2024-2025 Start of School Year Special Education Checklist for Principals

Introduction

Check off the items below to ensure you are prepared to support students at the start of the new school year.

Assign or Update Staff SESIS Access

☐ Ensure that all necessary school personnel have access to SESIS. Principals should check staff access in *Galaxy*, including adding new staff such as paraprofessionals and related service providers, substitute teachers and substitute paraprofessionals. For instructions on assigning SESIS roles in *Galaxy*, refer to the Security Guide for Principals or SESIS Resources for Principals.

Provide Applicable Staff Access to IEPs (Chapter 408)

☐ Ensure that the first full staff meeting prior to school opening includes the *Chapter 408 Guidance* slides in the InfoHub (Appendix E), and that all teachers and providers have access to *Individualized Education Programs* (IEPs) for students to whom they provide service. The principal or their designee should provide all applicable staff with an opportunity to review the IEPs of their students and be advised of their Chapter 408 responsibilities *before* implementation of an IEP before the start of the school year and with every IEP review after that.

☐ Ensure all members sign the appropriate *Chapter 408* verification forms (Appendices A-D) at the start of the school year and after every IEP review that follows for each student.

Identify Students with IEPs, Including Those Awaiting Placement

☐ Review registration procedures for identifying incoming students with IEPs and ensure students do not have duplicate ID numbers. Refer to the Correcting Duplicate ID Numbers in SESIS training guide.

☐ Identify all students with IEPs in your school by reviewing the *Program Recommendations, Related Service Recommendations,* and *Program Services (SESIS-STARS linkage)* reports including students that had IEP meetings over the summer.

☐ Convene the School Implementation Team (SIT) to review IEPs to ensure appropriate placements and all program support needs will be in place. *Identify any students awaiting placement (including those recommended for specialized programs and those recommended for bilingual classes) and contact your Administrator of Special Education (ASE) for support.*

Schedule and Conduct IEP Meetings

☐ Ensure IEP Teams review the *Program Recommendations* and the *Annual Review* reports in SESIS to determine compliance due dates for annual and mandated 3-year reevaluation IEP meetings. If students with a mandated three-year review is due this year, be prepared to hold the mandated three-year review before the annual review date so that parents do not have to attend two IEP meetings in the school year.

☐ Inform teachers and providers to create a schedule for monitoring progress on annual goals for reporting progress to parents through SESIS according to the schedules indicated in each student's IEP.

☐ Ensure that the transition sections of the IEP are completed for students aged 14 or older (or younger, if appropriate) during the IEP review process.

☐ Identify students requiring special transportation based on IEP mandates. Ensure bussing and transportation accommodations are provided as per the IEP.

☐ Confirm that all IEPs created after an IEP team review/meeting have been finalized and a *Prior Written Notice (Notice of Recommendation for Placement)* has been completed and sent to the parent, along with a copy of the IEP.

☐ Finalize completed documents including the Notice of IEP Meeting at least seven calendar days before the meeting date and send the parent with other corresponding documents. Refer to the Standard Operating Procedures Manual (SOPM) for guidance.

Create Paraprofessionals' Schedules

☐ Ensure students' IEP assigned and Alternate Placement paraprofessionals receive time with the teacher or related services provider to review the IEP, discuss their role in implementing it, and how to enter SESIS Encounter Attendance (1:1 paras only).

☐ Create paraprofessional schedules to meet all IEP-mandated periods, including lunch if students' mandate is full-time. *Ensure appropriate coverage is provided for Paraprofessional duty-free lunch for full-time para mandates.*

☐ Create a calendar for *Behavioral Intervention Plan* (BIP) progress monitoring. Review FBA/BIP with paraprofessionals and teachers for students with behavior management.

☐ Ensure that health paraprofessionals receive any training required to safely perform their tasks before providing service to the student(s) to whom they're assigned. Training needs should be specified in the Supports for School Personnel section of the IEP.

☐ **Confirm Classroom Staffing Ratios**

Confirm that *Integrated Co-Teaching* (ICT) classes have two appropriately certified teachers (one general education and one special education) and that both teachers are linked to the class in *STARS. Additionally, ensure the STARS section properties are completed accordingly. Confirm the teacher assignments are within their grade level certification.*

☐ **Schedule Students for Programs (ICT, special class, SETSS) and Related Services**

Beginning in mid-August log into SESIS and download the principal's Program Services (SESIS-STARS linkage) report and the *Weekly Special Education Mandate Report* from SESIS messaging and ensure that caseloads are assigned to related service providers and that students are programmed for *ICT, special class,* and *SETSS* in STARS by the first day of school.

☐ Review the Recommended Timeline for Ensuring Full Provision of Special Education Programs with your school-based special education committee and take appropriate steps to complete the items for late August – October.

☐ Confirm that classes begin the school year with no more than 40% of the students in an ICT class having IEPs and special classes have no more than the maximum number of students. Refer to the Continuum of Special Education Services for School-Age Students with Disabilities on the NYSED website for additional information. In addition, refer to the Continuum of Special Education Services in the New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) website.

☐ Confirm that *Special Education Teacher Support Services* (SETSS) and special classes have no more students than permitted by the maximum group size and/or student ratio.

☐ To the greatest extent possible, schools should avoid scheduling bridge classes.

☐ Confirm that in special classes, students are within a 36-month chronological age range and academic functional levels (does not apply to classes only comprised of students 16 and older or to the 12:1+(3:1) special class ratio).

Monitor Compliance Data Weekly

☐ Identify staff responsible for monitoring and coordinating special education compliance data (including special education liaison, transition point (for high schools), etc.)

☐ Principals access SESIS messaging to download the *Program Services Report* and the *Weekly Mandated Services Report*, sharing it with relevant staff members.

☐ Use the *Program Services Report* to ensure that students are scheduled for their IEP-recommended programs (SETSS, ICT, and special class) in STARS.

☐ Review the weekly Program Services Reports to identify discrepancies between IEP recommendations and STARS.

☐ Check the updated *Weekly Mandated Services Report* to ensure that all students are receiving their recommended related services.

Ensure Providers Record Encounter Attendance

☐ Inform related service providers and 1:1 paraprofessionals that they must record encounters as they serve students to ensure that families New York City Schools Account (NYCSA) and public reports on the provision of related services are accurate. Refer to the Encounter Attendance FAQs guide for more information.