



## **Prepare for student with 504 plan to return to in-person learning**

Some districts that are providing full-time virtual instruction now will transition to a hybrid model or return to full-time in-person instruction in the coming weeks. In addition to reviewing students' Section 504 plans to make sure their accommodations are appropriate for the current learning platform, plan ahead for future models, said Patrick Andriano, a school attorney at Sands Anderson PC in Richmond, Va.

Here are three steps to consider.

**Clarify accommodations for specific learning environment.** "You may need to say, 'Since we'll be going back to face-to-face instruction, what accommodations and services will be applicable when we return?'" Andriano said.

If you have accommodations and services listed in the 504 plan for both virtual and in-person instruction, for example, clarify when a particular accommodation and service is only applicable in the virtual learning environment, he said.

"Make that clear, so when [students] come back to in-person instruction, it's clear that accommodation or service won't be provided when they return to in person and vice versa," Andriano said.

If you're going to include accommodations and services applicable in both settings or in different settings on the 504 plan, make it clear in which settings those accommodations and services will be provided, he added.

**Prepare for possibility of return to remote learning.** Don't disregard the idea you may need to return to remote learning for a time if someone in your community tests positive for COVID-19. "I think we'll see more of that as districts return to in-person instruction," Andriano said. "It makes sense for the 504 team to plan ahead for that and to clarify the services and accommodations that will be applied in each setting so [the] student receives FAPE." Some districts are developing contingency plans to address this circumstance.

**Convene the team when needed.** Alternatively, develop a 504 plan for virtual learning and, when the student returns to in-person learning, convene another 504 team meeting where you review the current accommodations for the virtual learning environment and revise them as needed, Andriano said.

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