

**Division of Special Education
Virtual Town Hall Meeting
8/9/23 & 8/10/23
Parent Questions**

Question 1: Will the Online/Virtual Mode of Learning be used?

Answer: GDOE is offering in person learning

Question 2: I am asking for compensatory Speech services as my daughter did not receive it in the first semester of last year. How will SPED deliver that?

Answer: The Speech/Language Office from the Division of Special Education will be contacting you to discuss how compensatory services will be addressed.

Question 3: If GW will be on double session with another school, I would like my daughter to be given an opportunity to learn a skill out in the community for her Transition plan. If her session is morning, then she can be out at a job site in the afternoon and vice versa. We can take advantage of this opportunity to have her explore what job she may want to do after high school.

Answer: The Division of Special Education will work with you and your child's school to address your request.

Question 4: As a Surrogate Parent for many students, I would like to know about ESY. Ho was that service not delivered at all? How were IEP's not followed over the summer?

Answer 4: GDOE sought guidance from its OSEP Team Lead to address ESY for Summer 2023. Much like the guidance states and entities received during COVID school closures, GDOE schools were closed due to Typhoon Mawar. As such, GDOE could not provide services to the general student population. When this happens, GDOE is also not required to provide services to students with disabilities during that same period of time.

Question 5: If schools will be in double sessions, how will you transition students with ASD or other disabilities who have issues with changes? Do you have a plan for the students who have issues with new environments and new schedules?

Answer 5: Each student with a disability is unique and has individualized needs. As parents, you, along with your IEP Team members, will need to address the transition needs of your child through a staff meeting or

an IEP meeting. Your child's school should be contacting you to address these challenges.

Question 6: Though I haven't heard anything about Online Mode of Learning, how can that still be an option for kids with an IEP who just cannot learn online?

Answer 6: Bill 158-37 authorizes the operation of GDOE Schools that are awaiting inspections; this is at the discretion of the GDOE Superintendent and the Director of DPHSS

Question 7: I heard that putting all SPED kids into one school was discussed. I am hoping that we do NOT go back to the Chief Brodie times of having all of our kids with special needs "corralled" into one school.

Answer 7: These concerns are noted this discussion came about through brainstorming sessions with administrators and the Division with how to support students with disabilities should schools not open for in-person learning. The suggestion was dismissed because of the need to address FAPE and LRE, along with learning alongside non-disabled peers.

Question 8: What is the status of other related services. Has the department hired Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech therapists, etc. Online therapy is just not optimum.

Answer 8: There is a nation-wide shortage of teachers and service providers to deliver Speech/Language, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy. The GDOE is offering teletherapy for speech/language and occupational therapy through its contracted vendor. This is an allowable practice recognized by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The Division recognizes it would be ideal to have employees or vendors who are on island to deliver in-person services and will continue to recruit individuals to fill these needed services for our children.

Question 9: What is the contact information for Parent Services?

Answer 9: Anyone could call the Division at (671) 300-1322 or contact us via email at sped@gdoe.net with any questions or concerns; or to make a referral for special education and related services.

- Question 10: What is being done to address the lack of in-person OT's?**
Answer 10: The Division has a contract with Tiny Eye, a teletherapy company, who will be providing these services. There is a nationwide shortage of Occupational Therapists. The Division continues to recruit for these high need areas or find alternative models/platforms in which these services can be provided.
- Question 11: What is your plan for the schools that have no SPED teachers? My school has not had a consistent SPED teacher for the last 2 years?**
Answer 11: The Division will be providing training and coaching support to the teachers that are not certified in Special Education who will be covering these Special Education classes.
- Question 12: How would I be able to find out if my student will be receiving IEP?**
Answer 12: Contact your school administrator, IEPC/CRT. You may also contact the Division of Special Education @ 300-1322 or email the Division at sped@gdoe.net
- Question 13: My child was referred for IEP since September, will they be getting assistance this year or will they struggle all year again?**
Answer 13: Contact your school administrator, IEPC/CRT. You may also contact the Division of Special Education @ 300-1322 or email the division sped@gdoe.net
- Question 14: How soon will my child have a 1:1 aide? The beginning of last school year my child had a few 1:1 aides. After 2 months he finally had a permanent 1:1 aide who is consistent and reliable so that our children can succeed throughout the school year.**
Answer 14: Please contact the Division directly at sped@gdoe.net or by calling (671) 300-1322 so someone could speak to you about your comment/concern.
- Question 15: Part C – Guam Early Intervention question regarding compensatory services.**
Answer 15: This child, who has exited GEIS, has been found eligible for Special Education and related services under Part B. The child's IEP is being developed by the IEP Team, and if there are any services not delivered due to the lack of a service provider under GEIS, this can be discussed at the IEP meeting and the team can determine if compensatory services are warranted. If the team has determined that compensatory services are warranted then compensatory services can be provided under Part B.

Question 16: Is DOE recruiting for SPED teachers?

Answer 16: The Department continues to recruit for the open teacher positions as well as those in specialized fields (OT, SLP, PT). There is a shortage nationwide for these specialized areas and teaching positions.

Question 17: Question from Facebook: My child needs occupational therapy and is supposed to be given compensatory time. We do have a therapist from TinyEye..when can this start since this is through online services

Answer 17: The Division has been in constant contact with TinyEye and they have been informed that the school year will start on 8/23/23. TinyEye is currently in the process of identifying the therapists who will be assigned to the various schools. Once a therapist has been identified the schools will be notified and then services will start and the therapist will be responsible for providing IEP stipulated service time as well as documenting the delivery of compensatory services.

Question 18: Is there a plan to incentivize teachers with special education degrees to remain/teach as special ed teachers in our schools? As in implement/develop a fast track program with UOG as before and to include robust incentives

Answer 18: There is a plan to provide incentives for Teachers with degrees in Special Education. The Department is still determining how this will be fairly implemented. A funding source for these incentives needs to be determined. Working with U.O.G. but not at the point where it can be fast tracked.

Question 19: Do you plan on opening schools who were placed in phase III by August 23rd?

Answer 19: As per Deputy Superintendent Erika Cruz, Superintendent Swanson is committed to opening all schools by Aug 23 for Face to Face Instruction. Superintendent Swanson will be providing more information by next week.

Question 20: If schools will open on the 23rd with F2F mode, how soon parents be notified regarding the possible setting- double session or not?

Answer 20: As per Deputy Superintendent Erika Cruz, Superintendent Swanson will make that announcement by next week regarding the status of In person instruction and the opening of the Public schools.

- Question 21:** **I would like to have my high school daughter retested on all tests relevant to her. She would need an update on emotional and psychological tests. She was tested about 3 years ago. How do I go about doing this? She will now be in 11th grade.**
- Answer 21: Contact the CRT or the administrator at your child's school to help you navigate this process. You may also contact the Division at 300-1322 or email: sped@gdoe.net
- Question 22:** **What is GDOE's obligation during a "school closure"?**
- Answer 22: GDOE (your child's school) continues to be required to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- FAPE must be provided with the consistent need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those who provide the educational services.
- When GDOE provides education services to its general population, GDOE must also provide comparable opportunities to students with disabilities **tailored to their individual needs, to the greatest extent possible.**
- Question 23:** **How can we make changes to the IEP if we are not able to meet in person?**
- Answer 23: Parents and school personnel could agree to amend the IEP outside of an IEP meeting, except when the purpose of the IEP meeting is to conduct an annual review of the IEP (IEP Review meeting).
- Question 24:** **How will the IEP amendments be determined?**
- Answer 24: Parents will be contacted by the IEPC or CRT (or another member of your child's IEP team) to discuss the services and supports and the goals and objectives in your child's current IEP.
- Together, you will determine whether and how each of the parts of the IEP can be implemented.
- It is possible that the services provided, along with the frequency of the services, may change from how they were delivered when school was in full session.
- Your input is very important! Written consent from parent is not required for an amendment. Request for a formal IEP if not comfortable with the information & decisions proposed in the amendments.

- Question 25: What if my child was in the process of being evaluated?**
Answer 25: Evaluations must continue as scheduled. Some evaluations could be completed remotely, while others could be scheduled in-person. The IEP Teams must also move forward with determining eligibility.
- Question 26: What do I do if my child's circumstances have really changed (e.g. new behaviors)?**
Answer 26: Share your concerns with your child's IEP Team- Principal, Case Manager (IEPC/CRT) Teachers or other individuals who work with your child. Changes may need to be made to your child's IEP to address your child's needs. This could be done through an amendment or through a formal IEP.
- Question 26: With the proposed schedules for my child's school, how does this change the role of my child's 1:1 Aide?**
Answer 26: The role of the paraeducator will remain the same as the support to the assigned student and teacher. Any changes would be in the delivery of supports as it will align with the school's bell schedule.
- Question 27: Where can I get help if I have more questions or concerns?**
Answer 27: Parents are encouraged to seek the help of their child's Principal/Assistant Principal AND The division of Special Education Parent Services email: sped@gdoe.net; Tel: (671)300-1322.