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TO: School District Superintendents
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Directors of Pupil Personnel Services
Chairpersons of Committees on Special Education
Chairpersons of Committees on Preschool Special Education
Administrators of Nonpublic Schools with Approved Special Education Programs
Organizations, Parents and Individuals Concerned with Special Education
Preschool Providers of Special Education Programs and Services
Superintendents, Special Act School Districts
Superintendents, State-Operated Schools
Superintendents, State-Supported Schools

FROM: Christopher Suriano 

Subject: Considerations for Addressing the Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Promoting Equity in Educational Resources, Opportunities, and Welcoming Environments for Students with Disabilities

As Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) develop and implement plans to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on students and educators through new and existing funding streams, it is important to understand the role of special education services provided to students with disabilities and learning recovery programming being offered to all students. Evidence-based learning recovery strategies and interventions to meet student needs related to COVID-19 may include both district or schoolwide approaches to responding to students' social, emotional, and academic needs and also individualized approaches to providing specialized instruction and related services, consistent with students' individualized education programs (IEPs). Consistent with guidance from the United States Department of Education, these approaches are distinct.¹ While both approaches provide significant value and learning opportunities for students with disabilities, district or schoolwide learning recovery strategies do not supplant students' IEP services and IEP services do not exempt students with disabilities from meaningful inclusion in general recovery services/interventions aimed at benefiting underserved student populations that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Instead, these

¹ [ED COVID-19 Handbook, Volume 2: Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs](#). Inclusion of students with disabilities in district or schoolwide interventions to address lost instructional time does not relieve a district of its responsibility to make individualized decisions required under the IDEA about needed special education and related services for a student with a disability.

activities complement each other and must be recognized separately but coordinated comprehensively.

The New York State Department of Education (NYSED) Office of Special Education (OSE) has updated guidance on the [2021 Extended School Year Program](#) and [Compensatory Services](#) to assist