

WAYLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES  
SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY  
(Hybrid, Remote & In-Person Plans)

The plans contained in this document were developed in accordance with the guidelines issued by DESE on July 9 2020. The intent of the guidance, titled [Comprehensive Special Education Guidance for the 2020 21 School Year](#) , is to support districts in developing plans for students with disabilities that are comprehensive, compliant and supportive.

All three models address, but are not limited to, the following elements as they relate to the delivery of special education services in Wayland.

- The provision of 'FAPE' (Free & Appropriate Public Education)
- Prioritizing the need for 'In-person' instruction to the best extent feasible
- Family engagement in the back to school process
- Service Delivery, including classroom support and related services
- Students in Specialized Programs and Preschool Special Education
- Proposed usage of Teaching Assistants
- Service delivery minutes
- Conducting Special Education Evaluations
- The implementation of Special Education TimeLines
- Conducting IEP Meetings

### **Delivery of IEP Services**

Under any model students with disabilities must receive all the services documented in their IEPs through in-person instruction, remote instruction, or a combination of both. The district will be placing a strong emphasis on the provision of in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible, while abiding by the current necessary health and safety requirements. Based on the guidance from DESE the District will prioritize in-person instruction for two particular groups of students with disabilities: preschool-aged students, and students who participate in specialized programs. Remote learning is often more challenging for these students and it should be our stated goal to engage these groups of students with in-person service delivery to the greatest degree possible.

## THE HYBRID MODEL

**Service Delivery:** The service delivery grids in the IEP are typically developed around a five day cycle of instruction and indicate how many minutes of each service is to be delivered over the course of the 'cycle'. The service delivery grid is divided into three distinct sections.

- The 'A' grid comprises consultation service delivery: These are not direct services to a student. Minutes in the 'A' grid are typically used for planning purposes or for consultation between a Special and General Education Teacher.
- The 'B' Grid: services listed here are delivered to students in their regular, general education, classroom setting. These are commonly referred to as 'push-in' services.
- The 'C' Grid: services listed here are delivered to students in an alternate setting such as a 'learning center' or a 'speech room'. These are commonly referred to as 'pull-out' services.

In the Hybrid model students who have an IEP will continue to receive their services in a variety of different ways that will continue to be tailored to their specific needs and their time in the school building. Special education students will continue to receive all the service delivery minutes to which they are entitled as a result of their IEP.

Special education students will receive in person service delivery on the days when they are scheduled to be in school and remote service delivery on the days they are not. A hybrid schedule will be created by their school based liaison and will be unique for each individual special education student. It is anticipated that for most students this will be as close to a 50% in-person and 50% remote split as possible.

Each of the different grade levels will offer in-person services that are consistent with the current organizational structure:

- Elementary learning centers and resource rooms
- Middle School Org Skills classrooms
- High School LRT and ALRT programs

Students in specialized programs and preschool special education will continue to be afforded the opportunity to receive in person service delivery up to five days per week for a full school day as dictated by their IEP.

- Goals and Objectives: Special Education Teachers and Related Service Providers will continue to work on Goals and Objectives in the IEP in the same manner as if the student was in school on a full time basis. In-person opportunities for data

collection will be utilized as much as possible in order to establish progress towards the attainment of annual goals.

- **Accommodations:** are written into the IEP in order to access the general education curriculum: Setting accommodations address a change in the environment. Timing accommodations address time allocations or scheduling of tasks. Presentation accommodations address how material is delivered to students. Response accommodations address how students can present material to their teachers. In a Hybrid model students will continue to be afforded the accommodations that allow them to access the general education curriculum. Depending upon circumstances some accommodations may be dormant while others may be changed or adapted to meet the new needs. Additional accommodations may well be added where and when it is appropriate and effective.
- **Progress Monitoring and reporting:** Special Education Teachers and Related Service Providers will continue monitoring student progress under a Hybrid model. Progress reports will continue to be issued along timelines consistent with previous school years.

**Inclusionary Practices:** A cornerstone of special education in Wayland is our strong emphasis on inclusionary practice. Under a Hybrid model we would continue inclusionary support in a manner that is consistent with the IEP. Special Education Teachers and Teaching Assistants would continue to support students in General Education classrooms. There are three ways in which inclusionary practices can be maintained under a Hybrid model:

- Special Education Teachers ‘push-in’ to the classroom when students are physically present in the classroom. This option is predicated on a small classroom cohort and the ability of the special education teacher to ‘travel’ safely in the school building.
- Special Education Teachers could provide ‘remote’ support from within the school building. In this situation the student stays in the classroom, support is given virtually and foot traffic in the building is minimized.
- On the days where students are receiving remote instruction a Special Education Teacher or Teaching Assistant will attend the session in support of the students on their caseload. Information gleaned from these remote sessions will be used to formulate and inform instruction when Special Education Teachers can meet with students in person.

**Specialized Programs:** The District operates several specialized programs, from Kindergarten to High School, that address unique student needs that result from an educational disability. Under a Hybrid model, students who participate in specialized programs will attend school to the fullest extent possible. The guidance issued by DESE

requires the district to prioritize in-person instruction for all students in specialized programs. All IEP services for students in specialized programs will be delivered to them in school to the fullest extent possible in a manner that is guided by the relevant and most current health and safety protocols.

\* In the event that a school or district closure occurs, specialized programs will convert from a Hybrid to a Remote model that is consistent with those noted by grade level in subsequent sections of this plan.

**Preschool Special Education:** Preschool children with disabilities are particularly in need of in-person services so that they can develop socialization, motor and communication skills that are vitally important at this age. Under a Hybrid model, students who participate in preschool programs will attend school to the fullest extent possible. The guidance issued by DESE requires the district to prioritize in-person instruction for all students in preschool special education programs. All IEP services for students in preschool programs will be delivered to them in school to the fullest extent possible in a manner that is guided by the relevant and most current health and safety protocols.

\* In the event that a school or district closure occurs, specialized programs will convert from a Hybrid to a Remote model that is consistent with those noted by grade level in subsequent sections of this plan.

#### **Delivery of Related Services:**

- **Speech Therapy:** under a Hybrid model will be delivered in-person as frequently as possible. Due to the nature of speech therapy and the need to see both the mouth of the provider and the students, this type of therapy presents some unique challenges. Speech therapy staff will determine the most effective way of completing their work based on the goals and objectives in the IEP. Therapy will be delivered in one of the following three ways: (1) In the general education class as a 'push-in' service ('B' grid) (2) In the speech therapy space under carefully managed health and safety protocols that will include, but are not limited to, social distancing, masking, distinct seating arrangements and the use of plexiglass in order to see the mouth of the student and/or the speech therapist (3) In a virtual manner, even if the student is in school. Virtual therapy, while in school, will allow the speech therapist and the student to get very close to a camera for articulation purposes without the need to compromise health and safety protocols.
- **Occupational Therapy:** under a Hybrid model will be delivered in-person as frequently as possible. Occupational therapy staff will determine the most effective way of completing their work based on the goals and objectives in the IEP. Therapy will be delivered in one of the following two ways: (1) In the general education class as a 'push-in' service ('B' grid) (2) In the occupational therapy space

under carefully managed health and safety protocols that will include, but are not limited to, social distancing, masking, distinct seating arrangements and the use of plexiglass.

- Physical Therapy: under a Hybrid model will be delivered in-person as frequently as possible. Physical therapy presents a set of unique challenges as most of the therapeutic activity is 'gross motor' in nature. Physical Therapists will determine the most effective way of completing their work based on the goals and objectives in the IEP. Therapy will be delivered in one of the following two ways: (1) In the general education class as a 'push-in' service ('B' grid) (2) In the physical therapy space under carefully managed health and safety protocols that will include, but are not limited to, social distancing, masking and the use of gross motor activity equipment. It is anticipated that there will be a need for, between sessions, frequent cleaning of equipment in order to meet health and safety protocols.
- Guidance/Counseling: under a Hybrid model will be delivered in-person as frequently as possible. Guidance counselors and Social Workers will determine the most effective way of completing their work based on the goals and objectives in the IEP. Individual Counseling, as professionally determined will be delivered in one of the following two ways: (1) In the general education class as a 'push-in' service ('B' grid) (2) In the counseling space under carefully managed health and safety protocols that will include, but are not limited to, social distancing, masking, distinct seating arrangements and the use of plexiglass. Additionally, counselors will work to facilitate 'social skills' groups in the most appropriate manner. Counselors will also be available, as they typically are, to consult with students on an as needed basis. This may occur in-person, by phone or by other virtual means.

**Teaching Assistants:** Special Education Teaching Assistants (TA) play multiple key roles in the delivery and support of special education students. Under a Hybrid model TAs will be utilized in the following manner:

- Students who have TA support on their IEP will continue to receive the level of support indicated in the service delivery grid. When students are in school during a Hybrid model TA's will attend classroom sessions as per the IEP. When students are participating in a virtual learning environment in the Hybrid model TA's will participate in all virtual sessions that would typically be supported when the student is in school. Information gleaned from the virtual sessions will be shared with the special education teachers to support in-person service delivery on the days that students are present in the school building.

- TA's will be utilized to support students as they transition within the school building. This will allow special education teachers and related service providers to organize and clean teaching and testing spaces in between students sessions.
- TA's may be used to support small group instruction when such coverage is needed.

**Evaluations:** As part of the IEP process the District will continue to need to conduct assessments and evaluations. All of our current assessments and evaluations are designed and normed to take place in-person. Until such times that we identify assessments and evaluations that can be conducted virtually we will continue to assess and evaluate students in person. There are three key considerations:

- Schools will identify spaces for testing that allow for privacy and also meet health and safety requirements for ventilation and air circulation.
- Evaluators will offer more frequent breaks for students and will be thoughtful in dividing testing sessions in a manner that is both developmentally and age appropriate.
- Testing will only occur when appropriate PPE and/or environmental safety conditions are met. This will include, but will not always be limited to: masking, social distancing within school guidelines and use of plexiglass screens that allow for recognition of facial expression and oral motor indicators.

Under a Hybrid model the intent is to assess and evaluate students in school as their schedule allows. Based on testing capacity it may be necessary to schedule students, by appointment, for testing on days when they are not scheduled to be present in the school building.

**Implementation of Special Education Timelines:** On May 21st 2020 DESE issued a Technical Assistance Advisory titled '[Implementation of Special Education Timelines During the COVID19 State of Emergency](#)'. The guidance contained in this advisory will be used to assist the District in meeting the needs of students with disabilities within the requirements of federal and state special education laws that prescribe timelines and procedures for action. Currently, all federal and state special education timelines remain in effect and the U.S. Department of Education has stated that "as a general principle, during this unprecedented national emergency, public agencies are encouraged to work with parents to reach mutually agreeable extensions of time, as appropriate.

The process for annual review Team meetings, initial evaluations, reevaluations and transition to early childhood special education described in the advisory are focused on equitable access guided by the following principles: 1) student-centeredness; 2) communication and transparency; 3) parent engagement; and 4) documentation. The District will continue to use the guidance contained in the advisory until such times as school is resumed in a manner that could be described as 'normal'.

**IEP Meetings:** will continue to be conducted virtually for the duration of the 20-21 school year. Protocols that were developed during the Spring 2020 closure will continue to be used to conduct virtual IEP meetings. In the event that a parent requests an in-person meeting the district will work to make sure that this occurs in a safe and controlled environment.

## THE REMOTE MODEL

**Service Delivery:** The service delivery grids in the IEP are typically developed around a five day cycle of instruction and indicate how many minutes of each service is to be delivered over the course of the 'cycle'. The service delivery grid is divided into three distinct sections.

- The 'A' grid comprises consultation service delivery: These are not direct services to a student. Minutes in the 'A' grid are typically used for planning purposes or for consultation between a Special and General Education Teacher.
- The 'B' Grid: services listed here are delivered to students in their regular, general education, classroom setting. These are commonly referred to as 'push-in' services.
- The 'C' Grid: services listed here are delivered to students in an alternate setting such as a 'learning center' or a 'speech room'. These are commonly referred to as 'pull-out' services.

In the remote model students who have an IEP will receive their services in a variety of different ways that will be tailored to their specific needs. Special education students will receive all the service delivery minutes to which they are entitled as a result of their IEP which is different from the reduced service delivery minutes students experienced in the spring of 2020 via their 'Remote Learning Plans'.

The district, guided by DESE, will prioritize as much in person instruction as possible for two specific groups of students:

- Students who participate in specialized programs
- Preschool special education students

Remote learning is often more challenging for these students and these students will begin the year in in-person learning to the largest extent possible. Schedules for these students will be communicated directly to families by their school based liaison.

Students who are not identified as being in one of these groups will receive their special education services based on a schedule created by their school based liaison that will incorporate both in-person and remote learning. Our goal is to deliver special education services on a 'sliding scale' as we move through the proposed five weeks of the Remote model. When we reach the Hybrid model stage our goal is to have students receive a minimum of 50% of their IEP services in-person, in school. The 'sliding scale' approach is designed to slowly return students to school, in controlled small groups, in order to rediscover school and meet their providers. Each situation will be unique, but will follow the general outline noted below and will focus on 'C' grid services.

- 9/14 to 9/18 Up to 25% of service delivery minutes delivered in-person (week 1 of remote for the district)
- 9/21 to 9/25 Up to 25% of service delivery minutes delivered in-person (week 2 of remote for the district)
- 9/28 to 10/2 Up to 25% of service delivery minutes delivered in-person (week 3 of remote for the district)
- 10/5 to 10/9 Up to 50% of service delivery minutes delivered in-person (week 4 of remote for the district)
- 10/12 to 10/16 Up to 50% of service delivery minutes delivered in-person (week 5 of remote for the district)
- 10/19 onwards: Minimum of 50% of service delivery minutes delivered in-person (week 1 of Hybrid model)

If we do not start the hybrid model as planned on 10/19 we will continue to deliver up to 50% of service delivery minutes in person until the hybrid starts or we go back to fully remote. This will be determined by the prevailing health and safety conditions.

There are many reasons for introducing special education students back to school in this manner. They include, but are not limited to, the following concerns.

- Exploring and getting used to their changed learning environment which in many cases is a brand new building
- Having students get used to being together in learning and social groups in a controlled, structured manner.
- Getting students and teachers used to seeing each other in their masks,
- Getting students used to hearing our 'new' voices, from behind a mask or from a new distance
- Exploring the school and experiencing new traffic patterns, new bathroom and health routines and having the opportunity to practice routines with less pressure



- Being given the chance to practice the new routines of arrival and dismissal and becoming familiar with the new expectations

'Under a Remote model we will both deliver and support instruction through virtual means that are consistent with that of General Education. These will include, but are not limited to Google Meet, Zoom or other video conferencing applications.

If, based on prevailing conditions, we move to a fully Remote model, Special Education Teachers and Related Service Providers will develop a student specific schedule that will allow them to fully deliver on the minutes in the service delivery grids. In this model it will be incumbent upon the home support to make sure students are prepared and logged in on the appropriate day and at the correct time.

- **Goals and Objectives:** Special Education Teachers and Related Service Providers will continue to work on Goals and Objectives in the IEP in the same manner as if the student was in school on a full time basis. In-person opportunities for data collection will be utilized as much as possible in order to establish progress towards the attainment of annual goals.
- **Accommodations:** are written into the IEP in order to access the general education curriculum: Setting accommodations address a change in the environment. Timing accommodations address time allocations or scheduling of tasks. Presentation accommodations address how material is delivered to students. Response accommodations address how students can present material to their teachers. In a Hybrid model students will continue to be afforded the accommodations that allow them to access the general education curriculum. Depending upon circumstances some accommodations may be dormant while others may be changed or adapted to meet the new needs. Additional accommodations may well be added where and when it is appropriate and effective.
- **Progress Monitoring and reporting:** Special Education Teachers and Related Service Providers will continue monitoring student progress under a Hybrid model. Progress reports will continue to be issued along timelines consistent with previous school years.

**Inclusionary Practices:** A cornerstone of special education in Wayland is our strong emphasis on inclusionary practice. Under a Remote model we would continue inclusionary support in a manner that is consistent with the IEP. Special Education Teachers and Teaching Assistants would continue to support students in their remote General

Education classrooms. Under a remote model inclusionary practices will be maintained in the following manner:

- Where students are receiving remote instruction from their General Education Teacher, a Special Education Teacher or Teaching Assistant will attend the session in support of the students on their caseload. Information gleaned from these remote sessions will be used to formulate and inform instruction when Special Education Teachers 'meet' with their students or will be used to inform and support the General Education Teacher in differentiating their remote instruction.

**Specialized Programs:** The District operates several specialized programs, from Kindergarten to High School, that address unique student needs that result from an educational disability. Under a Remote model, students who participate in specialized programs will attend school in person on a planned weekly schedule. The guidance issued by DESE requires the district to prioritize in-person instruction for all students in specialized programs. IEP services for students in specialized programs will be delivered to them in-person as well as remotely in a manner that is guided by the relevant and most current health and safety protocols.

\* In the event that a school or district closure occurs, specialized programs will revert to a remote model that is consistent with those noted by grade level in the preceding sections.

**Preschool Special Education:** Preschool children with disabilities are particularly in need of in-person services so that they can develop socialization, motor and communication skills that are vitally important at this age. Under a Remote model, students who participate in preschool special education programs will attend school in person to the fullest extent possible. The guidance issued by DESE requires the district to prioritize in-person instruction for all students in preschool special education programs. All IEP services for students in preschool special education programs will be delivered to them in school to the fullest extent possible in a manner that is guided by the relevant and most current health and safety protocols.

\* In the event that a school or district closure occurs, preschool special education programs will revert to a remote model that will be similar to the elementary school model that is described in a preceding section of this plan.

#### **Delivery of Related Services:**

- **Speech Therapy:** under the Remote model will be delivered through virtual means and/or in-person. ASHA (The American Speech-Language Hearing Association) has provided clear guidelines and training to Speech Therapists that will support them in providing effective virtual therapy services when the situation dictates it. Students may receive their speech services individually or a part of a group. Speech

Therapy staff will determine the need for individual or group work using their professional judgement in conjunction with an assessment of the goals and objectives determined by the IEP. Remote therapy supports may also include pre-recorded videos for students to use as practice or 'worksheets' that provide activities that can be generalized to the home setting. Students in specialized programs and preschool will receive in-person speech services to the fullest extent possible.

- Occupational Therapy: under the Remote model will be delivered through in-person and/or virtual means. AOTA (The American Occupational Therapy Association) has provided clear guidelines and training to Occupational Therapists and Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants that will support them in providing effective virtual therapy services when the situation dictates it. Students may receive their occupational therapy services individually or as part of a group. Occupational Therapy staff will determine the need for individual or group work using their professional judgement in conjunction with an assessment of the goals and objectives determined by the IEP. Remote therapy supports may also include pre-recorded videos for students to use as practice or 'worksheets' that provide activities that can be generalized to the home setting. Students in specialized programs and preschool will receive in-person occupational therapy services to the fullest extent possible.
- Physical Therapy: under the Remote model will be delivered through in-person and/or virtual means. APTA (The American Physical Therapy Association) has provided clear guidelines and training to Physical Therapists that will support them in providing effective virtual therapy services when the situation dictates it. Students may receive their physical therapy services individually or a part of a group. Physical Therapy staff will determine the need for individual or group work using their professional judgement in conjunction with an assessment of the goals and objectives determined by the IEP. Remote therapy supports may also include pre-recorded videos for students to use as practice or 'worksheets' that provide activities that can be generalized to the home setting. Students in specialized programs and preschool will receive in-person physical therapy services to the fullest extent possible.
- Guidance/Counseling: under the Remote model will be delivered through in-person and/or virtual means. Guidance counselors and Social Workers will determine the most effective way of completing their work based on the goals and objectives in the IEP. Individual Counseling, as professionally determined will be delivered in one of the following three ways: (1) In-person (2) Through video conferencing (3) Over the phone. Additionally, counselors will work to facilitate 'social skills' groups in the most appropriate in-person and/or virtual manner.

Counselors will also be available, as they typically are, to consult with students on an as needed basis. This may occur in-person, by phone or by other virtual video means. Students in specialized programs and will receive in-person guidance and counselling services to the fullest extent possible.

**Teaching Assistants:** Special Education Teaching Assistants (TA) play multiple key roles in the delivery and support of special education students. Under a Remote model TAs will be utilized in the following manner:

- Students who have TA support on their IEP will continue to receive the level of support indicated in the service delivery grid. When students are engaged in remote instruction TA's will 'attend' classroom sessions as per the IEP. When students are participating in a virtual learning environment in the remote model TA's will participate in all virtual sessions that would typically be supported when the student is in school. Information gleaned from the virtual sessions will be shared with the special education teachers to support their remote service delivery.
- TA's may be used to support virtual small group instruction or social skills groups when such support is needed.

**Evaluations:** As part of the IEP process the District will continue to need to conduct assessments and evaluations. All of our current assessments and evaluations are designed and normed to take place in-person. Until such times that we identify assessments and evaluations that can be conducted virtually we will continue to assess and evaluate students in person. There are three key considerations:

- Schools will identify spaces for testing that allow for privacy and also meet health and safety requirements for ventilation and air circulation.
- Evaluators will offer more frequent breaks for students and will be thoughtful in dividing testing sessions in a manner that is both developmentally and age appropriate.
- Testing will only occur when appropriate PPE and/or environmental safety conditions are met. This will include, but will not always be limited to: masking, social distancing within school guidelines and use of plexiglass screens that allow for recognition of facial expression and oral motor indicators.

Under a Remote model students will be scheduled, by appointment, for testing in their home school building. The District will reserve the right to conduct testing in an alternative location should the students home school building be unavailable.

**Implementation of Special Education Timelines:** On May 21st 2020 DESE issued a Technical Assistance Advisory titled '[Implementation of Special Education Timelines](#)

[During the COVID19 State of Emergency](#). The guidance contained in this advisory will be used to assist the District in meeting the needs of students with disabilities within the requirements of federal and state special education laws that prescribe timelines and procedures for action. Currently, all federal and state special education timelines remain in effect and the U.S. Department of Education has stated that "as a general principle, during this unprecedented national emergency, public agencies are encouraged to work with parents to reach mutually agreeable extensions of time, as appropriate.

The process for annual review Team meetings, initial evaluations, reevaluations and transition to early childhood special education described in the advisory are focused on equitable access guided by the following principles: 1) student-centeredness; 2) communication and transparency; 3) parent engagement; and 4) documentation. The District will continue to use the guidance contained in the advisory until such times as school is resumed in a manner that could be described as 'normal'.

**IEP Meetings:** will continue to be conducted virtually for the duration of the 20-21 school year. Protocols that were developed during the Spring 2020 closure will continue to be used to conduct virtual IEP meetings. In the event that a parent requests an in-person meeting the district will work to make sure that this occurs in a safe and controlled environment.

## THE IN-PERSON MODEL

**Service Delivery:** The service delivery grids in the IEP are typically developed around a five day cycle of instruction and indicate how many minutes of each service is to be delivered over the course of the 'cycle'. The service delivery grid is divided into three distinct sections.

- The 'A' grid comprises consultation service delivery: These are not direct services to a student. Minutes in the 'A' grid are typically used for planning purposes or for consultation between a Special and General Education Teacher.
- The 'B' Grid: services listed here are delivered to students in their regular, general education, classroom setting. These are commonly referred to as 'push-in' services.
- The 'C' Grid: services listed here are delivered to students in an alternate setting such as a 'learning center' or a 'speech room'. These are commonly referred to as 'pull-out' services.

Under an In-Person model the District will deliver all minutes in the service delivery grids in-person to students in a manner that will be as consistent as possible with past practice. There will be additional health and safety protocols in place that are detailed in the general school safety plans.

- **Goals and Objectives:** Special Education Teachers and Related Service Providers will continue to work on Goals and Objectives in the IEP
- **Accommodations:** are written into the IEP in order to access the general education curriculum: Setting accommodations address a change in the environment. Timing accommodations address time allocations or scheduling of tasks. Presentation accommodations address how material is delivered to students. Response accommodations address how students can present material to their teachers. Accommodations will continue to be provided as written in the IEP.
- **Progress Monitoring and reporting:** Special Education Teachers and Related Service Providers will continue monitoring student progress towards annual goals. Progress reports will continue to be issued along timelines consistent with previous school years.

**Inclusionary Practices:** A cornerstone of special education in Wayland is our strong emphasis on inclusionary practice. Under a In-Person model we would continue inclusionary support in a manner that is consistent with the IEP. Special Education Teachers and Teaching Assistants would continue to support students in General Education classrooms. There are three ways in which inclusionary practices can be maintained under a In-Person model:

- Special Education Teachers ‘push-in’ to the classroom when students are physically present in the classroom. This option is predicated on a small classroom cohort and the ability of the special education teacher to ‘travel’ safely in the school building.
- Special Education Teachers could provide ‘remote’ support from within the school building. In this situation the student stays in the classroom, support is given virtually and foot traffic in the building is minimized.

**Specialized Programs:** The District operates several specialized programs, from Kindergarten to High School, that address unique student needs that result from an educational disability. Under a In-Person model, students who participate in specialized programs will attend school on a full time basis. The guidance issued by DESE requires the district to prioritize in-person instruction for all students in specialized programs. All IEP services for students in specialized programs will be delivered to them in-person in a manner that is guided by the relevant and most current health and safety protocols.

**Preschool Special Education:** Preschool children with disabilities are particularly in need of in-person services so that they can develop socialization, motor and communication skills that are vitally important at this age. Under an in-person model, students who participate in preschool programs will attend school on a full time basis. The guidance

issued by DESE requires the district to prioritize in-person instruction for all students in preschool special education. All IEP services for students in preschool programs will be delivered to them in school in a manner that is guided by the relevant and most current health and safety protocols.

### **Delivery of Related Services:**

- **Speech Therapy:** under a In-Person model will be delivered in-person as frequently as possible. Due to the nature of speech therapy and the need to see both the mouth of the provider and the students, this type of therapy presents some unique challenges. Speech therapy staff will determine the most effective way of completing their work based on the goals and objectives in the IEP. Therapy will be delivered in one of the following three ways: (1) In the general education class as a 'push-in' service ('B' grid) (2) In the speech therapy space under carefully managed health and safety protocols that will include, but are not limited to, social distancing, masking, distinct seating arrangements and the use of plexiglass in order to see the mouth of the student and/or the speech therapist (3) In a virtual manner, even if the student is in school. Virtual therapy, while in school, will allow the speech therapist and the student to get very close to a camera for articulation purposes without the need to compromise health and safety protocols.
- **Occupational Therapy:** will be delivered in-person. Occupational therapy staff will determine the most effective way of completing their work based on the goals and objectives in the IEP. Therapy will be delivered in one of the following two ways: (1) In the general education class as a 'push-in' service ('B' grid) (2) In the occupational therapy space under carefully managed health and safety protocols that will include, but are not limited to, social distancing, masking, distinct seating arrangements and the use of plexiglass.
- **Physical Therapy:** will be delivered in-person. Physical therapy presents a set of unique challenges as most of the therapeutic activity is 'gross motor' in nature. Physical Therapists will determine the most effective way of completing their work based on the goals and objectives in the IEP. Therapy will be delivered in one of the following two ways: (1) In the general education class as a 'push-in' service ('B' grid) (2) In the physical therapy space under carefully managed health and safety protocols that will include, but are not limited to, social distancing, masking and the use of gross motor activity equipment. It is anticipated that there will be a need for, between sessions, frequent cleaning of equipment in order to meet health and safety protocols.
- **Guidance/Counseling:** will be delivered in-person. Guidance counselors and Social Workers will determine the most effective way of completing their work based on the goals and objectives in the IEP. Individual Counseling, as professionally

determined will be delivered in one of the following two ways: (1) In the general education class as a 'push-in' service ('B' grid) (2) In the counseling space under carefully managed health and safety protocols that will include, but are not limited to, social distancing, masking, distinct seating arrangements and the use of plexiglass. Additionally, counselors will work to facilitate 'social skills' groups in the most appropriate manner. Counselors will also be available, as they typically are, to consult with students on an as needed basis. This may occur in-person, by phone or by other virtual means.

**Teaching Assistants:** Special Education Teaching Assistants (TA) play multiple key roles in the delivery and support of special education students. Under an In-Person model TAs will be utilized in the following manner:

- Students who have TA support on their IEP will continue to receive the level of support indicated in the service delivery grid. TA's will attend classroom sessions as per the IEP.
- TA's will be utilized to support students as they transition within the school building. This will allow special education teachers and related service providers to organize and clean teaching and testing spaces in between students sessions.
- TA's may be used to support small group instruction when such coverage is needed or to support students participating in 'in-building' virtual therapy, such as speech.

**Evaluations:** As part of the IEP process the District will continue to need to conduct assessments and evaluations. All of our current assessments and evaluations are designed and normed to take place in-person. We will continue to assess and evaluate students in person. There are three key considerations:

- Schools will identify spaces for testing that allow for privacy and also meet health and safety requirements for ventilation and air circulation.
- Evaluators will offer more frequent breaks for students and will be thoughtful in dividing testing sessions in a manner that is both developmentally and age appropriate.
- Testing will only occur when appropriate PPE and/or environmental safety conditions are met. This will include, but will not always be limited to: masking, social distancing within school guidelines and use of plexiglass screens that allow for recognition of facial expression and oral motor indicators.

**Implementation of Special Education Timelines:** On May 21st 2020 DESE issued a Technical Assistance Advisory titled '[Implementation of Special Education Timelines During the COVID19 State of Emergency](#)'. The guidance contained in this advisory will be used to assist the District in meeting the needs of students with disabilities within the



requirements of federal and state special education laws that prescribe timelines and procedures for action. Currently, all federal and state special education timelines remain in effect and the U.S. Department of Education has stated that "as a general principle, during this unprecedented national emergency, public agencies are encouraged to work with parents to reach mutually agreeable extensions of time, as appropriate.

The process for annual review Team meetings, initial evaluations, reevaluations and transition to early childhood special education described in the advisory are focused on equitable access guided by the following principles: 1) student-centeredness; 2) communication and transparency; 3) parent engagement; and 4) documentation. The District will continue to use the guidance contained in the advisory until such times as school is resumed in a manner that could be described as 'normal'.

**IEP Meetings:** will continue to be conducted virtually for the duration of the 20-21 school year. Protocols that were developed during the Spring 2020 closure will continue to be used to conduct virtual IEP meetings. In the event that a parent requests an in-person meeting the district will work to make sure that this occurs in a safe and controlled environment.