

COVID 19 Pandemic

SCHOOL UPDATES

The PREP Group



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COVID 19 PANDEMIC

The current COVID 19 pandemic has impacted our businesses, schools and families in so many ways. While we see more families outside spending quality time together, we can't help but think of the challenges that our students with disabilities are facing. All students need structure and predictability and students with special needs are no exception. While we search to find our new normal for the time being, The PREP Group is here to help provide guidance where we can.

INFORMATION ON COVID 19 AND SCHOOL CLOSURES

What we know:

- At this time, the federal government has not waived the federal requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Guidance explaining how these obligations operate in the context of school closures in response to COVID-19 can be found at: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/qa-covid-19-03-12-2020.pdf>.
- While distance learning can provide educational benefit to many students with disabilities, it is important to consider the unique learning needs, accommodations and supports noted in each student's IEP.
- Continued funding is being provided to school districts under Executive Order N-26-20 to offer educational opportunities to all students during school closures.
- The services outlined in an IEP are not only required by IDEA but also necessary for our students continued success.
- Individuals served by NPS/NPAs are some of our most vulnerable students. They rely on the services that are outlined in their Individual Education Plans and Behavior Intervention Plans. Without such services and supports, students are at risk of regression, increased injury, and loss of skills.



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So much has changed in such a short period of time. Thank you for leaning into all of it and taking such an impactful role.

- Silvana Gallo Karim

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What our school districts can do to ensure student success at this time:

- School districts that physically close schools should focus their planning efforts on how to continue serving their students through tailored distance learning platforms that provide SAI and all related services in an effort to provide continued educational benefits to students with disabilities.
- School districts should continually assess the extent to which its students with disabilities are able to attain educational benefit under virtual learning options and tailor learning platforms accordingly.
- To the greatest extent possible, school districts should continue providing related services consistent with the student's IEP. This may necessitate service delivery through virtual platforms and increased parent/guardian involvement to assist their student in accessing their services via the web based format.

The role of the NPS and NPA during closures:

- NPS/A's provide critical programs and related services to students with disabilities.
- The CDE has released guidance encouraging continued payment to NPS/A's during school closures but variability among school districts still exists. Continued guidance from the CDE for consistency across California school districts is needed.
- School districts should work with NPS/A's to take advantage of services that can be offered by NPS/A's that elect to continue to provide services during school closures.
- School districts and NPS/A's should work collaboratively to ensure continuity of services for students currently served by NPS/A's, pursuant to the IEP, including exploring options related to distance learning.
- School districts are encouraged to review master contracts with NPS/As and explore options for payment given the likelihood of student absences and the fiscal impact on NPS/A's. More importantly, school districts and NPS/A's should work collaboratively to find solutions to student absences during this time and to make participation in virtual learning options feasible.

Our hearts go out to the families, NPA's, schools, and businesses impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic. While there are no guarantees and no clear path outlined for us, The PREP Group is here working to determine the best way forward. It is our commitment to use our science of ABA and our passion for those we serve to find the answers we are all seeking and to make the lives of our students and their families easier during this time.

With love and respect for our families, school districts, NPA's and schools,

Melaura and Eddie



thePREPgroup

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The present situation going on, has changed our lives for now. You both wanting to stay connected and still offering to help all the students no matter what's going on, that's absolutely wonderful.

- Debbie Dadaian

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