



## *Extended School Year Amid COVID-19*

### **DESE-COVID-19 Response**

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) convened a Summer School Task Force, comprised of school leaders from across the state, to discuss 2020 summer school questions and the options available to school leaders amid COVID-19 and public health orders.

### **What are Extended School Year (ESY) services?**

Extended school year services are special education and related services that are provided to a child with a disability beyond the normal school year, in accordance with the child's IEP and at no cost to the parents of the child. Local school districts are required to consider the need for Extended School Year Services (ESY) for each student with a disability. ESY may be necessary to provide a student a free appropriate public education

### **Who determines if Extended School Year services are necessary?**

Extended School Year services must be provided only if the child's IEP Team determines, on an individual basis, that the services are necessary for the child to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education to the child. When considering ESY services for students the public agency may not limit services to a disability category or unilaterally limit the type, amount, or length of those services.

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education suggests schools consider the following when creating policies to determine student eligibility for ESY:

- Nature of the child's disability;
- The severity of the disability;
- The areas of learning crucial to the child's attainment of self-sufficiency and independence;
- Child's progress, behavioral and physical needs;
- Opportunities to practice skills outside the formal classroom setting (the more functional the skill, the more opportunities the child has to practice it);
- Availability of alternative resources;
- Areas of child's curriculum which need continuous attention;
- Child's vocational needs;
- Ability of child's parents to provide educational structure at home; and
- Opportunity for the child to interact with non-disabled children.

Regression/recoupment rate is recognized across the nation as the standard in determining whether to provide ESY. However, districts must not limit their policies to documented regression/recoupment. Instead, the case law indicates a need for the policy to allow for an extended school year based on the prediction of regression/recoupment problems and must always keep in mind that the decision whether to provide ESY for each student eligible for special education is a decision which should be made based on the unique characteristics of the individual student.

In developing a district ESY policy, DESE suggests the avoidance of restrictive language that will... Limit eligibility to consideration of only one factor: i.e. documented regression/recoupment.

Districts are not required to maintain the full continuum of placement options maintained for the regular school year. Districts are required to maintain those placement options which are necessary to implement a student's IEP. <https://dese.mo.gov/special-education/compliance/extended-school-year-policies>

## **How does Extended School Year (ESY) for students with disabilities factor into closures and changes?**

Each student's IEP should describe the IEP team's decisions regarding the need for ESY. If ESY is needed, the IEP must include a description of what services will be provided, when they will be provided and what IEP goals will be implemented. Before the end of the scheduled school year, each LEA should review IEPs to make sure they meet requirements and plan how to implement the ESY services (to the best of their abilities if in-school services are still not an option over the summer). LEAs should initiate meaningful communication with parents regarding the provision of ESY services. *Anything that LEAs can do over the summer to limit regression and mitigate recoupment time through provision of ESY services will benefit both teachers and students when in-school services resume. ESY services can be provided throughout the summer and should be calculated to reduce the incidence of regression to the greatest extent possible.*

ESY services are not automatically cancelled if scheduled summer school programs are cancelled. LEAs should take steps to implement ESY services during summer break. ESY services can be provided any time prior to the start of the next school year; so, if areas are still under stay home orders in June, those LEAs should consider providing ESY services through distance learning or rescheduling them to later in the summer when teachers and students can meet in-person. LEAs should be working on contingency plans for providing distance learning, in case it takes longer than expected for schools to reopen.

<https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/COVID-19-Summer-School-QA-4-23-20.pdf>

## **Public Health Measures**

DESE urges school leaders to make summer school plans in consultation with their local public health officials and published CDC guidance. Schools must plan for increased deep cleaning during in-person summer school. Daily disinfecting of hard surfaces, particularly in common areas, is advisable. This may require additional staff and supplies. Schools should consider safety protocols, including:

- Maintaining social distancing measures
- Washing hands frequently
- Wearing masks
- Taking temperatures
- Suspending the use of drinking fountains
- Altering food service routines
- Revising procedures for passing out and collecting materials, using common workspaces and playground equipment, etc.
- Communicating new procedures with students, families and staff

## **Schools responsibility to use appropriate methods to deliver ESY and summer school instruction**

Further guidance establishes that when considering virtual summer school, LEAs must think about the degree to which students can access learning experiences online...This will include not only the availability of devices and access to the internet, but also the degree to which faculty can develop and deliver high-quality virtual learning to all students. Schools should use a platform that ensures web accessibility for students with disabilities.

<https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/am/documents/OS-20-005.pdf>

## **Helpful Resources**

DESE-COVID-19 Webpage

<https://dese.mo.gov/communications/coronavirus-covid-19-information>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

MPACT Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/MOParentAct>

MPACT Website:

<http://www.missouriparentsact.org/>