

Summary of Reopening Washington Schools 2020: Special Education Guidance

This summary of [*Reopening Washington Schools 2020: Special Education Guidance*](#) will help families of students with disabilities know what to expect when schools reopen. It will also help families make decisions for their students. The information has strategies for learning online, in person, and a hybrid of both.

Special Education Planning for Reopening Washington Schools 2020

Scheduling Concepts for Consideration

This guidance was written to help schools reopen and provide special education services. Services might be delivered online, in person, or through a hybrid of both.

Special Education Planning Guide for Reopening Washington Schools in 2020

- The form has guiding questions about family engagement, language access, and technology. There are also questions about supporting students and staff.
- The form also has space to plan actions, timelines, and how teams will measure success.

Recovery Services Needs as a Result of COVID-19 School Facility Closure

- These are extra services for students with disabilities once schools reopen. Not all students need extra services.
- Teams should identify student needs due to missed school and missed services during spring 2020.
- Recovery services can be provided outside of school hours or during the school day.

Staffing Considerations

- Train all staff on how to support students with disabilities. Train staff to use accessible technology.
- Train all staff how to ask for and work with interpreters.
- Make sure all staff know how to ask for mental health supports for students and staff. Make back-up plans to support students when an educator is out sick.



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Inclusionary Practices Across the Continuum of School Reopening Models

Family Partnerships and Communication

- Schools should work with families to support student needs at home and in school buildings.
- Make sure all staff know how racism, ableism, and trauma affect students with disabilities and their families.
- Schools should communicate in ways that work best for families. Communication should occur in the language spoken at home.
- Schools should keep trying until they reach all families.
- Families with concerns should contact their school and/or district.

Student Engagement, Social-Emotional, and Behavioral Supports

- Schools should help all students to meet their social, emotional, and behavior needs.
- Make sure all staff know how to help students in a way that respects different cultures.
- Make sure all staff know how to help students who have experienced trauma.

Instructional Delivery and Universal Design for Continuous Learning

- All staff should work with special education teachers to help students with disabilities.
- All students and families need access to online lesson materials and schedules. Online schedules should be flexible.
- Students must receive accommodations and supports both online and in person.

Special Education Services Throughout School Reopening

Evaluations and Eligibility

- Teams should monitor progress for all students to support academics and behavior.
- School districts must find and support students with disabilities. This process is called child find.
- Teams should talk with families about student needs in school and at home. Teams should also discuss needs because of school closures in spring 2020.
- Data for evaluation can include observations and tests completed in person or online. Late evaluations should be completed as soon as possible.



Individualized Education Program (IEP) Development

- Students must receive IEP services. The delivery of services can be online, in person, or both.
 - Many students can learn online or through a hybrid of online and in person.
 - Some students need in-person instruction to learn. When it is safe to do so, schools should provide those services in person.
- If students are grouped for safety, schools should be careful not to further segregate students with disabilities. Placement decisions should be made individually based on student need.
- Services can be provided one-on-one, in small groups or in a class.
 - Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) is teaching that is changed to help a student with a disability learn.
 - Related services help students benefit from special education. Supports can include language, movement, transportation, and more.
 - Supplementary aids and services help students with disabilities in general education settings. This can include support from a paraeducator, one-on-one, or in groups.
- All staff can help students with disabilities. Special education staff must design the instruction and monitor progress.
- Families can help students learn at home and online. Schools should train and support families when needed.

Technology Supports and Assistive Technology (AT)

- Technology can help students with disabilities learn online, in person, or both.
- Schools must provide the technology in the student's IEP to help them learn. Schools should consider how additional technology could help students with disabilities learn.
- Schools must also help families learn how to use technology when students will learn online.
- Make sure all staff know how to use technology to help students with disabilities learn and be included.

Specific Strategies for Supporting Individualized Student Needs

- Students may have difficulties when schools reopen.
 - They may need help learning new routines at school, online, or both.
 - Students should practice using schedules and technology for independence.

- Schools should provide behavior supports so all students can learn.
 - Staff should focus on positive behavior supports and avoid punishments.
 - These supports should help students who have emotional needs.
- For students with unique needs, specialists should work with teachers and families to provide support at school, online, or both.

Progress Monitoring and Reporting

- Schools must document student progress on each IEP goal and objective.
- Progress reports should note which services were online or in person.
- Families must receive progress reports as scheduled in the IEP.
- Families may be asked to help schools monitor student progress.

Early Learning

- Make sure all preschool staff know how to help young children with disabilities learn online, in person, or both. Learning activities should be flexible and short.
- Teams must communicate often with families of young children with disabilities.
- Teams must work with families to help them support young children with disabilities at home.
- 2-year-olds with disabilities who receive services must have an evaluation and IEP in place by the time they turn 3 years old.

Graduation and Secondary Transition

- Every student in middle and high school must have a High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP). The HSBP should align with the IEP transition services for every student with a disability.
- Teams should plan transition services at school, online, or both. This must include career exploration.
- Students in high school may need recovery transition services. This might include students who graduated or turned age 21 in spring 2020.

