



Successfully Reopening Schools

— Guidance for Special Education —
July 22, 2020

**Welcome and Thank You For
Being Here**

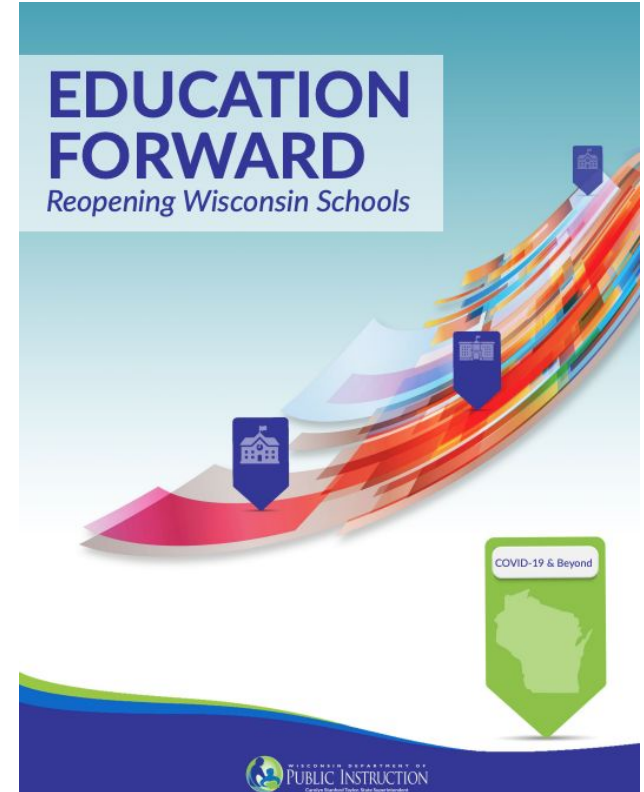


Unusual Times

The pandemic has required us to be more responsive, flexible and creative in our approach to providing education services to ALL students. And, there is more complexity in providing specially designed instruction and services for students with disabilities. Reopening will have to embrace the necessity for versatility while ensuring that we are meeting the needs of our learners as effectively as we can.

What are we going to cover?

- District Reopenings as of Today
- Preparation Activities for Special Education
- What to do in the First 30 Days
- The First Semester
- The Unknown



Presentation Notes

- We are operating in Zoom
 - Please make sure your mic is muted?
- Breakout Rooms
- Time for Q and A using the Chat Feature
- Patience and Forgiveness



The goals of returning to school...

1. Keep students and staff physically safe;
2. Caring for the social-emotional and mental health needs of students and staff;
3. Keeping learning coherent by creating a scope of standards with aligned systems of assessments and instruction—whether learning in person, virtual or physically-distanced
4. Meeting the needs of every student by considering the unique experiences of students and by considering students families as active partners in learning; and
5. Designing flexibility into school schedules, built-environments, protocols, and norms for being together in-person, physical-distanced, and/or through virtual learning.
6. Get student back into predictable routines, safe environments and allow parents to get back to work.

Public Health Assumptions

- A Vaccine is not likely for general use for 12-18 months
- Improved understanding of the virus will assist us in more precision in our curbing infection
- Another wave of infections could spark rolling closures.
- Children and staff with significant health conditions will be impacted
- Changes in the general operations of our schools are inevitable.
- We will need to address mental health supports for our students
- Clear, concise, communication with staff, families and students will be essential.

District Plans

In-Person Learning

Physically Distanced Learning/Blended

Virtual Learning

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for students and staff

- Districts will make PPE available for students and staff
 - Masks (some require it, some are making it optional)
 - Gloves as necessary
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Hand washing stations
 - Plexiglass barriers (some are, some are not)
 - SLPs (clearview masks and face shields/MCSE)
 - Medical fragile (cloth coverings as needed/MCSE)
- Environmental Changes
 - Classroom arrangements
 - Rotating staff vs. students
 - Entry and exit points
 - Transportation and Lunchroom procedures

Other precautions

- Health contingency plans
 - If staff are sick or exposed
 - If students are sick or exposed
 - Health surveillance
- Direction from County Health Departments
- State and/or National requirements

What does the law say about flexibility with special education delivery?

“(It is important) for the immediate foreseeable future to focus on flexibility that puts the priority on creative and collaborative delivery of substantive services. The business-as-usual compliance orientation on strict proceduralism and over-documented formalism is neither feasible nor fruitful at this time of limited resources and pressing demands.”

--Perry Zirkel

More from Perry Zirkel

“In these trying times, school district special education leaders need to apply **common-sense** proactive measures, as is their admirable norm and as our government is advocating for dealing more generally with COVID-19. Rather than fixating on perceived mixed messages, focusing on overly nuanced questions, or confusing well-intended guidance with binding legal requirements, local **special education** leaders **should continue to use their particular forte in being creative, constructive, and collaborative**, with due consultation with local legal counsel where needed.”

Summary “Do what is important (taking care of our students) and the rest will work itself out.” Kapitz

Group Time

In your break out, discuss what went well, what did not go well and what would we need to be successful in our reopening?

— 15 minutes —

Building a Plane

Share your groups discussion



Preopening activities for all staff...

- Be Kind To Yourself
- Become familiar with your district's reopening plan
- Prepare your classroom and/or work space
 - Arrangement of desks
 - Sanitizing items
 - Organizing materials
- Gather your PPE from your school**
- Brush up on your virtual skills (phone, googlemeet, Zoom, etc)
- BREATHE
- *If you have a medical condition that you feel puts you in a high risk category, contact me at your convenience)

Special Education Teachers..

- **Social/Emotional Health**
 - **Our first priority is make students feel welcome, let them know you are happy to see them and instill confidence that we will take good care of them while they are at school.**
 - Resources:
 - [Social and Emotional Learning Competencies](#)
 - [Reunite, Renew, Thrive](#)
- Environment: Plan how you will arrange your classroom space based on the districts plan AND the students you will serve (EC looks different that high school)
 - Desk arrangement (rows facing one direction)
 - Traffic flow (handing out papers, passing between rooms)
 - Hand washing stations
 - Sanitizing practices
 - Independent work space configurations
- Routines:
 - Decide how you will teach routines (when students arrive, through video message, social stories, etc. ([Stevens Point example for summer school](#)))
 - Anticipate children who may struggle with change more than others and plan for it

Special Education Teachers..

- Academics
 - Plan for both in person instruction **AND** virtual instruction
 - Determine online curriculum software/materials and Assistive Tech (more later)
 - If possible, have students rostered so you are ready to go when school begins.
 - Think about how you will instruct students in the use of the software and use of AT when students arrive so transitions can be fluid.
 - Ensure you have the devices you need and that they are charged and ready to use
 - Set up materials in Learning Ally or Bookshare as needed.
 - Review IEPs and data collected during the virtual instruction during the closures.
- Communication
 - Determine how you will communicate with parents-Especially those students who may have a hard time transitioning.
 - **Reach out to families/students who have been the most disengaged first**
 - Work with colleagues prior to school on shared expectations for instruction (including where the student will physically be) grading and managing transitions.

Special Education Teachers...

Procedures:

- Collaborate with School Psych on IEP and Evaluation schedules
- Schedule meetings with high risk students and families to discuss reentry and services.
- Continue to provide virtual meeting options for those families who request it.



Digital Learning and AT

A Quick **Word**

Digital learning is here to stay

Snap&Read (All districts)

Co:Writer (Athens)

- All MCSEC districts have access to Snap&Read - text-to-speech with study tools, text leveling and translation.
- Athens has access to Co:Writer - word prediction, speech recognition and language support

Accessible Educational Materials (AEM)

- Learning Ally - Reading Deficit required
- Bookshare - Print Disability required

Unique Learning Systems

Curriculum for students with Intellectual Disabilities

Digital learning

Sample Online Learning Tools

- IXL
- MobyMax
- Study Island
- Odysseyware
- SuccessMaker
- Rural Virtual Academy (RVA)

Take Note~

These tools are supplemental and do not replace individualize, skill specific instruction. They require discrete, specific instruction for students to be proficient.

Digital Learning Preparation

Plan to utilize digital learning by:

- Teaching students how to access and use the tools independently.
- Supports if the students get “stuck”.
- Prepare families on how to use and access technology and software.
- Consistent communication and support to families who will have to navigate platforms (How will it be used, how often, where to access it, etc)

Sample Tracking Tool

| Student | Grade | Disability | Gen Ed Teacher | Schedule | Type of instruction | Technology | Curriculum Tools | Supports | Related Services | Transportation |
|----------------|-------|------------|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| Nick | 5 | LD | Mrs. Bauer | 5 days/wk IP | Pull out for reading | Chromebook, google meet | Learning Ally, snap and read, Mobymax for reading reinforcement | Need instruction on how to use curriculum tools | None | Regular |
| Abby | 3 | SL | Mrs. Walchesky | 5 days/wk IP | Fully included, In class SE services | Chromebook, google meet | Mobymax for reinforcement of vocabulary skills | Need instruction on how to use curriculum tools | SL 1x wk IP | Regular |
| Matt | 9 | OHI | Mr. Kapitz, Mr. Brahmer, Mr. Zielke | 2 days IP, 2 days virtual | Pull out for study skills | Ipad/needs hotspot | Book Share for all texts | Needs to know how to access bookshare | OT IP 30 min/wk | Regular |
| Kendra | 9 | ID | Mr. Cihasky, Mrs Schreiner, Mr. Zielke, Mrs. Mattson | 4 days virtual, 2 hours/day for SE instruction each day | Self-contained all academics | Chromebook with a chair mount, google meet, Big Mac switch for communication | Unique with home support, parent training 1 week with switch | Parent training on switch and use of chromebook; para support 1x week for therapy, parent training on Unique | SL provided virtually 1x week: OT/PT support to parents weekly and 1 day /wk in school therapy in clean room for 1 hour | Parent transport one day per week |
| Evan | 7 | EBD | Mr. Cihasky, Mrs Schreiner, Mr. Zielke, Mrs. Mattson | 2day IP, 2 Virtual | 1:1 for social skills, 60 min/week counseling | Chromebook, google meet | None | None | Virtual Counseling with Therapist from NCHC | Regular |
| Sidney | EC/4k | SDD | Mr. Herrera | 4 days IP | Integrated/co-teaching | Ipad | ABC Mouse/reading | Family support on accessing ABC software, student training on ipad use and ABC access | SL IP, OT IP, virtual support to family 2x/mo | Regular |
| IP = In person | | | | | | | | | | |

Paraprofessionals

Prior to school:

- Get acquainted with the school reopening plan
- Acquire PPE as prescribed
- Find out your “before school” schedule (this will vary by district)
- Brush up on your technology skills and learn what role you will play in supporting students
- Discuss with your teacher what role you will play in online learning
- Support your teacher in prep activities

Related Services Providers (OT, PT, DHH, VI)

- Work with staff on schedules
- Discuss options if instructional format change (in person, blended, online)
- Plan for students who may have health conditions that limit school attendance.
- Communicate with families on any changes to services or alterations on how we will work with students (PPE, environment, etc)
- Be prepared to shift to virtual supports
- Discuss “clean room” options

Secretaries

All of you will work with your supervisors on specific pre-opening activities. These may include:

- Scheduling of meetings
- District-wide preparations
- Parent communications
- Recordkeeping/documentation/information gathering
- Keeping staff organized and procedurally on-track
- Other duties necessary for successful reopening

School Nurse & Health Aides

These staff will be (super busy):

- Creating and Implementing Reopening Procedures
- Health Surveillance
- Parent Communications
- Helping to prepare staff and the environment
- Recordkeeping/documentation/information gathering
- Other duties necessary for successful reopening

**TIME TO PROCESS:
WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?
WHAT WILL YOU NEED MORE HELP WITH?**



SHARE



First 30 days...

- **Help student acclimate to their return to school.**
- Teach and implement your new routines.
- Begin to do informal skill assessments and data collection based on IEP goals
- Teach the technology skills
- Familiarize students with the online curriculum-Independence
- Monitor students progress academically, behaviorally and emotionally-Even medically fragile students.
- Check in with families
- Collaborate with general educators
- Solidify schedules for IEPs and Evaluations
- **Ask for help if you need it.**

First Semester-Additional Services

“We recognize the significant efforts LEAs have made to allow for continuity of learning during this time, and that they have used a variety of approaches. We also recognize that some specially designed instruction, related services, and supplementary aids and supports could not be provided or were not as effective, which may have resulted in a regression of skills or impacted the student’s ability to make progress. Therefore, in some cases, students with IEPs will require additional services because of the extended school closure.”

[Information Update Bulletin 20.01](#)

Additional Services...

- Decisions are made on an individual basis
- Done collaboratively
- Supplement and not supplant the students existing educational program
- Services should not and cannot be practically replicated minute by minute. (*Reid v. District of Columbia*, 401 F.3d 516 [D.C. Cir. 2005])
- Are not automatically required if a student did not receive all of the services as specified in the student's IEP.
- Based on what services are needed to address regression and accelerate progress due to the impact of school closures.
- Additional services also cannot be provided in a more restrictive placement and must be determined in accordance with the least restrictive environment requirements.

How do we do this?

Data, data, data

- Data points at time of closure
- Data points from instruction during closure
- Data points from reopening
- Multiple sources (work products, informal assessments, parent information, past progress during closures).

Regression & Recoupment

- All kids regress during planned closures
- Is the regression more than peers
- What is the capacity to recoup given the child's circumstances

Timeframe:

Decisions about additional services should be made

- As soon as possible
- Not later than 6 months from the start of school
- Prioritize students who did not engage in instruction or were unable to access learning during closures first

Process:

- Review data
- Hold an IEP for students that may be impacted
- Develop and implement a plan

What might additional services include?

- Additional time for skill development during the day
- Additional specialists being involved
- Tutoring
- A longer day
- Summer instruction

* Services might be available to students whose evaluation and determination for services was delayed.

**NOT ALL STUDENTS WILL NEED ADDITIONAL SERVICES, but some might

What about students who cannot return in the fall due to medical conditions?

- IEP Team needs to meet
- Discuss students situation
- Include the school nurse
- Consider a full continuum of options
- Document options and decision
- Options might include:
 - Virtual instruction, teleservice, at home or remote site, some services in the school environment.
 - Not required to replicate the school experience in a home or alternative setting but must be meaningful.

What about students who could return but families choose not to send them?

- Meet as an IEP team
- Discuss the concerns
- Look at options the district is offering (RVA/Blended/Virtual/Home School)
- Determine delivery model that best fits the circumstances
- Document, document, document

**Districts should attempt to accommodate families within reason. Not required to replicate an in-person experience for students.

Common Question:

What happens if I can't get the minutes in as listed in the IEP?

- Consider the overall circumstances of the school configuration
- How is the circumstance impacting progress? (DATA)
- Can the minutes be provided during the “off day”?
- Can the schedule be adjusted to accommodate the minutes?
- Can minutes be provided within the classroom setting?
- Do you need to change the IEP?
- Will “additional” services be needed?

Remember: IDEA was not made for a pandemic, we will do our best given the circumstances~remember Zirkel!

The Unknown



Unknowns...

- Array of options for students who “cannot” attend school
- Full array of options for “additional services”
- Whether staff may do home visits and/or under what conditions
- Procedures for staff who are COVID 19 positive or exposed to COVID 19
- What if staff are out of sick days?
- What happens to staff if we have more extended closures?
- How long this will last?



Questions



Thank
you