

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for your patience as we have continued our work and planning for special education services in September. The past few weeks have been a whirlwind of team meetings, research, connections with parents and staff and collaborative work with our labor groups. We can provide you with some important updates today and plans for additional information later this month.

Before we share specific information regarding special education services, we would like to take a moment and recognize that our students with disabilities are general education students first. This must be the lens through which we consider the needs of our students. Our expectation is that our students will have access to and participate in the remote learning opportunities provided within general education. Further, we expect that all teachers will consider the needs of students with disabilities as they plan their instruction and learning activities. It is important to recognize that before we consider how to support students with special education services, we must first consider how their needs can be met within general education.

**For special education services, we will be supporting students with both remote learning and in-person services, dependent upon student need. Here is what you can expect:**

- You will be contacted by your child's special education teacher or therapist before September 4, 2020 to discuss if they require in-person services. This decision will be made collaboratively with families. We understand that it will be difficult to wait until September for this decision. The reason for this delay is to accommodate the staff work calendar as well as staff training needs. Students will be connecting with their teachers and therapists remotely until they can attend in-person.
- In-person services will be dependent upon student need and ability to access remote learning. In broad terms, in-person learning may be recommended for students with cognitive disabilities, those who participate in learning center and transition center programs and those with significant behavior concerns.
- Remote learning will be provided for students that are not identified for in-person supports as well as those who choose to not participate.

**For those that are chosen for in-person services, here is what you can expect:**

- To comply with King County Department of Health requirements, we are limiting class sizes. There will be no more than 10 students and adults in one classroom. These students and adults will only be in contact with the members of their group during the school day.
- Due to the need for smaller class sizes, we will run two sessions each day. There will be an AM session and a PM session, and each session will be 2.5 hours.
- In-person classes will occur 4 days a week – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. On Wednesdays, students will be able to participate in remote learning opportunities.
- Students will be required to wear masks, have daily temperature checks and provide health attestations. If a student is unable or unwilling to wear a mask, we will use alternative methods of protective equipment such as face shields.
- If a student or staff member become symptomatic or test positive for COVID, the students and staff in that child's program will be asked to remain home for 14 days and services will be provided remotely.
- Transportation will be provided.
- Students will be expected to practice and extend learning at home when they are not in school.

- All therapy services will be provided virtually to avoid cross contamination as our therapists generally serve multiple students and school. Services will be provided through synchronous sessions with therapists and asynchronous learning opportunities.

### **Preschool and Transition Academies**

- To keep class sizes small, we will provide in-person supports exclusively for students in special education and those in Head Start.
- We will offer remote learning for our preschool students who do not demonstrate the need for in-person services or who opt out.
- Our transition academies will operate Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday with no school on Wednesdays.
- Our transition academies will operate with two sessions (AM, PM) in alignment with other in-person programs.
- Our transition students will not be working within the community while King County is in Phase 2. Instead, we will simulate work site learning at school.

### **IEPs**

We will need to have IEP amendment meetings for most of our students in special education at the beginning of the school year. We will be amending IEPs to reflect remote learning needs and to consider student needs for recovery services.

### **Recovery Services**

Recovery services are designed to support students who struggled to make progress during the period of school closure at the end of the 2019-20 school year. In general, they are provided outside of a typical school day and often occur during school breaks. We will be reviewing each student's progress on their IEP goals to determine if they require recovery services. We have not yet determined how these services will be provided but planning is in process.

### **Questions and Answers**

We are creating answers for frequently asked questions that will be added to our district website regarding special education and 504 plans. In addition, on August 27<sup>th</sup>, I'll be providing a live meeting for parents in partnership with our Special Needs PTA group. See below for additional details.

In summary, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude to the many parents who were part of our work this summer. We had parents participating on multiple district teams and their insights and recommendations were invaluable. In addition, we received numerous emails and questions from families that in turn helped us consider areas of parent interest. I would also like to express my thanks to the many special educators and principals that worked with our team this summer and continue to work with us as we plan for September. We have a remarkable community of educators in our district who are passionate about meeting the needs of all students. We are looking forward to connecting with our families and to start working with students soon.

Sincerely,

Dr. Shannon Hitch  
Executive Director of Special Services

Special Education Group with LWSD  
Thu, Aug 27, 2020 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM (PDT)

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