

**Important Reminders/General Information Concerning COVID-19**  
**March 15, 2020**

**For the weeks of March 16-20, 2020, and March 23-27, 2020, North Carolina Public Schools are closed.**

The informal guidance provided below should be considered when and if the Governor directs the state to implement distance learning – instruction facilitated directly by teachers via a virtual or alternative format.

Therefore, there is no expectation that EC staff are to deliver special education and related services through an alternative format during this two-week time period (please see the FAQ link below). IEP Team Meetings and evaluations should not continue during this time as the health and wellness of ALL is a primary concern and school is closed.

LEAs are encouraged to use the next ten (10) school days to prepare and plan for the potential for distance learning and alternate participation in IEP Team Meetings beyond March 30, should the Governor's guidance change to require or permit virtual education delivery.

**NC DPI & DAC**

This morning, the EC Division (ECD) leadership met virtually with DAC representatives to discuss virtual or online professional development that EC department staff in LEAs may want to participate in during the next two weeks. The link to a recording of that meeting can be found here:

[https://zoom.us/rec/share/1M1UJKHRy2VJc6fzy3qGULIFA6jEX6a8h3BN-fQJzRnx9agaSVb5199j90\\_jaWxW](https://zoom.us/rec/share/1M1UJKHRy2VJc6fzy3qGULIFA6jEX6a8h3BN-fQJzRnx9agaSVb5199j90_jaWxW)

Again, school is closed, so this is not a requirement, but may be an opportunity for some personal staff development, in light of the diminished PD time allotted in our current school calendars.

Carol Ann Hudgens has created a padlet where Directors and district leadership can access all the informational documents, including the ongoing FAQ, that the ECD has distributed through the listserv. Regional coordinators have shared the link to the padlet and the password in a separate email. We ask that you restrict access to this padlet to EC Department leadership. This should not be shared with teachers or parents. Our intent is to create a space for Directors/Coordinators to have easy access to information, and to comfortably submit questions. We appreciate your response and compliance to this request.

## **2019-20 Data Submission for Table 2 - Federal Personnel Collection and April Child Count**

Due to the closing of all K-12 schools in the COVID-19 pandemic, the ECD will extend the deadlines for the Table 2 - Federal Personnel report for the 2019-20 school year and the April 2020 child count. At this time, the new due date will be May 15, 2020 for both reports, but may be extended as needed.

The Federal Personnel report is being collected via survey. This count is based on personnel that served students with disabilities as of the December 2019 child count. All LEAs, Charters, and State Operated Programs that submitted a December 2019 child count are required to submit personnel data via the survey. The link to access the survey is [https://ncdpi.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_797txrW4PSsPW4H](https://ncdpi.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_797txrW4PSsPW4H). You may need to copy and paste this link into your browser to access the survey.

The April child count will be submitted via ECATS. Resources to assist districts in verifying their data and correcting any exceptions were sent out in the March 9, 2020 Monday Message. Determination is pending to extend the April 1 child count date. Further information will be provided as soon as we have guidance from the State Superintendent, State Board of Education and General Assembly.

### **Information for Parents**

Information for parents, including a link to guidance documents by state and federal agencies will be sent later today. We have provided a courtesy copy to you, which can be found at [this link](#).

### **Dispute Resolution/Corrective Action Timelines**

Below you will find guidance and clarification for action items in the Dispute Resolution process.

#### **State Complaints**

- The 60-day timeline for complaint investigations is a federal requirement. While we anticipate further guidance from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), state government has not closed. Therefore, NCDPI must respond when complaints are filed.
- NCDPI, does, however, have the right to extend parts of the timeline in extenuating circumstances. The Governor's Executive Order and national crisis would constitute as an extenuating circumstance. Our Dispute Resolution Consultants (DRCs) will complete the intake process and establish timelines as per usual. Then, the assigned complaint investigator (DRC) will work with the LEA on an individual basis regarding the timeline to prepare a response and provide requested documentation inside of the overall 60-day timeline. It is

important that communication between your LEA and the DRC is clear, consistent and timely for this activity.

### Mediation/Facilitation

- The EC Division continues to coordinate these activities upon request and agreement of all parties.
- Some facilitators and mediators may agree to coordinate these activities via virtual platforms; however, state employees, and in the case state contractors, are prohibited from statewide travel. Therefore, this service is likely to be interrupted.
- Our mediation/facilitation coordinator, Teresa King – DRC, will work with the parties on a case-by-case basis during these unusual circumstances.

### Due Process

- Much of the court system has closed. We anticipate this will also be true for the Office of Administrative Hearings, the entity that facilitates Due Process hearings.
- A key timeline in Due Process is the first fifteen (15) days in which the parties are directed to hold/waive a resolution meeting or request mediation is still in effect. We do anticipate further guidance from OSEP as this is also a federally mandated timeline. To the extent possible, LEAs should be responsive to these filings as per usual and contact our office for technical assistance as needed.
- Teresa King, DRC, also provides technical assistance to Due Process parties. She is teleworking and can be reached by email at [Teresa.king@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:Teresa.king@dpi.nc.gov).

### Corrective Action

Corrective action may have been ordered as a result of state complaint or program monitoring activities. The timelines for these activities should be managed on a case-by-case basis and coordinated in collaboration with the Corrective Action Coordinator for State Complaints – Teresa King or the assigned monitoring consultant for program compliance reviews (PCRs). Their contact information can be found on the EC Division website under Directory. <https://ec.ncpublicschools.gov/directory/regional-consultants>