Special Education Distance Learning Innovative Solutions Workgroup
Resources Summary

SUBGROUP: SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH MILD SUPPORT NEEDS

Overview Of Workgroup Purpose

The California Department of Education (CDE) convened a stakeholder workgroup to gather and share innovative strategies, ideas, and resources that others have found successful as they provide access to students with disabilities in distance learning. The purpose of the workgroup was to assist educators and families across the state of California with distance learning as the new format for education during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic by developing and providing access for all students and students with disabilities in particular. Workgroup participants selected one of 10 topic subgroups to join and share strategies, ideas, and resources that have been successful for them.

Each of the area subgroups created an overview of key resources that were shared by the participants or submitted to the CDE by others in the field. The Workgroup Summary divides the strategies, ideas, and resources into focus areas according to issues or topics. Each focus area describes the issue and provides consideration or ideas to address the issue, describes what the practice should look like and provides examples and resources from the field with links to online resources where appropriate. Additional information for all of the online resources are also listed below each of the focus areas.

Overview of Subgroup Purpose

Supporting Students with Mild Support Needs Subgroup

Students with mild to moderate support needs are among the largest percentage of students with disabilities and are the students who typically spend a good portion of their school day in general education classes. A key concern for this group when planning for distance learning is ensuring that access to inclusive practices that had been in place prior to school closures will continue with distance learning.

FOCUS AREA ONE

Family Engagement and Student Engagement

Distance learning is new for the student, family, and the teacher; anxiety and concerns associated with the unknown are to be expected. While families have always been an essential partner in education, they play a larger role in distance learning, from setting up a space for the student to learn at home, to providing the tools to access distance learning, to being more directly involved with monitoring progress on educational goals.

Topic	Considerations	Examples from the Field
Setting up a learning environment at home	**Create a learning space that will benefit the student** • Does the student need a quiet space separate from the rest of the family, or does the student work better when there are others near? • What are the learning/ working space needs of others in the family?	• If possible, set up a learning space that has the learning materials that the student needs. • If the learning space is at the dining table, or a corner of the kitchen counter or other living space, consider putting all the materials in a box that can be swiftly unpacked and repacked in order to clearly mark when it is learning time and when it is family time. • If possible, try to avoid having students use their bed or the couch as their learning space—it may be more comfortable, but it has the potential of leading to confusion of learning time versus personal time. • Some students need a very calm, quiet learning environment—if that is difficult to find at a time when everyone is working and learning from home, use sheets or pillows to create a learning fort under the dining table, or set up a learning 'tent' in the child's bedroom. • Some students need the noise and energy of others; take each child's needs into account as much as is possible when creating the learning space. • Families can get creative with items and materials they may already have at home that can be used to make sensory activities, use an exercise ball for a chair when learning, repurpose an old binder to create a slant board or mobile desk.

Topic	Considerations	Examples from the Field
		• Districts/Schools/Teachers: Reach out to families to find out what support they need to set up a learning space. Energy has been focused on getting devices to students, but also consider the learning materials that students need to address their disability, such as a small whiteboard and whiteboard markers, math tiles and manipulatives, highlighters, notebooks, calculator, fidgets, and materials that students need and have access to at school but may not have at home. Consider putting together a package of these materials to provide the family and student the support needed.
Scheduling	**Scheduling for distance learning and engagement** • What should learning-at-home schedules look like (for younger students, middle school, high school)? • How do I select the focus of learning for distance learning lessons? • How much flexibility and student autonomy should be provided, and how do you 'plan' for that? • Do I include longer term projects that allow for independent practice? • What do we do about graduation, college signing day, prom? Can we do any of those virtually? • How do we think about community-service requirements? • How can paraeducators be used at this time?	**Schedules for distance learning** • Work with the family to create a realistic and achievable learning schedule that takes into account the whole family. Schedules may include physical activity, brain breaks, opportunities to socialize with peers (playing an online game, for example), virtual field trips, learning a new hobby (cooking, gardening, drawing). • Create visual schedules, reminder cards, visual calendars, token boards, and choice boards to support students who benefit from visual cues and reminders. • Create weekly learning schedules using Public Broadcasting System educational programming. To view programing schedules from the California Public Education Partnership by grade level and subject area, visit the website at: https://www.kqed.org/education/athomelearning • Chunk student's work time to support short bursts of focused production interspersed with mental and physical breaks. • Provide no and low-tech options such as workbooks, packets, manipulatives, etc. When providing paper materials, ensure that accommodations are addressed (for example, text at student's reading level, graphic organizers, visuals, prompts, etc).

Topic	Considerations	Examples from the Field
		• Consider virtual alternatives for community service, such as writing letters to residents in elder care facilities, first responders, grocery store workers; creating 'thank you' videos, organizing a neighborhood sidewalk chalk walking art show, organizing food drives for food banks. Freerice.com provides a fun, interactive game platform for quizzing students on academic topics and for each correct answer grains of rice are donated to end world hunger. • Paraeducators can create audio recordings of text book passages and stories that are not available in audio versions, be a second adult in the virtual classroom to support the teacher, monitor data to track students and families that have not been participating in distance learning.

Resource List for Focus Area One

Title	Description	Platform	Grade Span	Category
At-Home Learning Resources During the COVID-19 Pandemic	Create weekly learning schedules using PBS educational programming.	• Website at: https://www.kqed.org/education/athomelearning	• All	• Technology

FOCUS AREA TWO

Social Emotional Learning, Mental Well Being, and Executive Function Needs

Addressing the social emotional and mental health needs of students with mild support needs during distance learning is a challenge but planning to ensure these needs are

being addressed and services are available and accessible requires planning and collaboration between staff and families with monitoring of progress.

Topic	Considerations	Examples from the field
Social Emotional and Mental Health	• Resources: provide families with local mental health resources in primary language • Schedules: routines support students during distance learning • Physical activity as a family • Social: Engagement with peers during COVID-19 shelter-in-place • Emotional: Journals and/or creative writing and art projects • Supporting students through uncertain times	Children thrive on routine, and with emergency distance learning, many of the routines that benefited students have disappeared. Families may also have disruptions to family routines during this time. Help families create schedules and routines at home: • Establish a consistent wake time • Alternate rigorous school activities with social and/or outdoor activities • If you know the young person's school routine, try to match your home schedule to what the learner is familiar with (as much as possible) • During breaks, check in and ask questions like: o How are you doing? o Do you have any questions? • Provide the student and family very clear behavior expectations for online learning—consider providing a visual guide of those expectations. • Include sensory motor activities to address student needs to move and engage and relieve stress. • Understanding executive function skills and strategies to support those areas of need by helping students with organization, scheduling their time, prioritizing tasks, and putting order to their learning plans. • Create visual schedules, visual reminder cards, emoticon cards, visual prompts, consider interactions that can often be verbal and how providing visual cues can benefit many learners. **Resources and ideas to support communication with students and families:** • Google Voice available within your google account • Wix.com (Easy and free way to create a website for the teacher) • Remind app at: https://www.remind.com/ • Talking points app (translates communication between sender and receiver in multiple languages at https://talkingpts.org/

Resource List for Focus Area Two

Title	Description	Platform	Grade Span	Category
Wix Website Creator	Wix.com is an easy and free way to create a website for teachers.	Website at: https://www.wix.com/freesitebuilder/hiker-create?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=195454540^10375167220&experiment_id=wix^e^48420852700^&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI7PP6mtms6QIVCx-tBh0DRQfFEAAYASAAEgJh1PD_BwE	• All	• Technology
Remind App	App for reaching students and parents where they are and providing communication for the school, home, and everywhere in between.	Remind App website at: https://www.remind.com/	• All	• Technology
Talking Points	Talking points app translates communication between sender and receiver in multiple languages.	App website at: https://talkingpts.org/ (Providing free access during the COVID-19 crisis)	All	• Technology

FOCUS AREA THREE

Accessibility Tools and Resources

Access to distance learning requires the use of many new platforms, programs, and tools. Many of these resources have accessibility features built in or available to increase the usability for all students. Knowing where to locate and engage these tools and features is critical to ensuring equitable access to the learning platform.

Topic	Considerations	Examples from the field
Accessibility via distance learning	• Provide students with the opportunity to access learning via whatever method needed. • What does accessibility when learning-at-home look like (for younger students, middle school, and high school)? • Provide tips on using Google Meet, Chat, and Classroom to facilitate online learning. • Make documents convenient for online use.	• The majority of, if not all, learning platforms and education technology tools have accessibility features such as enlarging text, changing text font styles and colors to improve readability, text-to-speech, screen reader, and more. Many presentation tools also include live closed-captioning abilities. See Google accessibility features website at: https://support.google.com/docs/answer/6282736?p=accessibility&hl=en&visit_id=637250077826134084-180925303&rd=1 • Teachers should activate those accessibility features, and when not available through a certain platform, consider using a different tool that does include accessibility features. • Teachers may also need to provide resources to students and families about using accessibility tools. • Consider accessibility to content and learning for low and no-tech resources as well, such as using visuals and graphic organizers, chunking longer texts, providing choice and flexibility for how students learn and how students demonstrate their learning.

Resource List for Focus Area Three

Title	Description	Platform	Grade Span	Category
Google Accessibility Tools	Google accessibility features provide many presentation tools also include live closed-captioning abilities.	Website at: https://support.google.com/docs/answer/6282736?p=accessibility&hl=en&visit_id=637250077826134084-180925303&rd=1	• All	• Technology

FOCUS AREA FOUR

Collaboration for Inclusive Practices

Inclusive Mindsets: Equity and Access for All
Creating inclusive, equitable, and accessible educational opportunities for every learner, including students with and without disabilities, requires general and special educators to work closely together to create meaningful and rigorous lesson plans aimed at meeting the needs of all students. An inclusive approach requires a collective and shared responsibility with a high level of collaboration amongst general and special educators, as well as related service providers and families.

Topic	Considerations	Examples from the field

Inclusive Mindsets: Equity and Access for All	• Barriers to access exist at the student and family levels. These include:
	  o How students take in information (representation)
	  o How students express their learning (action and expression)
	  o Pre-requisite skills (baseline prior to school closure)
	  o Reading and listening comprehension
	  o Language and communication (input and output)
	  o Working independently and staying on task
	• Considerations for overall instructional planning to create instructional environments that are accessible for all students can alleviate many of these barriers. Barriers for educational staff exist in both the social-emotional/behavioral and teaching and learning areas which can be addressed by ensuring that educators collaborate to create the most effective universally designed lessons and instruction.
	• Administrative support is required to provide the structure for meaningful collaboration.
		• To create the most purposeful instructional plans for all students, educators can use the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Framework to guide their instructional goals, assessments, methods, and materials. For information about the Universal Design for Learning Framework visit the CAST website at: http://www.cast.org/our-work/about-udl.html#.XqMm3GhKhQA
		• The California Special Education Local Plan Area Lead for creating open access to UDL for all has modules for Making Distance Learning Accessible to Students with Disabilities can be found at: https://www.openaccess-ca.org/
		• The UDL Framework requires educators to celebrate learner variability, recognize the unique identity and the intersectionality of those identities, and consider individual social-emotional, mental health, behavioral and academic needs of each and every student. Learn About Learner Variability at: https://digitalpromise.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Learner-Variability-Is-The-Rule.pdf.
		• For information on intersectionality see the video Tutorial Explaining Intersectionality at:

Topic	Considerations	Examples from the field
		https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6dnj2IyYjE&feature=youtu.be

Inclusive Mindsets: Mitigating Barriers to Distance Learning	**Creating master schedules** during distance learning is critical for educators and families. Schedules should be designed to ensure equity and access for all students; make certain general and special educators have shared responsibility in collaborating, co-planning, and co-instructing; consider the following questions when designing a master schedule:
	• Are general and special educators provided explicit planning time in the master schedule to co-plan, co-assess, co-instruct, and collaborate?
	• Are special educators provided planning time with related service providers and paraprofessionals supporting students on their caseload?
	
	Considerations for professional learning during distance learning
	• Are special educators (including related service providers) included in professional learning opportunities for distance learning (including those specialized to their role)?
	• Are there feedback cycles between administration and teachers to ensure the structures in place are designed to support collaboration, co-planning, co-assessing and co-instruction amongst general and special educators?
	• Are educators provided opportunities to use their voice and choice in engaging in professional learning opportunities?
		Strategies for effective use of paraprofessionals
		• For more information about paraprofessionals and school closures, view the Ideas for Utilizing Paraprofessional Document at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Xk0LdmNQib7XmhNlo14FGAhM1Om3zSVb/view
		
		Professional learning during distance learning
		• Suggestions for how to provide options for professional learning needed to support distance learning are listed below:
		    o New methods for providing instruction using online platforms
		    o New methods for communicating with families and students while protecting teacher and student privacy issues
		    o Managing new schedule and routines
		    o How to monitor student learning progress during school closures
		
		Providing administrative support for distance learning
		• Consider the following stressors educators may experience during school closures:
		    o Supporting their own children and/or family members while simultaneously working
		    o Learning new methods for providing instruction

Topic	Considerations	Examples from the field
	• Are educators provided options for professional learning needed to support distance learning? • Are educators provided flexible schedules to account for their self- care and balance between educator responsibilities and personal responsibilities? **Considerations for school administrators when embarking on distance learning** • Increased communication and support to students and their families to address family needs. Administrative support for educators and families should include considerations for: ○ Leading with care and concern for others ○ Putting safety and family first ○ Reaching out to one another to check-in ○ Being transparent ○ Presuming positive intent ○ Providing resources to one another ○ Building in feedback loops and holding one another accountable **Co-teaching and co-planning when teaching remotely** • Teachers who were co-planning and co-instructing prior to school closures may be wondering how to continue this effective inclusive practice when teaching remotely. • Because co-teachers have already established a professional rapport and have planned and taught together, they have a head start on transferring their co-teaching skills to a distance learning model. • How will the six co-teaching instructional models be implemented via distance learning?	**Strategies for co-teaching and co-planning when teaching remotely** • A few things that may change are the questions to ask each other when co-planning and the shared responsibilities to prepare for co-teaching; Resources providing suggestions for teachers who are co-teaching on how to co-plan for distance learning are at: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_v4r4ib7YgzDvYeR-IylJJD4QxvOm7fy • Information outlining the challenges and benefits of each model, and how to implement each model in a distance learning class, and suggestions for how to use paraprofessionals as a support in some of the models is at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FyPfaI9n-JRBck5zviYIS6ixt1WPuI2V/view?usp=sharing • One tool that can help teachers to support the needs of all learners is a worksheet to determine how to apply accommodations to students with disabilities that can be found at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BSA-pk3xnQ14Rpk3pKY7zy2bR_hqtw1a/view?usp=sharing • A tool to help identify the potential barriers to student learning and lesson planning to help overcome those barriers is to identify five focus students and design instruction and access considering those five students that are representative of the range of learners in your virtual classroom. This tool can be found at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jZGEKEx58eN2gOy_Few5f04ILOH6JTH0/view?usp=sharing

Topic	Considerations	Examples from the field
	• Ensuring access and providing accommodations to address disabilities that affect how students learn is one aspect of co-planning and co-instructing. • Universal Design for Learning is the instructional framework to design and deliver accessible instruction for all learners, from advanced to English learners to struggling and even students who are at grade level.	• This UDL Lesson Planning Template for Co-Teachers includes links to resources to help teachers design their co-instruction on the principles and guidelines of UDL and can be found at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WXQ4wKdRGYBQJsjC7Igqo0XaXNXXw0S_/view?usp=sharing

Resource List for Focus Area Four

Title	Description	Platform	Grade Span	Category
About Universal Design for Learning	Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) website with information about the Universal Design for Learning Framework:	Website at: http://www.cast.org/our-work/about-udl.html#.XqMm3GhKhQA	All	• Student with mild support needs • Mild/moderate students
Making Distance Learning Accessible to Student with Disabilities	The California SELPA Lead for creating open access to UDL for all has created modules for creating accessible distance learning.	• Website at: https://www.openaccess-ca.org/	All	• Student with mild support needs • Mild/moderate students
Learner Variability is the Rule, Not the Exception	Article from Barbara Pape of the Learner Variability Project of Digital Promise	PDF at: https://digitalpromise.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Learner-Variability-Is-The-Rule.pdf.	All	• Student with mild support needs • Mild/moderate students
Intersectionality 101	Video of kids explaining intersectionality	YouTube video at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6dnj2IyYjE&feature=youtu.be	All	• Student with mild support needs

Title	Description	Platform	Grade Span	Category
				• Mild/ moderate students
Ideas for Utilizing Paraprofessionals During School Closures	Link to google doc with a list of ideas for use of paraprofessionals during school closures.	Google doc at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Xk0LdmNQib7XmhNlo14FGAhM1Om3zSVb/view	All	• Student with mild support needs • Mild/ moderate students
Strategies and Tools to Support Co-Planning in Remote Emergency Learning	This resource provides suggestions for teachers who are co-teaching to co-plan for distance learning.	Google doc at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IOxaZq0sr5WEkph7KrVr96ruu2G3OA2n/view?usp=sharing	All	• Student with mild support needs • Mild/ moderate students
The Six Co-Teaching Instructional Models Implemented in an Emergency Remote Learning Model Due to COVID-19 School Closures	This document outlines the challenges and benefits of each model, how to implement each model in a distance learning class, and includes suggestions for using paraprofessionals as a support in some of the models.	Google doc at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FyPfaI9n-JRBck5zviYIS6ixt1WPuI2V/view?usp=sharing	All	• Student with mild support needs • Mild/ moderate students
Students with Disabilities Considerations for Distance Learning Worksheet	This worksheet can be used to determine when to use accommodations to support students with disabilities.	Google doc at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BSA-pk3xnQ14Rpk3pKY7zy2bR_hqtw1a/view?usp=sharing	All	• Student with mild support needs • Mild/ moderate students

Title	Description	Platform	Grade Span	Category
Selecting Focus Students and Creating a Class and Focus Student Profile to Inform Instructional Design	This tool is a form to identify five focus students and design instruction and access considering those five students that are representative of the range of learners in the virtual classroom.	Google doc at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jZGEKEx58eN2gOy_Few5f04ILOH6JTH0/view?usp=sharing	All	• Student with mild support needs • Mild/ moderate students
UDL Lesson Design Cycle and Planning Template	This UDL Lesson Planning Template for Co-Teachers includes links to resources to help teachers design their co-instruction on the principles and guidelines of UDL.	Google doc at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WXQ4wKdRGYBQJsjC7Igqo0XaXNXXw0S_/view?usp=sharing	All	• Student with mild support needs • Mild/ moderate students

FOCUS AREA FIVE

Accommodations and Distance Learning

Planning for the use of accommodations during distance learning will assist with the accessibility to learning for many students and is a key component of the provision of Specially-Designed Instruction (SDI)**. The Federal definition of SDI includes:** adapting as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child, the **content, methodology, or delivery of instruction** to address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability and to ensure access to the general curriculum, so that s/he can meet educational standards (34 C.F.R. § 300.39).

Topic	Considerations	Examples from the Field
Accommodations and Distance Learning	**Questions to ask:** • What are the accommodations that the student benefited from in the classroom? • How can those accommodations be provided via distance learning? • How can teachers coordinate teaching and assignments to not overwhelm students and families? • Are there Assistive Technology needs to address? • Are there accessibility tools and resources available through ed technology that will provide accommodations to address the student's disability?	• Work collaboratively with the family, student when appropriate, and teachers to develop a plan for providing accommodations for distance learning that will support the student. Consider the accommodations, including Assistive Technology, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and other related services, that the student was receiving at school prior to school closure, and create a plan for how similar supports and accommodations can be provided via distance learning. • Consider how to utilize paraprofessionals to help support accommodations and access. Can a paraprofessional be a second adult in the virtual classroom to help monitor student chats, ask prompting questions, take notes that students can access, observe and make note of students who are struggling? Paraprofessionals can also make audio recordings of textbook passages that are not available as audio texts. • Understood.org has a series of one-page resources for a variety of disabilities, from Auditory Processing Disorder, to Developmental Coordination Disorder to Dyscalculia and more. Each page describes how the disability impacts student learning and suggests accommodations to address the disability; share this information with general education teachers to develop understanding of the relationship between the accommodations and the student's disability and can be found at:. https://www.understood.org/search-results/v1/search?query=fact+sheet&_ul=1*1x3jabq*domain_userid*YW1wLTEwTUQ0ZW82QTM0dWtYZFlTeGdaVHc.&_ul=1*1x3jabq*domain_userid*YW1wLTEwTUQ0ZW82QTM0dWtYZFlTeGdaVHc.

Resource List for Focus Area Five

Title	Description	Platform	Grade Span	Category
Fact sheets	A series of one-page resources from Understood.org for a variety of disabilities. Each page describes how the disability impacts student learning and suggests accommodations to address the disability.	Website at: https://www.understood.org/search-results/v1/search?query=fact+sheet&_ul=1*1x3jabq*domain_userid*YW1wLTEwTUQ0ZW82QTM0dWtYZFITeGdaVHc.&_ul=1*1x3jabq*domain_userid*YW1wLTEwTUQ0ZW82QTM0dWtYZFITeGdaVHc.	All	• Student with mild support needs • Mild/ moderate students