Special Education Guidance Related to Special Education Services During COVID-19 Health Related District Closure/Alternate Learning Environment

April 2020
Special Education Services

Omaha Public Schools will continue to provide special education services to students with disabilities.

This requirement ensures students with and without disabilities are treated equitably and is required by federal and state anti-discrimination laws, including Title II of the ADA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the IDEA.
Special Education Staff Communication Expectations

• Special Education staff should be communicating with the families (parents/guardians) regarding services.

• Special Education staff members should regularly communicate with their Principal/Program Director and Special Education TLCs regarding how they are providing special education services for students on their caseloads.

• Teachers should not use text messaging to reach out and communicate with or to students.

• OPS recognizes that communicating electronically with students or staff (i.e. through social media) creates its own challenges. Remember all communication needs to remain professional and appropriate. Every communication should reflect the values and standards of Omaha Public Schools.
It is very important that special education staff document everything they are doing to work with families and students during the school closure.

This includes but is not limited to; documenting whether the parent wants services and what types of services, parent phone calls, student lessons, attempts to contact the families, small group instruction, preparation of materials, co-planning and co-teaching.
Documentation Requirements

• Each special education staff member should contact the families of students on their caseload to discuss the provision of special education services.

• Special Education staff members should keep documentation of all communication they have with families and services they provide to students. A sample documentation chart is provided. Special Education TLCs will be regularly collecting your documentation and data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student A</th>
<th>Student B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/25</td>
<td>3/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoke with Dad, he would like his child to attend virtual reading lessons.</td>
<td>Called dad, he does not have email, we talked over the phone about how to create a visual schedule for student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/28</td>
<td>4/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emailed Mom; sent directions for logging into Scholastic; discussed reading accommodations she can provide at home.</td>
<td>Checked in with the general ed teacher to make sure she knew how to accommodate the activity she’s sending to class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Called dad to make see how the use of the visual schedule is going.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Service Delivery Solutions

- Try to replicate the groups you had during the school year
- Schedule groups and stick to that time period – the student attends or doesn't (just like if they were in attendance or absent during the school day)
- Create a schedule of when groups will be seen and plan to share this with your TLC
- Instruction must be scheduled during school hours
- Based on the resources a family has available, groups may need to be adjusted to fit service delivery method
- Familiarize yourself with the resources already provided by the district (LibGuides, SharePoint, OPS website)
Service Delivery Options

**No services will be provided in person while schools are closed due to COVID-19 Health Related Closure.**

- Online or virtual instruction
- Instructional phone calls
- Support with parent or district printed paper packets or worksheets
- Support with textbook accessibility
- Consultation between the special education and general education teacher and other curriculum-based activities
- Regular phone calls to check-in with parents/students to answer questions or provide support
Planning and Communication

- Check with families/students to ensure they can use accessibility features in Microsoft Teams or other district approved platforms or applications.

- Collaborate with the general education teacher on what applications and websites they will be using.

- Problem solve and become familiar with accessibility features and identify students who may need additional support.

- Be available through the school preferred platform for communication if students or teachers have questions.
Specially Designed Instruction in a Virtual Environment

- Students in ACP, BSP, and HI Classroom programs who are mainstreamed to the general education curriculum need to have access to these online lessons. General Education and Special Education teacher need to coordinate together for student access.

- Check with families/students to ensure they can use accessibility features indicated on the students IEP, such as text to speech, dictation and/or screen reading.
Specially Designed Instruction in a Virtual Environment

- At the secondary level, Special education co-teachers should co-plan and co-teach.

- Special educators should advise general education regarding accommodations and accessibility.

- Any expectations for general education should be followed by special educators as well.

- If general education is utilizing a recorded or live session, preview for accessibility. Participate to provide instruction, accommodations, and feedback to students.
Specially Designed Instruction in a Virtual Environment

- Check in with families to provide behavior skills support (examples would include social skills lessons, visual schedules, zones of regulation).

- Provide low-tech accommodations such as visuals and choice boards to assist in accessibility of general education.

- Provide virtual ‘office hours’ to assist with questions, accommodation suggestions, student organizational ideas to complete work, assist with problem solving of learning structures.
Specially Designed Instruction in a Virtual Environment

• Encourage use of accommodations such as tens frame and multiplication charts. These were provided in the special education packets.

• Special Education teacher will collaborate with parents by helping create visual schedules, visual cues (academic and social/emotions), and social stories.

• Special Education teachers will support families by answering academic related questions, brainstorming ways to help a student work through a situation or walking a student/family through on how to complete a task, problem, assignment etc.
Specially Designed Instruction in a Virtual Environment

• Check with families/students to ensure they can use accessibility features indicated on the students IEP, such as text to speech, dictation and/or screen reading.

• Check with general education teacher on what book the teacher will be using to provide input on accessibility and students who may need added supports such as a graphic organizers, build background knowledge, provide a multiple exposures to the same book, develop/expand on vocabulary.

• Special Education teachers may provide reading materials that are on the student's instructional level. Parents may be guided to use instructional level activities in LibGuides that support their child.
How do I access information and support on how to provide virtual lessons?

The district Instructional Technology Team has created tutorials to use. You can find these on the OPS website.

Go to Staff Links:

Then, click on Tech Hub:

Then, click on COVID19 DIGITAL SUPPORT in the top right-hand corner:
How do I access information and support on how to provide virtual lessons?

Once you are in the site, you will see Resources by Role:

Click on Instructional Staff. You will be given detailed directions. When you click on the topics, they take you to a new screen with detailed directions.

The Students and Families tab provides detailed directions for families to use to access and navigate Microsoft Teams and the Student Clever Portal.
Examples of schedules teachers could follow to provide services and support to students

M-W-F, 10:00-11:00: Virtual Sunday Reading Intervention Group
T-Th, 9:00-9:30: Social Story small group
Every Wednesday morning, 9:00-11:30: Call families who want a weekly check-in
M-T-W-Th-F, 1:00-1:45: Co-teach math class
Thursday 2:30-2:40: Speedy Speech lesson on a phone call with the student
Monday: Create paper packet of work to be used for two weeks, email to the family, call family once a week to see if there are questions
M-T-W-TH-F, 9:00-9:20, 9:30-9:50, 10:00-10:20, 10:30-10:50: Virtual Speech Articulation small group lessons
M-T-W-TH-F, 10:00-11:00 and 1:00-2:00: Virtual SRA Reading Groups
Every Friday Morning: Record five reading intervention lessons and send to families to use the following week
Every Monday morning: Email schedule and/or materials you prepared for the week
Keep It Simple

What were you doing when school was in session?

What can you continue in a virtual environment?
Data Collection Reminder

Special Education staff is responsible for collecting data towards IEP goals/objectives which will be documented on Progress Reports.

In some cases, a parent may want only some of the services (i.e., speech and not resource, or BSP student receives the reading lesson but no social skills lessons).

Examples of data collection opportunities for Progress Reports could include:

1) Virtual or phone lessons for articulation or language
2) Virtual or phone lessons for reading or math and/or writing lesson
3) Documentation that the parent has requested no services at this time
4) Documentation that parent requested some but not all services, with a list of their request
5) Documentation that you provided the parent suggestions on how to use accessibility features and 5-point scale. Document weekly check ins and what parent reports.
Next Steps

1. Start serving the students who are accessible and who's minutes can be replicated.

2. For students in ACP, BSP, etc. whose IEP minutes cannot realistically be met virtually, have conversations with families to determine which services will be provided.

3. For students who have school issued devices and request virtual services provide a list of students to your TLC who need their camera enabled on their device.
Questions for Teams to use in Conversations with Families

1. What skill is most important to you right now?

2. How many minutes at a time is your student able to sustain attention to a task?

3. What parts of the home routine are most challenging for your student?

4. What kind of support would be most helpful to you right now?
We are here to support you!

The Special Education Division is here to support you and answer your questions.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to your Special Education Teaching and Learning Consultant!