A Continuum of Teaching and Learning for Students with Disabilities during COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

During Maryland's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, a continuum of teaching and learning remains in place (Figure 2). Throughout the extended school closure and re-opening process currently underway, continuity of learning models implemented in each local school system/public agency (LSS/PA) continue to adapt for both general and special education (as illustrated in green and blue respectively in Figure 2), driven by the health and safety needs of teachers, service providers, and students under the direction of the governor and State Superintendent of Schools.

In April, each LSS/PA was required to develop a systemwide Continuity of Learning Plan for all students, including students with disabilities and in August, required to submit a local board approved Recovery Plan in alignment with the MSDE's Plan for Education. Throughout this process, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students with disabilities have been, and continue to be, reviewed, amended, or revised as appropriate to provide FAPE consistent with the districtwide service delivery model.
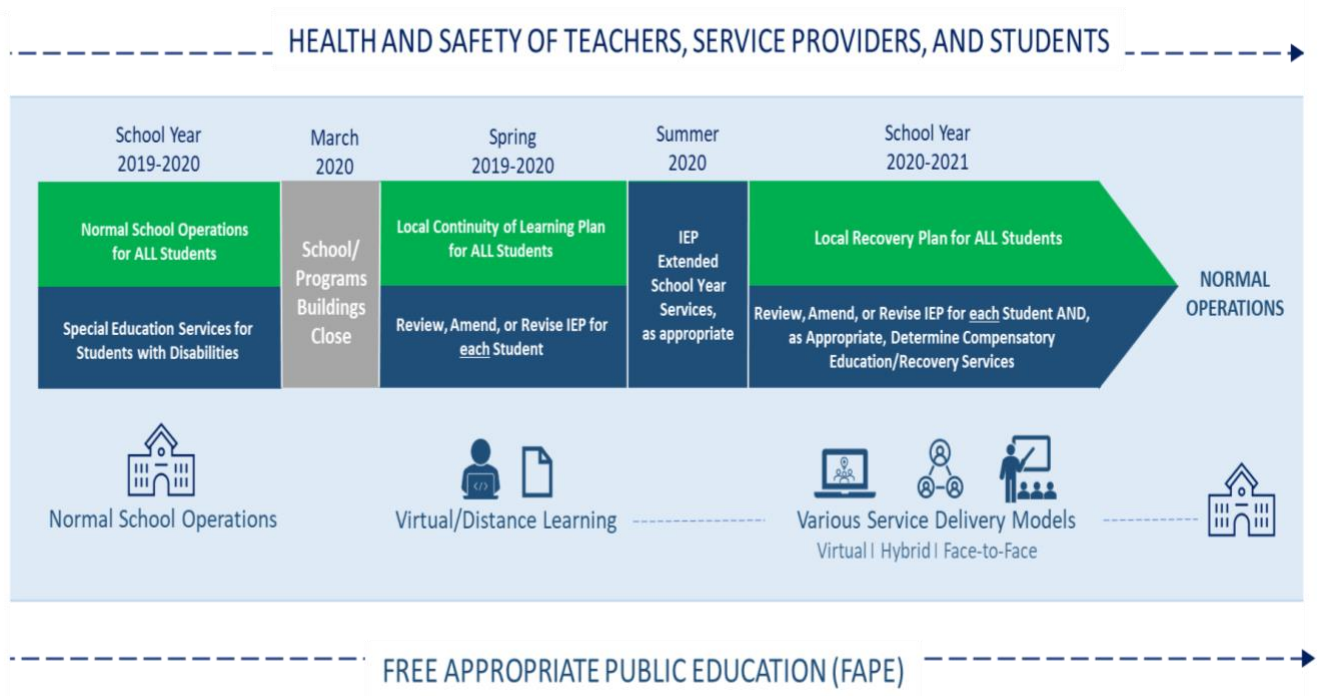

Figure 1. *Continuum of Teaching and Learning during the Extended School Closure and Beyond.*

Resources to A Continuum of Teaching and Learning for Students with Disabilities during COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

The MSDE Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services (DEI/SES) created the following resources to address the development, implementation, and evaluation of early intervention/special education services during the extended school closure and beyond. Documents have been categorized by Continuity of Learning, Recovery Planning, Tips for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and Parent Guides. All resources are available on www.marylandpublicschools.org and www.marylandlearninglinks.org/COVID-19.

Technical Assistance Bulletin (TAB) *Continuity of Learning*

Serving Children with Disabilities Under IDEA During School Closures Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

This document addresses common questions raised by local public agencies, parents, and the advocacy community during the extended school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Several flowcharts are included to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of an individualized continuity of learning plan using the existing IEP document, the continuity of the IFSP for young children (Birth-Age 4) with developmental delays/disabilities and their families during extended school/ agency closures, and IFSP development for new referrals during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Providing Continuity of Learning to Students with Disabilities Through Nonpublic Special Education Schools During COVID-19

This document provides guidance for the continuity of learning for students with disabilities receiving services through our nonpublic special education schools as well as the applicable billing practices during the COVID-19 pandemic response.

Each TAB provides a legal framework, implementation guidance, and frequently asked questions.

An icon has been used to indicate if a TAB contains a procedural facilitator.

An Each TAB is hyperlinked to the comprehensive document.

Providing Continuity of Learning to Students with Disabilities during COVID-19

This document guides the provision of special education and related services to students with disabilities during the extended school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A flowchart is included to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of an individualized continuity of learning plan using the existing IEP document.

[Providing Continuity of Learning to Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, Blind, Low-Vision, and DeafBlind Students During COVID-19](#)

This document provides guidance to support the continuity of learning for Blind, Low Vision, Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, or DeafBlind students in a virtual and/or distance learning environment during the extended school closure period due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Navigating Secondary Transition Services for Students with Disabilities During COVID- 19](#)

This document provides guidance to address any implications and the implementation of the secondary transition component of the IEP in response to extended school closures during the COVID- 19 pandemic.

[Continuity of the IFSP for Young Children (Birth – Age 4) with Developmental Delays/Disabilities and their Families During Extended School/Closure Due to the COVID- 19 Pandemic](#)

This document provides guidance to support the continuity of learning for young children with developmental delays/disabilities and their families receiving early intervention services during physical school/program closure due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Two flowcharts are included to support the continuity of the IFSP for young children (Birth-Age 4) with developmental delays/disabilities and their families and IFSP development for new referrals during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

[Providing Continuity of Learning for Students with Disabilities Who Require Extensive, Intensive, Individualized Instruction and Support During the COVID- 19 Pandemic](#)

This document provides guidance to support the continuity of learning for students with significant cognitive disabilities that require extensive, intensive, individualized instruction and support, and the use of alternate or modified curricular in a virtual and/or distance learning environment during extended school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Supporting the Use of Assistive Technology in a Virtual and/or Distance Learning Environment](#)

This document provides guidance to support the continuity of learning for students who receive Assistive Technology (AT) devices and/or services as a part of their IEP delivered through specially designed instruction (SDI).

Technical Assistance Bulletin (TAB) *Recovery Planning*

[Recovery Efforts: Addressing the Provision of FAPE through Alternative Service Delivery Models for Students with Disabilities During the Reopening of Schools](#)

This document supports LSSs/PAs decision-making in addressing individual student needs arising from the transition(s) to different alternative service delivery models (e.g., virtual and/or distance learning, blended, or face-to-face instruction); determining compensatory education/recovery services, as appropriate due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and documenting those decisions in local recovery efforts. Two flowcharts are included to support due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and documenting those decisions in local the continuum of IEP service delivery, including the identification and provision of compensatory/recovery services as applicable and to support transportation planning for students with disabilities.

[Recovery Efforts: Addressing the Reopening of Nonpublic Special Education Schools](#)

This document provides considerations for the development and implementation of a Nonpublic School Recovery Plan.

[Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program: Recovery Efforts to Support a Continuum of IFSP Service Delivery During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond](#)

This document provides guidance to support Local Infants and Toddler Programs decision-making related to recovery planning. Specific considerations have been incorporated to address program-wide health and safety protocols/procedures and infrastructure adjustments. A flowchart is included to support the continuum of IFSP service delivery, including the identification and provision of compensatory/recovery services as applicable.

TIPs Documents: Implementation Best Practices & Considerations

[TIPs to Implement Specially Designed Instruction though Varied Service Delivery Models](#)

This document provides tips/strategies to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of specifically designed instruction (SDI) across various instructional models. Specific IEP areas addressed include objectives, supplementary aids and services, and behavior supports.

[TIPs to Support Mask-Wearing for Students with Disabilities](#)

This document provides tips/strategies to support mask-wearing for students with disabilities.

[TIPS for Monitoring Student Progress through Alternative Service Delivery Models](#)

This document provides tips/strategies for collecting data to inform and guide instruction for students with disabilities as systems begin recovery efforts using alternative service delivery models.

[TIPs for Recovery Planning for Students who are Blind, Low Vision, and Deaf/Blind](#)

This document provides tips/strategies to support instruction for students who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, blind, low-vision, and deafblind as systems begin recovery efforts using alternative service delivery models.

[TIPs for Recovery Planning for Secondary Transition](#)

This document provides tips/strategies that may be useful in the delivery of transition assessments and services/activities during virtual or a return to in-person learning. This document provides tips/strategies that may be useful in the delivery of transition assessments and services/activities during virtual or a return to in-person learning.

[TIPs for Supporting Students Who Require Extensive, Intensive, Individualized Instruction and Supports through Varied Service Delivery Models](#)

This document provides tips/strategies to support the successful transition to new instructional delivery models (e.g., virtual, hybrid, and in-person learning) for students requiring extensive and intensive individualized instruction and support.

[TIPs for Teaching and Learning and the Least Restrictive Environment in Varied Service Delivery Models](#)

This document provides tips/strategies to support collaborative co-teaching and engagement of the student with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE) across instructional models (distant learning, hybrid plans, or face-to-face).

[TIPs for Supporting Engagement of Students with Disabilities through Varied Service Delivery Models](#)

This document provides tips/strategies to support increased learner and parent engagement in a remote classroom, as well as making intentional connections between students as schools develop, implement, and evaluate specially designed instruction (SDI), as determined by students' IEPs.

[TIPs for Collaborating to Provide Special Education Services in Childcare and Community-Based Programs Across Varied Service Delivery Models](#)

This document provides considerations for both personnel and infrastructure to promote interprofessional collaboration, building staff capacity, and addressing individual needs of children with disabilities.

[TIPs to Address Special Education Staff Shortages, Scheduling, and Logistical Challenges Across Varied Service Delivery Models](#)

This document provides tips to aid local school systems in addressing the development, implementation, and evaluation of specially designed instruction across a variety of service delivery models during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[TIPs to Support Concurrent and Virtual Face to Face Instruction](#)

This document provides tips to support engagement, self-advocacy, accessibility and perseverance of students with disabilities during concurrent instruction. It also provides strategies to aid local school systems in logistical planning.

[TIPs to Support Behavior and Social Emotional Transition](#)

This document provides transition tips as schools either continue virtual learning and/or implement plans to transition back to in-person learning. Equity and access are critical to successful transitions for everyone, but especially for those students and families who require targeted supports for success.

[TIPs to Support Data Collection by Parents During Virtual or Hybrid Learning](#)

This document provides tips for relying on parents for information and data that are difficult to assess in a virtual learning environment.

[TIPs for Speech and Language Therapy Telepractice During COVID-19](#)

This document provides tips to help speech and language therapists understand key aspects of telepractice.

[TIPs for Classroom Teachers to Make the Virtual Classroom Accessible for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Students](#)

This document provides tips to support classroom teachers to ensure that virtual classrooms are accessible to deaf and hard of hearing students.

TIPs for the Safe Provision of Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physical Therapy (PT) Services Upon Return to In-person Learning

This document provides tips for OTs and PTs to help protect themselves, students and school team members from the spread of COVID-19 during the return to in-person learning.

TIPs for Adapted Physical Education in a Virtual Environment

This document provides tips to support physical education as a critical part of a well-rounded education and an essential learning opportunity for students with disabilities as they adapt to new learning environments.

TIPs for Classroom Teachers to Make Content Accessible for All Students

This document provides tips to support classroom teachers to ensure that content is accessible to ALL students.

TIPs to Support Secondary Transition in Virtual and Hybrid Learning

This document provides tips and resources to support school staff to support secondary transition during virtual and hybrid learning.

Guidance Documents

School Discipline Basics and Integrating Supports: A Focus on Students with Disabilities

This guide is designed to address the identified needs of behavioral leaders from each local school system in Maryland.

Extended School Year (ESY) Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic

This document provides a flowchart and frequently asked questions to support local school system and public agency decision-making around ESY services.

Interprofessional Collaboration: Related and Support Services

This document describes State steering committees that have developed unique and innovative programs to promote collaborative and interprofessional practices. Three collaborative models are illustrated to highlight state-of-the-art strategies which support the learning of students.

Supporting Students with Disabilities During COVID-19 and Afterwards: A Guide for Emotional Well-being

This guide is designed to provide strategies and resources for school systems to help support students' and their families' emotional well-being during COVID-19 and beyond.

Parent Guides

A Parents' Guide: Navigating Special Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic

This guide is designed to assist parents with understanding how special education services will be determined and provided to their child during the extended closure of school buildings caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It offers information and suggestions for families and school professionals working together to ensure that the delivery of special education instruction, services, and supports continues to be designed to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities in Maryland.

This document is designed to assist families with understanding what the local school systems and public agencies (LSS/PA) must do to make sure that this happens and how they must offer compensatory education/recovery services, if it does not occur. This document also offers information and suggestions for families and school professionals, working together, to ensure that the delivery of special education instruction, services and supports continues to be designed to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities.

Maryland Learning Links

Education for students with disabilities is a collaborative effort among local school systems, education advocates, and legislation adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education, with families as key stakeholders in the teaching and learning process. *Maryland Learning Links* has been created to serve as the MSDE, DEI/SES's one stop shop website designed to inform and support all stakeholders.

The site is organized around the imperatives reflected in the DEI/SES's *Strategic Plan* and supports the development, implementation, and evaluation of early intervention/special education from Birth through age 21.

During the extended school closure, all related resources have been curated and made available to the public. A new family portal has been created to support families as they navigate special education services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

www.MarylandLearningLinks.org