

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Recommendations for Ensuring Continuity of Special Education/ENL Service Coverage

The DOE recognizes that the recent increase in COVID-19 infections in New York City has resulted in short-term staffing shortages. Note that principals have discretion to assign teachers to emergency coverage assignments in accordance with relevant contractual agreements. To ensure that students with individualized education programs (IEPs) and multilingual learners/English language learners (MLs/ELLs) continue to receive their mandated programs and services to the extent possible, principals are encouraged to exhaust other options, as described below and to the extent possible, to resolve day-to-day staffing gaps caused by COVID-19 related staff absences, before temporarily reassigning certified special education, English as a new language (ENL), or bilingual education teachers. In addition, please review the following:

- Prior to temporarily reassigning certified special education, ENL, or bilingual education teachers, principals may consider assigning a substitute teacher, certified special education or ENL teachers with room in their schedule or working in out-of-classroom positions (including the Centrally-funded IEP/Intervention Teacher), paraprofessional classroom managers, lead teacher assistants, or speech teachers, collapsing and combining similar classes and/or course sections, or by utilizing 6th period coverage. Please note that if Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) or special classes are collapsed, they should not exceed maximum class sizes, the 60/40 ICT ratio, IEP mandated special class ratio, or result in more than a 36-month age range. ENL and bilingual education classes may not exceed two grade levels.
- Principals may consider other viable options for class coverage before temporarily separating ICT or Integrated ENL pairs, to the extent possible.
 - If a school's short-term staffing shortage persists, principals may consider reassigning teachers on a rotational basis and avoid

splitting a particular ICT or Integrated ENL pair for an extended period.

- In order to staff any special education teacher vacancies, principals can review suggestions and step-by-step best practices through [H.I.R.E. Connections](#). Principals can also request a PDF version of the Guidance on How to Fill a Special Education Vacancy through the [Contact Us](#) form on H.I.R.E.
- In the rare and unlikely circumstance that an ICT pair must be separated for an extended period, students with ICT recommendations will be entitled to the interim measures, described on pages 96 and 97 of the [Special Education Standard Operating Procedures Manual \(SOPM\)](#), until their regularly assigned special education teacher returns.

In cases where speech teachers and SETSS providers must be reassigned to cover classes, speech make-up services should be provided, as teacher/provider schedules allow. Make-up sessions are to be delivered in a manner that is instructionally appropriate for the individual student, and is in accordance with student IEP recommendations.

For additional guidance, review [Hiring for the Provision of Special Education Program Services](#). For additional questions about external teacher hiring, contact the [Office of Teacher Recruitment and Quality](#).

For questions about special education services, contact your BCO [director of special education](#). For questions about ENL or bilingual education, reach out to your BCO [director of MLs/ELLs](#).
