether remote assessments can be completed through a contract agency or assessment authorization. In making such determinations, the school psychologist and Supervisors of School Psychologists will give due consideration to all relevant factors such as but not limited to: the reason for referral, the complexity of the student's condition, the student's level of comfort with the use of technology, and the nature and complexity of the assessment required. Upon request by their supervisor during individual case consultation, the school psychologist will be prepared to explain the basis for their assessment planning recommendation. Final determination of whether a psychoeducational assessment, as defined below, can be completed by a DOE school psychologist without remote or face-to-face testing (when available) will be the sole discretion of the school psychologist.

Definition of psychoeducational assessment

A process by which a New York State-certified school psychologist or licensed psychologist uses, to the extent deemed necessary for purposes of educational planning, a variety of psychological and educational techniques and examinations in the student's native language, to study and describe a student's developmental, learning, behavioral and other personality characteristics.

Learning environment observation

As part of an initial evaluation, an observation of the student in the student's learning environment is required and must be conducted during this period of remote learning.

Observations of live (synchronous) remote learning sessions can be conducted through the remote learning platform in use by the school. To arrange the remote observation, take the following steps:

- Contact the student’s school or agency to determine if live instruction is being provided and to make logistical arrangements.
 - For K-12 students attending DOE schools, reach out to the student’s classroom teacher via email to schedule a lesson to observe. You may alternately reach out to the special education liaison or school administrator to schedule the observation.
 - For K-12 students attending NPS or charter schools, reach out to the school’s special education liaison or administrator to schedule the observation.
 - For T5 students who are engaged in remote learning, contact the agency or school providing these services to schedule the observation.
- Note that for observations of students attending bilingual classes, the observation should be conducted by an observer who understands the language of instruction. If that is not possible, contact your supervisor.
- Ensure that the parent’s consent for a remotely conducted evaluation (in addition to the consent for the initial evaluation or consent for assessments) has been sought and obtained and that the remote assessment process (including a description of the remote observation process) has been explained to the parent.
- Note that for observations of students attending bilingual classes, the observation should be conducted by an observer who understands the language of instruction. If that is not possible, contact your supervisor.

Conduct the remote observation on the remote learning platform in use by the school. The staff member should log into the live instruction classroom. They should mute their audio and turn off their video to ensure there is no disruption to the learning environment. Depending on the live remote learning platform in use, the observer should “pin” the student in the platform to ensure they can continue to observe the student for the duration of the class. If possible, the teacher should ensure in advance that the student’s audio and video will be turned on for all or part of the lesson and the teacher can organize the lesson to

facilitate select interaction to take place involving the student. The goal would be to permit the observer to see student to teacher participation or student to student participation. If instruction sessions are short (e.g., under 30 minutes), a second observation may be scheduled to ensure sufficient opportunity to gain a meaningful understanding of the student's functioning in the live remote classroom.

To complete your observation report, in the Classroom Observation in SESIS, state the following in the "Findings" section:

- The following observation has been conducted during remote instruction. Information gathered from this observation should be interpreted with caution, as this is a novel learning environment for the student and teacher and there may be multiple variables (e.g., COVID-19, home environment, alternative learning format) that impact this observation. This observation should be used in conjunction with other evaluations, school-based assessments, teacher input, and most importantly, student performance prior to school building closures.

Referrals and Consent

Guidance on the remote process of referrals can be found [here](#)(Open external link).

Please note that the parent may consent to the initial evaluation or additional assessments by stating in an email that they consent to have their child evaluated. If a parent does not have access to their own email account:

- Consent can be received from the student's email account, as long as the email states that consent is being given by the parent; or
- Consent can be received by text message from the parent from a phone number associated with the parent. If consent is received by text, a screenshot of the text received should be forwarded to the DOE staff's email address and then uploaded to SESIS.

If the parent is unable to provide consent through the student's email account or by text message, contact your supervisor for support in identifying another available method. When contacting the parent to discuss the referral and consent, if the parent's preferred language is other than English, ensure that interpretation is provided.

When assessments can appropriately be conducted remotely, the DOE members of the IEP team will seek parental consent specifically for a remotely conducted evaluation (in addition to the consent for the initial evaluation or consent for assessments). The IEP team will go over the remote assessment process with the parent and address any questions or concerns. This consent will be requested in an email that explains the process and limitations to the parent. Consent for remote assessments can be received by email, or, if the parent does not have access to email, through the same alternatives specified above.

IEP Meetings

IEP teams should meet remotely while schools are closed. See SOPM. When conducting IEP meetings using an online platform, teams should use Microsoft Teams, Google Meet or Zoom to conduct IEP meetings. These platforms are compliant with FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act).

Microsoft Teams

Clinicians will be able to schedule meetings using their Outlook calendar from Office 365. They will use the Teams meeting toggle to set their location to conduct meetings using the Microsoft Teams Video conferencing. In addition to allowing for video conferencing, Microsoft Teams allows for telephone participation by any IEP team member by also providing a dial-in phone number and PIN for each meeting.

Google Meet

Clinicians will be able to schedule meetings using their DOE Outlook account. They will be able to have video conferences and audio conference when selecting the “Meet” application. They will find the “Meet” application in the Google waffle grid. Once they select “Meet”, they will be prompted to join or start a meeting. To start the meeting, enter a nickname (name) for the meeting. Then select Continue and Join. The clinicians will have the option to join using a phone for audio. IEP teams will send meeting invites to participants by email once they have been added to the meeting. Google Hangouts Meet creates a dial-in phone number and PIN for each meeting allowing each participant to communicate via phone conference. For security purposes all video and audio streams in Meet are encrypted.

Zoom

Clinicians will be able to schedule meetings using central account access to Zoom. When using Zoom, all staff and students must use the new DOE central account to access Zoom. All NYCDOE Zoom users will sign onto nycdoe.com.us (Open external link) with their DOE user credentials to be able to use the full complement of Zoom features.

Please visit the [Zoom for Remote Learning](#) page to learn more about accessing Zoom, including:

- How to access DOE Zoom
- How to schedule or join a meeting
- Participate in live or prerecorded training
- New security settings and instructions for use
- Contacts for technical support
- The summary of the new agreement between the NYCDOE and Zoom
- Details of the original concerns with the Zoom platform
- The official NYCDOE press release

The IEP Process

Prior to IEP Meeting

1. To the greatest extent possible, ensure and maintain the privacy and confidentiality of information, files, and communications. Conduct telephone calls and meetings in a place where confidential information will not be overheard or viewed by individuals who are not involved in the meeting. Use Microsoft Office 365 online tools and approved platforms, which provide appropriate safeguards for maintaining the confidentiality and security of DOE information and records.
2. Contact parents and schedule meetings at a mutually agreed upon time. If parents require an interpreter, arrange for an interpreter to be present for the meeting, and follow the SOPM with respect to arranging for translation of documents upon request.
3. Inform all participants that they should be present for the entire duration of the meeting and that they will be actively participating throughout the meeting.
4. Contact school principals and administrators if contact information is needed for required participants. Meetings must not be held without the participation of mandated IEP members. All outreach efforts must be documented in the SESIS event Log. Document School/Non-Public School/Private School requests to reschedule meetings due to COVID-19 related unavailability by creating an event in SESIS. These meetings will be rescheduled.
5. Clinicians with clerical support will oversee that at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, families are contacted to confirm attendance and to ensure that parents have and can utilize the dial-in phone number and PIN for the meetings. For video conferencing, confirm that parents have access to a smartphone/tablet/laptop/desktop computer with webcam and speakers, and that parents have video and audio components for the entire duration of the meeting.
6. Discuss video conferencing and audio conferencing with parents and select the method of conference with proper consideration given to the parent's comfort with and access to the necessary technology. Supervisors are currently setting up trainings for clinicians on how to effectively hold meetings on Microsoft Teams.

7. Be prepared for IEP meetings. Review all pertinent documentation, evaluations and reports that will be considered during the meetings and ensure that all participants have all pertinent information/ documentation to make appropriate IEP recommendations prior to the IEP meeting.
8. Ensure that parents and DOE IEP meeting participants have access to the content of the meeting. Send evaluations and reports that will be considered during the meeting to parents electronically at least 7 days prior to the IEP meeting and inform DOE participants that all pertinent documentation and records are available in SESIS or electronically prior to the IEP meeting. If the parent does not have an email address, ask the parent if they consent to the material sent to them via the student's email address. If they decline to receive the materials by email, contact your school leadership for assistance in mailing materials to the parent.

Sending special education records to families via email

The parent may elect for special education records to be sent to them by email. During the school closure, you may accept a parent's email requesting materials by email as their consent.

To send a document stored in SESIS to a parent, the user should follow these steps:

- Print or save the document as a PDF on the DOE network**
- Attach the saved PDF to an email to the parent using Outlook in Office 365
- Select "Encrypt"
- Send to the parent's email address

Special education records include any meeting notices, prior written notices, IEPs, assessments, progress reports, or other material requested by the parent.

**If the user does not have access to the DOE network, the user should save to an encrypted flash drive. If the user does not have an encrypted flash drive, the user may save on their

- local drive into a private folder. All contents of that private folder should be deleted as soon as the school closures end.
9. To the greatest extent possible control background noise before starting the meeting. Find a quiet location, minimizing external noise, and dedicate uninterrupted time for the duration of the meetings. The space should be quiet and free from distractions (e.g., noises, other conversations, other persons in the space).
 10. Ensure that the background of the location is appropriate and professional for all video conferences.
 11. Present in the same professional manner as if it were a meeting face-to-face meeting.
 12. Establish the online video conferencing connection several minutes before the meeting start time and test the dial-in phone number and PIN for the meeting before the conference call (15 minutes are recommended).

Holding IEP Meetings

The DOE members of the IEP team must arrange for families, teachers and/or services providers to participate in the IEP meeting via Microsoft Teams, Google Classrooms or Zoom. All IEP attendees will be notified 7 days prior to the date of the meeting. SESIS contact information will be used to identify the families preferred method of remote communication and preferred language. The invitation should include the date, time, phone number and access code for each meeting. If the parent's preferred language is other than English, ensure interpretation services are arranged for the IEP meeting.

School staff should share and update Outlook calendars daily to determine availability to facilitate the planning and organization of IEP meetings.

1. Ensure that all participants can see and hear all other participants. Ask participants to indicate if they are having any difficulties with their video and audio at the start of the meeting.

2. Start the meeting by allowing all IEP meeting participants to take turns introducing themselves by name and title.
3. Ask participants to mute their microphones if their location has background noise and when not speaking. Microsoft Teams and Google Meet support the use of computer audio. If joining a virtual meeting using a cellular phone or landline use *3 to mute phone and for desk phones use *6.
4. Start the meetings by presenting an overview of topics to be covered and planned outcomes. Confirm that all DOE participants and parents have received and have access to the content of the meeting and will share any pertinent documentation that will be considered during the meeting with any DOE participants or parents as needed.
5. Engage and encourage parent participation and contribution to the discussion, and check for understanding and alignment during the meeting.
6. Listen closely and monitor participant's turn-taking during the meeting to ensure engagement and contribution of all IEP participants.
7. Indicate IEP meeting participation of participants by phone in the SESIS attendance page. For further guidance see: [Guidance for School Building Closure for School Staff](#)(Open external link)
8. For guidance regarding attendance sheets and Initial Placement/provision of services see [here](#)(Open external link):

Interpretation and Translation

The DOE members of the IEP team will arrange for interpretation services at the IEP meetings and translation of special education documents, as necessary. Schools' language access coordinators can assist in arranging interpretation services during an IEP meeting. For more information about the DOE's Language Access Plan, including information about interpretation and translation please visit the [Translation and Interpretation InfoHub Page](#).

Service Recommendation and Implementation

During this period of time, the IEP team should make the same recommendation of special education programs, services, and placement as they would make if school were in session. If the IEP team believes that different programs/services are needed remotely as a result of the IEP meeting, the school should follow the [Special Education Remote Learning Plan Guidance](#) to develop or revise the RLP.

Comparable Service Plan (CSP)

If a student is admitted or readmitted to the NYCDOE and has an IEP from a prior school district, the IEP team may need to create a Comparable Service Plan (CSP). The IEP team should follow the SOPM with respect to the creation of the CSP and opening of the case. The CSP should be provided to the parent via email, with the parent's agreement. Placement or Initial provision of services will be as per guidance below.

If the parent is unable to provide all the necessary documentation electronically, the team should document all the relevant information provided to them via telephone in SESIS events. The team should also reach out to the previous school/school district to receive the appropriate documentation electronically, and to also secure verbal confirmation. If the IEP team is unable to secure sufficient confirmation of previous special education placement/services after contacting the prior school/school district, the parent should be provided with contact information to the Family Welcome Center for General Education admission.

Contacts for the Family Welcome Centers are below:

- Bronx: bronxfwc@schools.nyc.gov(Open external link)
- Brooklyn: brooklynfwc@schools.nyc.gov(Open external link)
- Manhattan: manhattanfwc@schools.nyc.gov(Open external link)
- Queens: queensfwc@schools.nyc.gov(Open external link)

- Staten Island: statenilandfwc@schools.nyc.gov(Open external link)

At the Conclusion of the Meeting

Prior to the conclusion of the IEP meeting, ensure that families provide IEP teams with a valid email address and agree that special education records, including the IEP, should be sent via email. Teams should make every effort to obtain Consent for Use of Electronic Mail from families during this time, but in the event that the consent cannot be obtained, teams should move forward with the process. At the conclusion of the IEP meeting, if the IEP cannot be immediately finalized and sent to the parent, the DOE members of the IEP team are to provide the parent with a copy of the Recommended Special Education Programs and Services page of the draft IEP from SESIS. This should be emailed to the parent if they have the parent's agreement to do so. The IEP must be finalized in SESIS and sent, along with the Prior Written Notice, to the parent via email no later than 10 business days after the meeting was held. All efforts must be made to ensure that IEPs are completed within the compliance date.

If the parent does not have an email address, ask the parent if they would consent to have the material sent to them via the student's email address. If the parent declines, contact your school leadership for assistance in mailing materials to the parent.

For issues related to SESIS documentation please see the guidance for School Building Closure for School Staff

Prior Written Notice

Guidance can be found [here](#)(Open external link).

Placement or Initial Provision of Services

Guidance can be found [here](#)(Open external link).

Please note that the parent may consent to special education services by stating in an email that they consent to their child receiving special

education services. If a parent does not have access to their own email account, see above for alternatives.