Turlock Unified School District

Ericka Tschantz, M.A
Director of Special Education

Alternative Format Plan

Purpose

The purpose of this Alternative Format Plan is to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to their school health information and communications by providing such information in a format that is appropriate and accessible to them. The plan is designed to comply with state and federal laws mandating equal access to healthcare services for individuals with disabilities and to support the coordinated system of care and support for students and families provided by Turlock Unified School District. The alternative format plan aims to address individual communication and accessibility needs.

Background

In compliance with state and federal laws, including the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA), Turlock Unified School District is required to establish policies and procedures for ensuring that individuals with disabilities can access their school health information and communications in an appropriate and accessible format. This includes providing information in alternative formats, such as large print, audio, or electronic formats, to ensure that individuals with disabilities can better understand and participate in their school health decisions. Turlock Unified School District already provides services to students with disabilities to address their individual needs, including accessibility needs, as part of our commitment to creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment. This alternative format plan builds on (LEA) system of care and support by ensuring that students with disabilities have access to their health information and communications in a format that is accessible to their needs.

Turlock Unified School District

Turlock Unified School District is committed to complying with state and federal civil rights laws, including laws related to accessibility and accommodations for individuals with disabilities. To ensure compliance, the District has designated the following as its ADA Coordinator:

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Accessibility to Alternative Formats

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the district provides appropriate auxiliary aids and services when necessary to afford individuals with disabilities equal opportunity to participate in or enjoy the benefits of a service, program, or activity. These aids and services may include, but are not limited to, qualified interpreters or readers, assistive listening devices, assistive technologies or other modifications to increase accessibility to district and school websites, notetakers, written materials, taped text, and Braille or large-print materials. Individuals with disabilities shall notify the Superintendent or principal if they have a disability that requires special assistance or services. Reasonable notification should be given prior to a school-sponsored function, program, or meeting.

The specific type of alternative format used will depend on the individual's needs and preferences, as well as the type of information being communicated. The following steps, while not limited to, are typically followed to provide alternative formats for students:

1. A parent, teacher, or healthcare provider submits a request for an alternative format or accommodation to the student's health care plan team.
2. The student is assessed to determine the appropriateness of the request and its potential benefit to the student.
3. The alternative format or accommodation is documented in the student's health care plan (IEP, IFSP, 504, or other).

4. If the alternative format or accommodation requires a tangible object that needs to be purchased, proper authorization for the purchase is obtained, and internal processes are followed to place the corresponding order.
5. If the alternative format or accommodation is a service, such as American Sign Language, the school district has contracts in place to fulfill this accommodation.
6. Once the alternative format or accommodation is obtained, the requesting party is notified, and the product and/or service is delivered to the student. Adequate training is provided if needed.

Healthcare providers and schools will ensure that alternative formats are provided in a timely manner and in a format that is accessible to the individual, without discrimination or exclusion.

Coordination with Medi-Cal

As a provider of service enrolled with Medi-Cal and participating in Medi-Cal billing, (LEA) is required to verify any alternative format requests a student/family may have already provided to Medi-Cal. To accomplish this, Turlock Unified School District partners with the District's Medi-Cal billing vendor, who is authorized by DHCS' Tri-Party Data Use Agreement (DUA) to provide a data output file which indicates if a beneficiary requests alternative formatting. This file will be provided on a quarterly basis.

The information obtained from this report is provided by the Medi-Cal billing coordinator to the healthcare teams managing school health services for Medi-Cal eligible students, who will update a student's health care plan as needed to ensure that alternative formats are provided. On a quarterly basis, the Medi-Cal billing coordinator will report any new alternative format requests received to Medi-Cal via its Alternative Format Request portal (https://afs.dhcs.ca.gov/), if they are not already on file with Medi-Cal.

The District's Medi-Cal billing coordinator has access to the required information to perform this task via the report supplied by the District's Medi-Cal billing vendor. Through this coordinated approach, Turlock Unified School District can comply with state and federal laws, ensure equal access to healthcare information and communications, and support the success of students with disabilities.