2020-21 Start of School Checklist for LEA Special Education Points of Contact

We need your help! Special education (SE) points of contact (POCs) who complete the tasks below will assist their LEAs in preparing to serve incoming students with disabilities (SWDs) for the 2020-21 school year and ensure that both staff and students experience a great start to the new year.

Action	Earliest LEA Can Begin	Final Deadline	Resources & Support
Ensure appropriate access to the Special Education Data System (SEDS) and SY20-21 Early Access to Students with Disabilities (SWDs) Qlik application for LEA-level users	Ongoing	Ongoing	eSchoolPlus LEA Points of Contact User Guide SEDS Basic User Guide Submit additional questions through the OSSE Support Tool
Conduct an audit of your LEA's users in SEDS to ensure that points of contact have appropriate access; staff that are no longer with your LEA should be deactivated	Ongoing	Ongoing	SEDS Basic User Guide
Ensure nonpublic special education schools and programs attended by LEA-enrolled students have appropriate access to SEDS	Ongoing	Ongoing	Additional information provided in the March 2019 LEA SE POC webinar (pre-recorded)
Provide refresher training to LEA Special Education Staff using SEDS resources	Ongoing	Ongoing	Getting Started with SEDS: Related Service Provision 101 (pre-recorded) Navigating Initial Eligibility Process in SEDS (pre-recorded) SEDS Basic User Guide

Create your SY20-21 calendar, including progress reporting periods, in SEDS	Ongoing	June 28	Additional information provided in the [August 2018 LEA SE POC webinar](#) (pre-recorded)
Use information from the SY20-21 [Early Access to SWDs Qlik application](#) to inform planning for incoming students with disabilities	April 29	Ongoing	[2020-21 Early Access to SWDs Qlik application](#) Submit additional questions through the [OSSE Support Tool](#)
Secure transportation arrangements for <u>returning students</u> by completing transportation request forms (TRFs) in the new Transportation Online Tool for Education ([TOTE 2.0](#))	July 6	July 24	[TOTE Quickstart Guide](#) Answers to additional questions can be obtained via the TOTE Support Line (202-576-5520)
After your LEA student information system (SIS) is switched to SY20-21, ensure SEDS shows new students enrolled for SY20-21	Following completion of SY19-20 to SY20-21 year-end SIS transition	Two weeks prior to a student's first day of school	Submit additional questions through the [OSSE Support Tool](#)
Secure transportation arrangements for <u>students new to your LEA</u> by completing transportation request forms (TRFs) in [TOTE](#)	Following completion of SY19-20 to SY20-21 year-end SIS transition	Two weeks prior to a student's first day of school	[2020-21 Start of School Campaign website](#) • [Transportation](#) [TOTE Quickstart Guide](#) Answers to additional questions can be obtained via the TOTE Support Line (202-576-5520)
Use OSSE support resources to troubleshoot data system issues, as well as the [OSSE Support Tool](#) to get help with tougher challenges	As needed	As needed	[2020-21 Start of School Campaign website](#) • [Data Connectivity](#) Submit additional questions through the [OSSE Support Tool](#)

2020-21 Start of School Preparation Tips for LEAs

To assist LEAs in ensuring a smooth and successful start of the school year for students with disabilities, OSSE recommends the following steps:

1. **Review relevant databases to gather special education information**
   Use the Early Access to Students with Disabilities Data application and SEDS records to ensure familiarity with incoming and returning students.

2. **Compare staffing levels with student needs**
   Examine the number of incoming students with disabilities, incomplete eligibilities or IEPs, and accompanying service hours and service types to determine appropriate staffing levels. Identify specific services with the greatest influx and determine if current LEA staff and resources, including related service providers, are adequate to provide those services. Consider the need to hire or contract with additional related service providers to ensure timely and appropriate completion of initial evaluations and provision of services. Plan for staffing to ensure initial evaluations and reevaluations are completed and IEPs are finalized or updated in a timely manner. Throughout the year, as students enroll or are exited and annual IEPs are held, review and adjust the staffing plan and teacher schedules to ensure all IEPs are implemented with fidelity.

3. **Determine additional staff training needs**
   Review student services and needs to determine if school staff is prepared with the necessary training and skills to serve these students. For example, if an LEA is receiving a large number of students with autism, consider if staff is adequately trained on serving and interacting with these students.

4. **Plan for service provision, including dedicated aide allocations**
   Review the number of students whose IEPs indicate a dedicated aide, along with required hours, to ensure adequate staffing.

5. **Review student information to determine classroom and cohort assignments**
   To ensure students with disabilities are appropriately educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE) with peers without disabilities, examine student LRE data, special education levels, and primary disability categories to create diverse classrooms.

6. **Ensure submission of all transportation request forms (TRF)**

Review students who are eligible for school year transportation and prepare the information needed to submit a Transportation Request Form (TRF) in the Transportation Online Tool for Education (TOTE) application to ensure students are appropriately routed and receive special education transportation services on the first day of school (or as soon as possible thereafter).

7. **Develop a calendar of meetings**
Review each student's eligibility end date and IEP start and end dates and set up a calendar for IEP team meetings and reevaluations. Review IEPs for thirteen-year-old students in anticipation of beginning secondary transition planning for these students prior to their fourteenth birthdays. Identify students with pending initial evaluations to ensure completion of a timely eligibility determination. Schedule meetings as appropriate to ensure updated or finalized IEPs are in place for children transitioning from IDEA Part C. Anticipate an increase in IEP team meetings to review the impacts of COVID-19 closures for each student with a disability, including making compensatory education determinations if necessary.

8. **Establish consistent protocols for review of special education documentation**
Create LEA- and/or building-wide protocols for typical special education processes, such as IEP draft submission and review, IEP meeting documentation, and student progress monitoring, to encourage consistent practice across student files.

9. **Ensure appropriate access to all student records**
Ensure LEA and nonpublic staff have appropriate access to SEDS and TOTE. Contact the sending schools to coordinate transfers of student records and other relevant information. Reach out to colleagues at each sending school to establish a channel of communication, which will ensure a smooth transition for both staff and students. Request appropriate student records or transcripts (parent consent is not required to send or receive student information in this scenario).

10. **Plan appropriately for children exiting IDEA Part C early intervention services**
LEAs are responsible for ensuring a smooth and effective transition of students from IDEA Part C early intervention services to IDEA Part B special education services. Review the Part C column in the Early Access to Students with Disabilities Qlik application to identify students who have previously received IDEA Part C early intervention services and ensure staffing and services are in place to provide IEP services in a timely manner. If you need additional information or access to records for children transitioning from IDEA Part C early intervention services, contact DCPS Early Stages for more information regarding a child's initial evaluation or IEP development.

11. **Plan to address missed services due to COVID-19 closures**

When school resumes, an IEP team must make an individualized determination to decide whether a student with a disability requires compensatory education to make up for any skills that may have been lost because the student did not receive educational benefit during COVID-19 closures. Plan for an increase in IEP team meetings and develop protocols for IEP teams considering the impacts of the lapse in services, as well as guidelines for determining if and what compensatory education is necessary. Consider conducting additional staff training regarding compensatory education and the general impacts of COVID-19, school closures, and trauma as students prepare to return to school.

12. **Plan to address extended school year (ESY) service delivery for anticipated or unanticipated breaks in service due to COVID-19 closures during the 2020-21 school year.**
Extended school year (ESY) services for students with disabilities are prescribed to address a student's possible educational regression and the consequent time that would be required for a student to recoup lost educational skills (OSSE ESY Services Policy). ESY is provided during times when regular school instruction is not taking place (e.g., before or after school hours, winter and spring break, and summertime). As with the delivery of other services prescribed in a student's IEP, ESY services may be provided through a distance learning model. Consider planning when your LEA will deliver ESY services during the 2020-21 school year, how those services will be delivered (distance versus in-person delivery models), and how your LEA will communicate decisions about service availability to families. Also consider whether or not students with disabilities enrolled in your LEA will require IEP team meetings to determine eligibility for ESY services during the 2020-21 school year, and if ESY eligible students will require IEP amendments due to special considerations for delivery of ESY services through distance learning-models.

13. **Reach out to parents to make early connections**
Strong, positive parent-school relationships are integral to student success. Get a jumpstart on building relationships with parents of students with disabilities by making contact prior to the start of school to provide important information, establish points of contact, and invite parents to school events.