

Local Law 18 Annual Report

January 22, 2025

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Introduction

NYC [Local Law 18](#) (LL18), signed into law in February of 2023 by Mayor Eric Adams, aims to support students with disabilities as they transition from high school to higher education. It requires the city to develop and implement a system in consultation with relevant agencies to facilitate the electronic sharing of information about students' special education services between New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) and institutions of higher education (IHEs), such as colleges and universities, promoting access to the resources students with disabilities need to succeed in higher education, such as disability-related support and accommodations.

The work of implementing this law across NYCPS reflects a broader commitment to improving educational equity and providing necessary tools for students with disabilities to thrive in post-secondary education. The resulting program is designed to address challenges faced during this critical transition period, namely the primary obstacle of access to and sharing of educational documents required to determine eligibility for disability support at an institution of higher education.

At the time of this law’s passing, a system to accomplish this goal did not exist, and several months were spent engaging stakeholders and relevant agency teams to determine the best path forward to develop a system using existing resources. Ultimately, a solution was implemented through the addition of a letter to the Prior Notice Package for Placement (the final document required during the development of a child’s Individualized Education program) in the Special Education Student Information System (SEIS), to be shared with families at each IEP meeting for students aged 14 and older. This letter includes a section

for parents and/or students, depending on age, to opt into electronic sharing of their IEP and/or special education evaluation documents with a recipient of their choice. This letter and system were fully implemented in late June of 2024.

Because of the later implementation of the letter in SESIS, a temporary system was put in place for school year 2024 (SY24) to comply with the law. Graduating students and their families with an email address on file received an email in their preferred written language informing them of the option to share IEPs and evaluation documentation with institutions of higher education, including a survey linked in the email to obtain consent to share the student's IEP and/or evaluations with IHEs. Additionally, the email connected families to the Transition College and Access Center (TCAC), a resource designed to help with planning for life after high school, such as exploring adult services or receiving tailored guidance based on a student's postsecondary goals. The email was sent in June of 2024 and re-sent to recipients who did not open the message at two additional times between June and October of 2024.

This report outlines each of the steps taken by NYCPS during the first year of LL18's implementation, including the results of this temporary system to track consents to opt in to electronic sharing of documents. Future annual reports will summarize participation of students and families who opt in via the consent process documented in SESIS, or the special education data management system in place at that time.

Student Participation

For SY24, the following outcomes were recorded:

- 3,307 students and parents with an email address on file received the consent survey via email in June of 2024.
 - 65 total surveys completed
- # of parents or students who requested a copy of their IEP via survey: 59
 - # of valid consents based on student's age: 46
- # of parents or students who requested a copy of their most recent special education evaluation via survey: 59
 - # of valid consents based on student's age: 46
- Total # of unique requests for at least one document to be shared electronically: 62
 - # of valid consents based on student's age: 48

To review the email sent to families and students, including a link to the survey sent to students and families, see *Attachment 1*.

Description of Assistance Provided

NYCPS has taken steps to comply with LL18 by successfully developing a system to facilitate electronic sharing of information between NYCPS and IHEs, as well as other methods of assisting students and their families, including:

1. Updates to MOPD website to provide guidance to the public when seeking information on access to higher education for students with disabilities.

- In February of 2024, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities created a new page on their website: [Resources or Students with Disabilities Transitioning from High school to Higher Education](#).
 - This page links directly to NYCPS pages and resources for consistency and to ensure accuracy of the latest policies and initiatives.

2. Repurposing of Transition and College Access Center staff role to act as student advocates, providing information and support to students with disabilities regarding obtaining accommodations in higher education.

- Community Engagement Managers staffed at each borough TCAC have received a new title of Postsecondary Engagement Manager (PEM) and an updated job description to reflect student support aligned with the Student Advocate/Ambassador role requirements of this local law. As of September 2024:
 - TCAC leadership has met with PEMs to explain new shifts in workflows and expectations
 - PEMs have been trained on LL18 and its requirements
 - PEMs have been trained on job expectations and ambassador role connected to LL18 and newly created workflow of individually instructing students regarding obtaining accommodations at institutions of higher education
 - PEMs have begun connecting students seeking higher education at a CUNY campus to CUNY Offices of Disability and their respective point person(s)
 - PEMS have begun advocating for support for students with IEPs in college programs by attending CUNY public forum meetings
- There are currently five (5) PEMs staffed citywide - one per borough.
 - This school year, these five PEMs have supported over 524 students with connections to higher education disability offices to determine eligibility for accommodations.

3. Updates to NYCPS website pages to provide comprehensive information to families and students on how to obtain accommodations in higher education, including information on early preparedness.

- NYCPS website – new sections added to pages:
 - [After High School](#) ("College Considerations for Students with Disabilities")
 - [College and Career Planning](#) ("Families of Students with Disabilities")

4. Professional Learning and Staff Capacity Building Resources

- Multiple sessions on accessibility services in higher education offered but the Office of Student Pathways in the College & Career Advising and Awareness Professional Learning Catalog, including topics such as:
 - Transition Planning
 - Navigating Accessibility Services
 - Benefits After Turning 18
- Facilitators include SUNY, NYU, INCLUDEnyc, and other stakeholders.

5. Partnership with INCLUDEnyc on Development of College Transition and Accommodation Process Resource Guide

- NYCPS' Office of Student Pathways collaborated on development of this guide, which is now available to schools, students and families to support transition conversations with exiting students.
- The guide can be found [online here](#).

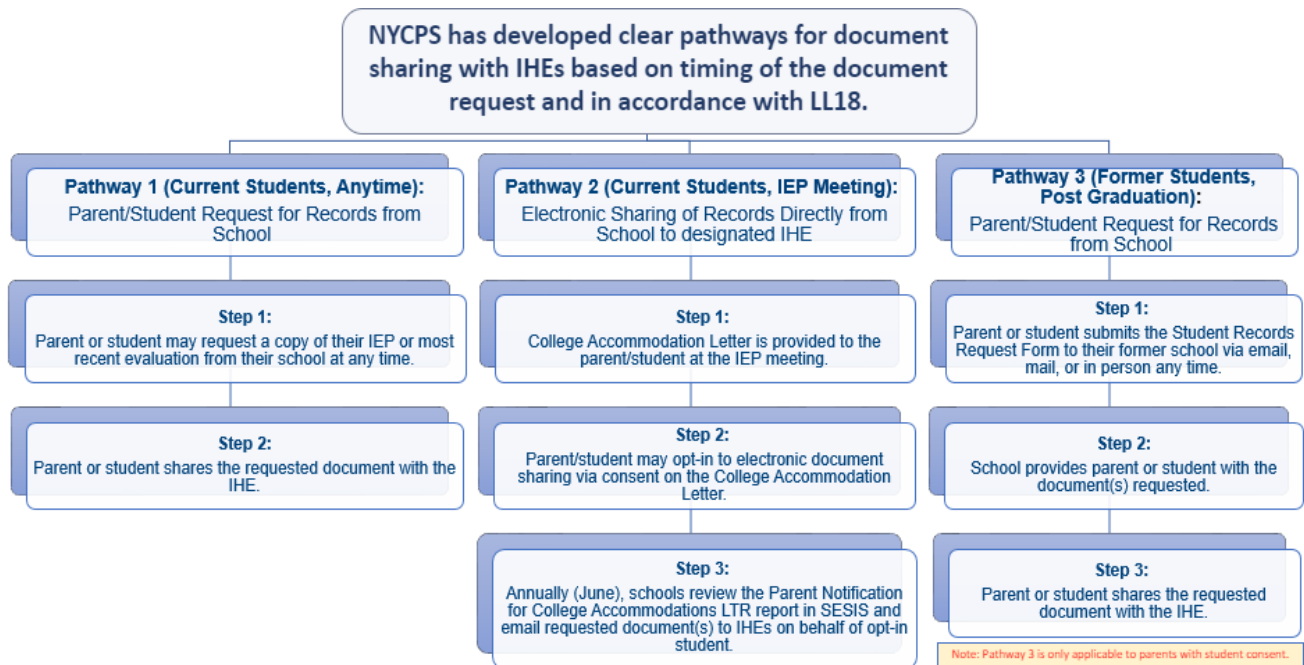
Details of the Established Information Sharing System

NYCPS has successfully developed a system to facilitate electronic sharing of information between NYCPS and IHEs, including:

- Updated NYCPS Records Request Form to streamline requests for special education documents from former students
 - Official [electronic records request form](#) has been updated to include requests for IEPs or most recent evaluations.
 - Form is accessible [here](#).
- Updated College Accommodations Letter in SESIS to include opt-in consent for parents and students (if age 18).
 - For every student aged 14 or older, the IEP template in SESIS includes a letter to families as part of the Prior Notice Package for Placement which outlines the ability to opt in to electronic sharing of the student's IEP and/or evaluations with an institution of higher education.

- To opt in, students must be 18 years old at the time of college enrollment. Parents may opt in on behalf of students only if the student is or will be under the age of 18 at the time of college enrollment.
 - Schools are responsible for uploading signed letters back into SESIS to document consent to opt in until the new data management system is released for school-age students.
- This letter is provided in the parent’s preferred written language as part of the Prior Notice Package for Placement after completion of the IEP.

This system is one of three pathways by which students can request their special education documents for the purpose of sharing with IHEs to determine accommodation and disability support eligibility.



Note: This system was fully implemented in late June of 2024, which led to the manual collection of consents from students and parents via survey for the initial year of this law’s implementation while this system was developed, as described in the introduction section of this report.

Student Advocate Duties

The Transition and College Access Centers are each staffed with a Postsecondary Engagement Manager whose duties and responsibilities have been updated to reflect and expand on the Student Advocate duties outlined in LL18.

As of September of 2024, these duties now include:

- Coordinating and collaborating efforts with relevant partners in ensuring that all college experiences are aligned with LL18
- Ensuring that all college bound students with disabilities have relevant information and linkages to campus disability offices
- Ensuring that all college bound students with disabilities have the information, resources and support in obtaining accommodations when attending institutions of higher education
- Producing and updating a yearly guide to local borough-based colleges and universities that supports students and disabilities and their families in the college selection process.
- Providing information, resources and help on navigating pathways to higher education with CUNY and SUNY Offices of Accessibility in each borough
- Working with high school seniors through the transition team leaders (TTLs), to coordinate campus visits and college tours that emphasize accommodations for students with disabilities
- Through consultation, serving as student ambassadors to assist students to navigate the college process through college tours, onsite visits, remote or in person consultation

Evaluation of Outreach Efforts

One takeaway from the initial year is that there was a low number of responses to opt into the program. While there may be many reasons for this, to improve outreach to families regarding LL18 in future years, NYCPS will adopt several strategies to address challenges highlighted in the initial implementation phase:

1. **Diversify Communication Channels:** The reliance on email alone, as demonstrated by the 3307 emails sent with only 65 survey responses, likely did not effectively reach all families. Moving forward, the new system in place is integrated into IEP meetings for every transition-aged student, which should increase program participation. NYCPS may also utilize phone calls, text messages, printed mailers, and in-person outreach through schools and community events, as appropriate, to ensure families understand this opportunity.
2. **Engage School Staff and Community Organizations:** Teachers, counselors, and community-based organizations often have the closest relationships with families. Training these stakeholders to communicate the importance of this document sharing to facilitate the eligibility process later may improve participation rates.
3. **Targeted Outreach for Hard-to-Reach Populations:** Families without consistent access to email or digital resources might have been excluded from the initial outreach. The new process in place should largely eliminate this barrier in SY25 and beyond. If problems persist or trends are identified that suggest communities are

not participating, NYCPS will identify and focus on reaching these families through schools directly, TCACs, and other community resources.

4. **Leverage Transition Team Leaders (TTLs):** Since the Postsecondary Engagement Managers (PEMs) are actively involved in transition planning, they can collaborate with TTLs to ensure families understand LL18's benefits. TTLs will also coordinate personalized follow-ups during IEP meetings or postsecondary planning sessions.
5. **Multilingual and Culturally Relevant Messaging:** NYCPS will continue to ensure outreach materials address language barriers and cultural considerations that help all families understand their options and feel confident participating.
6. **Ongoing Awareness Campaigns:** Continuous engagement, rather than limited outreach before graduation, will ensure families are aware of LL18 throughout a student's high school career. This includes reminders during annual IEP meetings or through social media campaigns. With the letters sent home annually beginning when a student is 14 years old, this creates an ongoing conversation that promotes early awareness and buy-in over time.
7. **Monitor and Adjust Outreach Strategies:** NYCPS will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of its outreach efforts by analyzing response rates and collecting feedback from families. Adjustments based on this data can ensure more families opt into the program in future years.

By addressing these areas, NYCPS will work to continuously increase family and student participation in the electronic document sharing program, ensuring more students benefit from a smoother transition to higher education support.

Attachments

Attachment 1: June 2024 Email with Survey to Students and Families

Email Subject: Graduating NYCPS Seniors with an IEP (Individualized Education Program) Survey

Email Body:

Dear Parent and Graduating Senior,

First, congratulations on reaching this milestone! We are so happy that you are graduating and moving on to college, career and other post high school options.

We are writing to ask you to complete [this survey](#). The survey is a way for you to communicate to NYC Public School that you plan to participate in a post-secondary learning option such as college, university, community colleges, trade schools, certification programs etc. and would like your individualized education plan (IEP) and/or assessments and evaluations shared with your post-secondary learning option or institute of higher education.

Through the survey you can also complete a request for adult service support or a team member from the Transition College and Access Center (TCAC) to contact you and support your after high school planning.

Please contact nyctcacs@schools.nyc.gov with any questions.

Attachment 2: Letter to Families from Prior Notice Package for Placement in SESIS

Document Title: **Parent Notification for College Accommodations Letter**

Date: ##/##/#### Student's DOB: ##/##/#### Local ID: #####

Dear Parent or Guardian of **STUDENT**

It's important to learn as much as you can about disability services at your institution of higher education (IHE) of choice as each IHE tends to offer different types of support. Most college campuses have some version of an Office of Disability Services, which coordinates the provision of reasonable accommodations and support services for students with disabilities. A student's need for reasonable accommodation and/or support services is typically verified by these offices. They also may provide counseling and referrals, and arrange crucial auxiliary aids and services, including assistive technology services, note takers, readers, sign language interpreter services, distance learning networks, priority registration, and alternative testing arrangements. In many cases, students may be eligible for these accommodations, including students in dual enrollment, certificate, associate, baccalaureate and graduate degree programs.

In all cases, participation is voluntary, and some students do not request assistance in meeting their needs on campus. Other students may not need accommodation for every class or every semester for which they enroll. And some other students may have disabilities which do not limit access to educational opportunities. Decisions regarding specific accommodations are made by campus staff based on documentation and need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Every college campus operates differently, and disability offices may have different names and documentation requirements. If a student is found eligible, the disability office will develop an accommodation plan based on the documentation that the student provides.

Many IHEs also offer college experience programs for non-degree seeking students or students on credential pathways who participate in New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA). For more information on these programs, students and families can explore the ThinkCollege online college search or request additional information on these programs from your school's Transition Team Leader, Parent Coordinator, or local Transition & College Access Center.

High schools should support transition planning by ensuring that dual enrollment and other forms of college awareness and preparation are discussed in IEP meetings. High schools can support students in locating IHE disability offices and should ensure students understand the process for obtaining higher education disability support. To assist, students and families may contact their borough Transition & College Access Centers, which can support students with this process, at **(BOROUGH TCAC EMAIL ADDRESS populated based on student home address)**.

If your student wants to request accommodations, it is likely that they will need some special education documents, such as their last IEP and recent evaluations. You are encouraged to request copies of these documents before your child leaves the DOE. Or, if you would like the DOE to contact you or your child after graduation, at which time you can inform the DOE where to send these records, please complete the consent

below.

If you would like to consent to sharing special education related documents to support requesting/receiving accommodations at an institution of higher education (IHE) of your choice, select an option below (optional) and provide a non-DOE email address to which future communications on this can be sent. We will contact you/your student after graduation so you can identify the location to which documents should be sent:

- I _____ (parent name) _____ (email address) consent to the electronic sharing of my child's IEP, most recent evaluation results, or other special education related documents with IHE(s) upon request. (for parents of students under age 18 at time of college enrollment ONLY).
- I _____ (student name if 18 or older) _____ (email address) consent to the electronic sharing of my IEP, most recent evaluation results, or other special education related documents with IHE(s) upon request.

Note: Highlighted fields are populated based on the student's profile information in SESIS.