

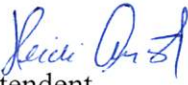


STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

May 13, 2020

TO: Complex Area Superintendents, Principals (All), District Educational Specialists, Student Services Coordinators, Special Education Department Heads, Special and General Education Teachers, Public Charter School Executive Director, Public Charter School Directors

FROM: Heidi Armstrong 
Assistant Superintendent

SUBJECT: **Graduation Guidance for Students with Special Needs During School Closures**

The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance for students with special needs in regards to graduation. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and based on the guidance from local, state, and national officials, the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) closed its school facilities to students through May 28, 2020. In place of traditional in-person instruction, teachers are utilizing an instructional enrichment approach that will continue to engage students in a modified approach to learning until school reopens to students.

To ensure consistency amongst Hawaii's public and charter schools, and to standardize modifications in graduation and post-secondary transitions, educational programming, and services, the HIDOE issued its *Hawaii State Department of Education Guidance for Long-Term School Closures: Graduation, Promotion and Grading memo dated April 17, 2020*. This document provides further guidance, information, and new procedures for students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan.

Regardless of whether a student is on the diploma or certificate route, schools shall continue to provide to the greatest extent possible, accommodations, special education, and related services identified in the student's IEP/Section 504 plan during school closures. Note: All pertinent HIDOE graduation requirements, procedures, timelines, and applicable state and federal laws remain in effect during this period.

Students who have met the criteria to graduate with a high school diploma

Conduct an Exit IEP meeting that includes review of a student's post-secondary transition plan and complete the Summary of Performance.

- There is no requirement to determine a student's individual need for compensatory services due to school closure as the student met the criteria to graduate with a high school diploma with the Class of 2020.

Students who have not met the criteria to graduate at the end of the third quarter, but may be able to do so by May 28, 2020

- Students who did not meet the criteria at the end of the third quarter and need additional support will be provided with opportunities to earn credit. Remediation and intervention may be provided at the earliest date possible with teachers and counselors at the respective schools.
- For Class of 2020 seniors, the HIDOE has purchased student licenses for online learning to support seniors who are not meeting criteria based on their third-quarter grades. The Office of Curriculum and Instructional Design (OCID) will enroll students in courses as requested by schools. Schools will then monitor student progress in order to provide them the most flexible option to complete the criteria to graduate.
- Communicate with students and families to discuss remediation, intervention, and options available to meet graduation requirements. Review the IEP/Section 504 plan and provide appropriate accommodations and support so that students are able to access these opportunities to earn credit.

Students who have not met the criteria to graduate with a diploma by May 28, 2020, but may be able to do so by earning summer credits

- The HIDOE recognizes the need to provide students who are not meeting the criteria to graduate with a credit recovery option to fulfill graduation and grade level requirements. This statewide summer credit recovery program is an option for students.
- For Class of 2020 seniors, the HIDOE has purchased student licenses for online learning to support seniors who are not meeting criteria based on their third-quarter grades. The OCID will enroll students in courses as requested by schools. Schools will then monitor student progress in order to provide them the most flexible option to complete the criteria to graduate.
- Communicate with students and families to discuss available courses to meet graduation requirements. Review the IEP/Section 504 plan and provide appropriate accommodations and support so that students are able to access these opportunities to earn credit.

Students who will receive a certificate of completion and turn 22 during the school closure

- It is advised that the IEP Team meet prior to the student turning 22 or soon thereafter if the team suspects there is a need for compensatory services.
- At the meeting, the IEP Team shall decide, when looking at the data, whether: (1) the student was unable to make progress and meet his/her IEP goals, including transition goals, because of the COVID-19 school closure; or (2) whether the student met these goals and does not require compensatory services.
- A Prior Written Notice must be issued to document the decision made for the compensatory services, including information such as frequency and duration as appropriate. Once compensatory services have been provided, schools should conduct an Exit IEP meeting and complete the Summary of Performance.

If you have questions regarding students with disabilities and graduation, please contact Ms. Cynthia Rice, Administrator, Special Needs Section, at (808) 305-9806 or via email at cynthia.rice@k12.hi.us.

HA:ak

c: Superintendent
Assistant Superintendents
State Public Charter School Commission