

Date: September 28, 2018

Subject: Information Sharing from the State Director of Special Education

The purpose of this message is to reiterate the importance of considering Orientation and Mobility as a related service for many students with visual impairments. There has been an increase in the number of educators and parents contacting the California Department of Education regarding issues related to these services. The issues reported are:

1. Orientation and Mobility instruction not being allowed to occur off the campus site
2. Orientation and Mobility specialists not being allowed to transport students off site
3. Orientation and Mobility instruction not being allowed to occur on public transportation

In addressing these issues, it is important to review the *Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)* related to Orientation and Mobility. *34 CFR* Section 300.24(b)(6) identifies the following:

(6) Orientation and mobility services--(i) Means services provided to blind or visually impaired students by qualified personnel to enable those students to attain systematic orientation to and safe movement within their environments in ***school, home, and community***; and (ii) Includes teaching students the following, as appropriate: (A) Spatial and environmental concepts and use of information received by the senses (such as sound, temperature, and vibrations) to establish, maintain, or regain orientation and line of travel (e.g., using sound at a traffic light to cross the street); (B) To use the long cane to supplement visual travel skills or as a tool for safely negotiating the environment for students with no available travel vision; (C) To understand and use remaining vision and distance low vision aids; and (D) Other concepts, techniques, and tools.

It is also important for local educational agencies addressing these issues to consider options to make Orientation and Mobility a viable service. In doing so, the need for Orientation and Mobility as a related service must be documented on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) after qualified personnel have completed an assessment. Measurable goals that will indicate the extent of the services must be included on the IEP. It is critical that parents are involved in the decision-making about the extent of the services offered, as it is necessary for them to give permission for the students under the age of 18 to leave the campus site.

For any questions, contact Linda Wyatt, Special Education Consultant, Special Education Division, by phone at 916-322-3254 or by email at lw Wyatt@cde.ca.gov.