

# Fully Ready from Day One: A Back-to-School Checklist for School Leaders

Ensure your district is fully  
staffed, fully compliant, and  
fully ready to serve students.

A photograph of a female teacher with short dark hair, wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, leaning over a desk and pointing at a laptop screen. A young girl with curly brown hair, wearing a striped tank top and a leopard-print bow, is looking at the laptop. Another student is partially visible in the background. The image is overlaid with a green and blue geometric design.

**7 TIPS**

FOR SCHOOL +  
DEPARTMENT  
LEADERS





As the new school year approaches, preparation is key to avoiding delays and disruptions that can impact student success and start the compensatory education clock.

***This checklist walks you through the essential steps to ensure your school starts the year smoothly and stays ahead so you can avoid scrambling to catch up later.***

### Assess Your Staffing Needs Now

Don't just review last year's numbers. Use them to predict and plan.

Review end-of-year data to identify how many students require IEP and behavioral health services.

Confirm projected caseloads for special education and therapy providers.

Identify open or at-risk provider positions and begin recruiting or supplementing immediately to prevent last-minute shortages.

**Expert Tip:** Use summer to align student support data with projected enrollment trends, especially for high-mobility populations.

### Fill Critical Service Gaps Before the School Year Begins

Last-minute hiring leads to inconsistent services and noncompliance.

- ☐ Assign all required services to qualified providers to meet compliance requirements.
- ☐ Use trusted supplemental providers to fill gaps quickly and maintain uninterrupted service delivery.
- ☐ Align service schedules with student needs to prevent delays that can disrupt learning.

**Expert Tip:** Districts lose up to 2 months of IEP service time each fall due to provider vacancies. Avoid this with a tiered staffing approach. [NCES, 2023]

### Support Your Staff to Prevent Burnout

A training session won't prevent burnout. A culture of care will.

- ☐ Provide hands-on training to align processes and tasks, saving time and reducing stress for your team.
- ☐ Bring in supplemental providers to lighten heavy caseloads and give staff the breathing room they need.
- ☐ Build in regular collaboration time so staff feel less isolated and more connected as a team.

**Expert Tip:** Burnout often stems from emotional labor and administrative overload, not just caseload size. Design your support systems accordingly.

## Trusted by 500 Districts Since 2011

Before teletherapy was trending, we were building it.

Rely on a dependable, fully customizable solution that ensures timely access to care for students with special education and behavioral health needs.

- **Special Education Services & Staffing**
- **Behavioral Health Support & Counseling**
- **Customized Staff & Caregiver Training**



## Ensure Continuity and Quality of Care

True continuity isn't just about staffing—it's about systems.

- ☐ Establish clear communication channels among providers, educators, and families.
- ☐ Review and update protocols to guarantee timely service delivery and progress tracking.
- ☐ Use data proactively to monitor service delivery and make adjustments as needed.

**Expert Tip:** Students with disabilities experience greater academic regression without coordinated service restart in August. Plan for more than just day one.

## Stay Audit-Ready and Compliant

Audit prep should be a monthly habit, not a year-end crisis.

- ☐ Audit the IEP and 504 plan completion status and address any outstanding items.
- ☐ Verify all provider credentials and keep accurate, organized records.
- ☐ Prepare documentation ahead of time to avoid last-minute compliance stress.

**Expert Tip:** Districts that shift to "always-on" compliance tracking reduce compensatory education payouts and legal risk.

## Secure and Track Funding Streams

Maximize impact by funding strategically, not reactively.

- ☐ Review local, state, and federal funding sources, including IDEA B & C and Medicaid.
- ☐ Align staffing and service plans with available funding to maximize resources.
- ☐ Monitor reporting requirements and deadlines to avoid compliance issues tied to funding.

**Expert Tip:** Strategic use of braided funding can stretch your budget by 15–30%, especially when tied to measurable outcomes.

## Align Student Services with District Goals

Student services aren't a silo, they're a lever for districtwide success.

- ☐ Ensure special education priorities align with your district's strategic plan.
- ☐ Identify key metrics (e.g., graduation rates, attendance, academic performance) that tie student success to district outcomes.
- ☐ Include special education leadership in district-level planning and communication.

**Expert Tip:** Your student services plan should be seen as an enabler of district transformation—not just a compliance checklist.



## Start the school year ready and confident.

**Secure the staff and supports your students deserve from day one.**

Get a free quote from eLuma today and discover how our trusted services can support your district's unique needs. Visit [eluma.com](https://eluma.com) for more information today!