

Memo to Stockton Unified Schools

Date: April 29, 2020
To: SUSD 504 Teams
From: CWA Department and District 504 Coordinator
Subject: 504 Guidance during Distance Learning due to Covid 19

We hope this finds you well, safe and secure. Thank you for all you are doing during these challenging times to provide exceptional distance learning to our students.

This e-mail is to provide you with an update and guidance for supporting your students with 504 plans during this time of distance learning and school closure due to Covid-19.

What does the law say? - The United States Department of Education (USDOE) has stated on a Supplemental Fact Sheet, dated March 21, 2020: “To be clear: ensuring compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504), and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act should not prevent any school from offering educational programs through distance instruction.” The USDOE further understands “during this national emergency, schools may not be able to provide all services in the same manner they are typically provided.” In this unique and ever-changing environment, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) also recognizes that these exceptional circumstances may affect how all educational and related services and supports are provided, and the Department will offer flexibility where possible. Stockton Unified is also communicating these updates in a letter to families of students with 504 plans called “504 Compliance and Information during Distance Learning due to Covid-19” (attached).

What do schools need to do for our 504 students during distance learning? –For students with 504 plans, our goal is to support the teacher, family and student to access the student’s Section 504 supports and services, to the greatest extent possible, in order to ensure they can access their online/distance learning plan and benefit from the educational program options to the same degree as other students as allowed by circumstances. We have created a powerpoint that reviews specific guidance for school 504 teams. Overall guidance is to continue with business as usual, as circumstances allow. Please continue to offer 504 accommodations, supports, and services to the best of your ability.

At the district level, we are mailing a packet on “504 Compliance and Information during Distance Learning due to Covid-19.” This packet includes a letter to families explaining what our district is doing to be compliant with the law during this time of distance learning due to Covid-19. It also includes a “Notice of Action” legal notice to inform families that during distance learning, schools will not be able to implement all 504 supports and services in the same way and will work with families to provide supports and services that

make sense for the student's needs in the distance learning environment. The packet also includes an update on testing and a copy of the Section 504 Parent/Guardian Rights.

We have also put together the attached resources to support your 504 team during this time.

- "504 Compliance and Information" letter (English and Spanish)
- updated form 4 - parent rights (English and Spanish)
- forms 8 and 9 with Covid school closure/distance learning language (English and Spanish)
- Powerpoint reviewing 504 practices and procedures during distance learning

What do schools do about 504 timelines and meetings? - The attached letter for parents explains that the District recognizes internal timelines and requirements applied to the development of your student's 504 Plan, such as evaluations and annual reviews, may be altered during this COVID-19 event. The District will, to the maximum extent possible, make efforts to hold required 504 Plan meetings through alternate means such as telephone or video conferencing provided you are in agreement with proceeding in this manner. Any face-to-face assessments or observations will be delayed until school reopens.

We recognize that the impact of school closure will vary substantially among students, their families, teachers and staff, as well as the entire community. SUSD's primary concern is to prioritize the long term health and well-being of its students, families, and employees, and is committed to mitigating the impact of school closure on each student upon reopening.

Please contact our Child Welfare and Attendance Department if you have any questions about this letter. Our team members are working to support and respond to your needs and will make every effort to assist you.

Respectfully,

Katrina León, Ed.D.
Director
CWA@stocktonusd.net
(209) 933-7111 Option 4

Jessica Martinez
Administrator
JMartinez@stocktonusd.net
(209) 933-7111 Option 4

Jennifer Robles
District 504 Coordinator
JRobles@stocktonusd.net
(209) 933-7111 Option 4