

Town Hall with SEPTA



August 19, 2020

Arlington Public Schools



Introduction and Opening Comments from SEPTA



Arlington Public Schools

Opening Comments from the Office of Special Education



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Opening Comments from Dr. Durán



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Inclusion is not a strategy to help people fit into systems and structures which exist in our societies; It is about transforming those systems and structures to make it better for everyone.

–Diane Richler, Past President, Inclusion International



Arlington Public Schools



APS Will Address Questions from the Following Overarching Themes

- ❖ General Questions
- ❖ IEP/504 Considerations
- ❖ In Person Instruction
- ❖ 1:1 Aides
- ❖ Working Parents, Parent Involvement, Parent Training
- ❖ Service/Accommodation Implementation at Home
- ❖ Compensatory Services and Recovery Hours
- ❖ Assessment and Progress Measurement
- ❖ Technology
- ❖ ATSS

General Questions



General Questions

- What are driving return to school decisions? Budget, insurance, liability, teacher availability, facilities, safety?
- What is APS' plan to ensure equity and consistency from school to school in communication, services offered, delivery of services?
- How will APS ensure students with disabilities are meaningfully included in remote instruction alongside nondisabled peers?
- How will attendance/truancy be handled with students with disabilities? If they make the attempt to attend, even for a few minutes, will that count for the day?
- Are UDL (Universal Design for Learning) principles being used in the delivery of virtual instruction? If so can you provide some examples? If not, why not?



Responses to General Questions

Reopening Criteria - School Decisions

1. Student and Family Instructional Preference
2. Employee Work Preference
3. Employee and Student & Family Preference compared to Operational Capacities under COVID-19 health and safety measures
4. Global Supply Availability (Personal Protective Equipment and Custodial Supplies)
5. Local, Regional, and National COVID-19 Health Metrics (10 Key Health Metrics)
6. Local, State, and Federal Public Health Guidance

Equity

The Department of Teaching & Learning and other offices are meeting with building administrators weekly to develop common and consistent plans of action to ensure consistency across all schools in the division. Due to the different building, students, and demographics needs, equity is going to look different. Equity is a principle of fairness. APS will aggressively strive for equity by encompassing a wide variety of instructional models, programs, and strategies that may be considered fair, but not necessarily equal. Equity is the process; equality is the outcome.



Inclusion

- ★ Participation with nondisabled peers in a virtual environment

- ★ Students with disabilities will have the opportunity to participate in small groups and a variety of activities with nondisabled peers. These interactions will be planned with intentionality to increase meaningful interactions.

- ★ Some examples of virtual inclusive opportunities:
 - Participation in instructional groups, co-taught classes and asynchronous activities
 - Morning meetings
 - Movement breaks
 - Social Emotional Learning
 - Electives, clubs and extracurricular activities as available



Attendance

Virginia regulations indicate that if a student participates in a portion of their school day they are marked present for the day. The IEP team can also consider a modified schedule for students with disabilities with the following considerations:

- If a shortened schedule is determined appropriate by the IEP team, the IEP team will need to ensure that IEP accurately depicts the decision to shorten the normal school day by adjusting the services page and LRE page to reflect the student's newly agreed schedule and when & where they will receive the IEP services.
- Caution should be taken by the team in consideration of the shortened normal school day so that the student still has access to the services indicated as needed per their IEP.
- The IEP team should determine progress during the shortened schedule, document service provision and develop a plan for return to the normal school schedule when appropriate.



Universal Design for Learning

Teachers will be considering the UDL Framework to design:

- Multiple means of engagement - recruiting interest, sustaining effort & persistence, self-regulation
- Multiple means of representation - perception, language and symbols, comprehension
- Multiple means of action and expression - physical action, expression and communication, executive functioning



Additionally teachers will be able utilize UDL principles such as:

- Recording instruction for student to watch asynchronously
- Augmenting instruction through written materials and voice recordings
- Providing copies of all notes and handouts to assist with note taking in class
- Allowing students to slow down the rate or pace of content provided in distance learning environments or have extended time
- Providing assessment formats in the student's most successful modality or response format
- Providing students opportunities to demonstrate competency of the content by using alternative methods for assignments
- Having multiple ways to assess course content and providing students options for task and assignment completion

APS has created an **Accessibility Work Group** to review all instructional resources to ensure they are ADA compliant. As the work group gets going, we will also include community members for feedback and collaboration.

IEP/504 Considerations



IEP/504 Considerations

There seems to be a lot of confusion surrounding the change of instructional time from 30 to 24 hours per week and its effect on IEPs and 504s. With respect to this topic, can you walk us through these points?

- What explicit instruction was given to staff about a maximum of 24 hours of special education services per week and how this was decided on?
- We understand that virtual learning by definition does not include time spent on things like transitions and other non-academic tasks. Can you do a breakdown of the change in hours?
- What will happen with IEPs/504s where parents will not agree to the amended IEP/504?
 - Or if they feel language in the prior written notice is not sufficient?
- When IEP/504 teams meet to address these changes, can a distance learning plan or addendum be attached to the existing IEP/504 rather than altering the agreed upon IEP/504? If not, why?
- Mondays have been referred to as a day for additional supports (in addition to teacher meetings), is this considered part of the 24 hours?
- For evaluations that were in progress when schools shut down in March, will APS direct student study teams to accept private evaluations in order to not further delay the development of needed IEPs?



Response to IEP/504 Considerations Questions

- ★ Schools are reviewing IEPs and reaching out to families to schedule meetings. With the current distance learning model of 24 instructional hours, some IEPs may need to be revised to ensure students are receiving the support they need to access their learning and make meaningful progress on their IEP goals.
- ★ In some cases, hours may temporarily be reduced to reflect what the student requires in this model and the number of instructional hours available to provide service. In other cases, services may even be increased. When school resumes the normal 30 instructional hours, IEP teams can meet to make changes to reflect the service the student required before we went virtual.
- ★ Each student's IEP will be thoughtfully reviewed for any possible needs they may have accessing distance learning. The purpose is not to reduce hours in an arbitrary way or make adjustments in some sort of proportion but to ensure students receive meaningful instruction and services they need to continue to make progress.
- ★ IEP Teams may determine to amend an IEP without holding an IEP team meeting. However, the case carrier, parent(s), and other team members must consult and discuss a proposed IEP amendment prior to the amendment being emailed to the family for consent. As always, changes to IEPs require parental consent.
- ★ OSE has given schools a template to carefully document previous services in the PWN.



Additional Response to IEP/504 Considerations Questions

What will happen with IEPs/504s where parents will not agree to the amended IEP/504?

IEP teams will continue to try and collaborate with families to reach consensus; however, if there's a situation where IEP teams cannot reach consensus, then parents have the right to not sign and APS would operate under a stay put IEP.

When IEP/504 teams meet to address these changes, can a distance learning plan or addendum be attached to the existing IEP/504 rather than altering the agreed upon IEP/504? The addendum is a process we use within Synergy to make a change to a finalized IEP. Once the addendum is finalized, the IEP is updated with the changes. It does not remain as a stand alone document.

Mondays have been referred to as a day for additional supports (in addition to teacher meetings).

Is this considered part of the 24 hours? Yes

For evaluations that were in progress when schools shut down in March, will APS direct student study teams to accept private evaluations in order to not further delay the development of needed IEPs? APS will begin virtual assessments this fall. As always, if a family has done private testing, the team considers the data from those too.

In Person Instruction



In Person Instruction Questions

- What benchmarks does Arlington need to meet that will allow for the prioritized populations to return to in-person? What data are you using? What factors are taken into consideration when deciding who can return and when?
- Will students with the most significant support needs (ie Shriver, Life Skills, MIPA, Interlude, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Blind and Visually Impaired, PEP) be prioritized ahead of the greater SWD population during the initial phases of reopening?
- If some in-person day care services will be provided for children of APS staff, why is it not possible to provide limited in-person instructional support for those students with the greatest needs?
- Can services be offered in-person at the school by appointment during distance learning? What if the therapists and/or aides are willing to work with one-on-one students at their homes, an outdoor space or community center?



Ensuring FAPE is Provided to ALL SWD

- IEPs will be implemented virtually, student progress will be closely monitored and we will continue to work within the IEP process to be flexible and make adjustments.
- APS is:
 - Creating a work group to plan for opening a few centers **to provide 1:1 assistance to some students who require extensive support to access distance learning;** and
 - Exploring how to use assistants in a few buildings to support students while engaging in distance learning as the first phase before moving to hybrid instruction
- Representatives from ASEAC and SEPTA will be included
- Hopefully by the end of September but we don't know for sure
- Criteria still to be established

Additionally, IEP teams need to be flexible and work with the family to offer multiple support options for students (i.e. breaks, flexible schedule, recorded sessions, more asynchronous times etc)

1:1 Aides



1:1 Aides Questions

- How will you address FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) for children who need one-on-one supports during the day? For example, one parent wrote:
 - *My child has a visual impairment, utilizes a high-tech speech generating device to communicate, has severe speech and motor impairments secondary to a diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy. Prior to distance learning, he relied substantially on an aide to literally be his eyes and hands. Without getting into the details, we really had challenges accessing the curriculum during the closure in the Spring. With remote learning 2.0, how will you reallocate aides/paraprofessionals to meet the needs of a steady continuum of communication supports in a General Education setting?*
- Will one-on-one aides still be working virtually with students? What will that look like?
- This question is submitted by a teacher: *Many parents are requesting in-home services, based on the fact that their child(ren) cannot access virtual learning independently. How can teachers support those children without going into their home? (specific training is welcome)*



Response to In Person Instruction Questions

IEP teams will continuously collaborate to offer multiple options of instruction and continued progress monitoring on IEP goals.

- This could include alternative schedules, more asynchronous instruction, coaching for parents, instruction recorded to review flexibly throughout the day, shorter instructional sessions
- Continuous data will be taken on IEP goals and reviewed
- Some students may need recovery services when we come back in person
- Assistants will be working virtually and providing extra support for some students

APS is working on returning some of our most vulnerable populations to in-person instruction.

- Reviewing current staffing requirements to meet needs
- Implementing specific health and safety plan(s) for in person instruction mirrored and potentially enhanced from the broader APS plan



Delivery of Instruction and Accommodations

IEP teams will work with each individual case to ensure students can access instruction.

This might include:

- Shorter chunks of direct instruction
- Breaks
- Extended time
- Provision of more asynchronous activities or recorded lessons
- Flexible scheduling
- Checklists
- 1:1 sessions
- Small break-out groups to pre-teach or re-teach skills

**Working Parents,
Parent Involvement,
Parent Training**



Questions on Working Parents, Parent Involvement and Parent Training

Many of our families have parents that both work full-time and/or have multiple children in the home. A number of questions reflected concern over how to support their children and keep their jobs.

- IDEA has provisions which assists parents to acquire the necessary skill that will allow them to support the implementation of their child's IEP. Will APS be willing to engage parents who are able to provide support to their children during online learning period? If yes, will this extend to 504s?
- What parent trainings will be offered for the myriad of platforms we'll be using? Is it possible to simplify? What other parent trainings are planned?



APS has created a series of Parent Academies designed to address a variety of topics such as:

- What distance learning is and what it will look like.
- Tips for supporting your student and setting up a successful learning environment at home via Microsoft Teams.
- How to access and use Canvas, SeeSaw, and other applications.
- Global Protect connections and troubleshooting.
- Delivery of specialized services and supports in synchronous and asynchronous instruction.
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- ...and more



The **Special Education Parent Resource Center (PRC)** staff will continue to:

- Be available for individual parent consultations via phone and videoconferencing
- Offer online parent learning opportunities (both live and recorded events)
- Continue to expand and offer the PRC's collection of digital tools and resources for parents
- Share information, news and updates through weekly School Talk messages
- Maintain and disseminate information on community supports for families such as webinars, meetings, resources, community services and tools
- Closely collaborate with the Office of Special Education, Arlington SEPTA and ASEAC to support special education initiatives

APS Special Education Parent Liaisons are available to support parents within each school



Responses to Questions on Working Parents, Parent Involvement and Parent Training

- IEP Teams are encouraged to address effective, two-way home school communication to celebrate successes, and to share concerns that may need to be addressed.
- School-based members of IEP teams may provide consultation and coaching for parents via email, phone calls, or video sessions. This may include providing guidance and feedback from parent-provided video or work samples. This can also include instruction for equipment use or use of assistive technology or other tools for learning.
- Staff may provide resources, videos, and other forms of pre-recorded or written instruction through the APS approved platforms including SeeSaw and Canvas. Materials may also be directly e-mailed to parents. These materials may be used to support direct or consultative intervention.

Service/Accommodation Implementation at Home



Questions on Service/Accommodation Implementation at Home

- Will there be flexibility in scheduling related services for families for whom an adult is not in the position to work with their child online through a full school day, or for students receiving instruction in a general education setting? When should parents expect these services to begin?
- How will teams decide when “tele-therapy” or "parent coaching" will be used?
- Can you provide us with some examples of how Microsoft Teams might be used to deliver the following IEP/504 services?
 - Executive Function interventions
 - Orton-Gillingham (Would the instructional setting in the IEP be Special Education, General Education or both?)
 - Social skills in the general education setting
- Will flexible/alternative/asynchronous/non-screen based activities and materials be made available for students who cannot attend to extended screen time or who cannot access the curriculum without the aid of parents during work hours?
- Can schools set up a system to loan out things like chair rubber bands, fidgets, wiggle seats and other accommodations that students would be using in the classroom? Families may not necessarily own these items and it could help us support our kids with IEPs and 504s in their distance learning.



Canvas and Teams to Support Executive Functioning Needs

Teams is a tool to provide face to face virtual instruction either whole class, small group or individual. Within Teams, teachers can create breakout groups to provide additional instruction to reinforce the main lesson or provide specially designed instruction on IEP goals.

Canvas is a tool to help teachers design courses, assignments and instruction that can provide both synchronous and asynchronous activities. This can include supports for **Executive Function** needs as well.

- Calendar reminders for due dates, missing assignments
- To do List
- Assignment chunked
- Announcements



Additional Ways APS Will Support Executive Functioning Needs

Teachers, assistants and other related staff will work with students to:

- Learn how to use features in our online tools that help organize assignments, manage due dates, assignment completion, etc.
- Chunk instruction, record instruction to view at a different time, and provide additional check-ins throughout the week
- Provide more asynchronous opportunities
- Provide the students with self-monitoring resources, such as checklists, rubrics, or planning guides. This helps them visually scaffold expectations and provides cognitive supports when affective challenges present themselves.
- Use multimedia examples that focus on the expected work and behaviors to assist students' understanding,



Additional Responses

Will there be flexibility in scheduling related services for families for whom an adult is not in the position to work with their child online through a full school day, or for students receiving instruction in a general education setting? When should parents expect these services to begin? **Service will begin on Sept 8. Service providers can work with some flexibility but we do need to honor their contract times and they will not be asked to provide services outside of their contract hours.**

Can you provide us with some examples of how Microsoft Teams might be used to deliver the following IEP/504 services?

- Orton-Gillingham (Would the instructional setting in the IEP be Special Education, General Education or both?) **This would match what has been delineated in the IEP for reading goals and services.**
- Social skills in the general education setting- **This would match what has been delineated in the IEP for social skills goals and services.**

How will teams decide when “tele-therapy” or “parent coaching” will be used? **IEP teams will make that determination together.**

Can schools set up a system to loan out things like chair rubber bands, fidgets, wiggle seats and other accommodations that students would be using in the classroom? Families may not necessarily own these items and it could help us support our kids with IEPs and 504s in their distance learning. **Yes, this can be possible.**

Compensatory Services and Recovery Hours



Questions on Compensatory Services/Recovery Services

- Can you distinguish for families and staff the difference between recovery hours and compensatory services?
- How will students be assessed for regression and will IEP/504 teams be reconvened as a result?
- Are there guidelines or expectations for compensatory services? What will be the process to determine compensatory services once school returns to in-person?
- When will IEP teams discuss and provide recovery services? Will this wait until after the pandemic is over, or is there a plan to start sooner? For a child that has a one-on-one aide, what does this look like?



VDOE has released guidance encouraging schools to gather data before determining what Recovery Services are needed:

Pre-COVID Data

IEP Teams should review student data from pre-COVID closures to establish a baseline and compare skills and performance toward IEP goals. Consider data from before COVID school closures including but not limited to:

- review of the progress on IEP goals, objectives or benchmarks;
- observation and data from teachers, therapists, parents, and others having direct contact with the student;
- screening, assessment or information maintained on the student, including pretest and posttest data; and
- curriculum-based assessment, including pretest and post-test data; and other relevant factors.

COVID-19 School Closure Data

Data from student participation in any post COVID-19 school closure educational offerings should also be considered. This includes student participation in any activities and data from those offerings; including but not limited to:

- observations;
- samples of the student's work;
- behavior logs;
- screenings and assessments; and
- parent interviews/observations.



Recovery Services

Gathering New Data

IEP Teams should consider the use of a variety of tools ranging from “just-in-time” formative assessment prior to instruction to identify gaps in understanding to local assessments or other assessments that would be useful in evaluating student progress.

Educators should be prepared to gather new data upon students returning to school in whatever format instruction is taking place (virtual, hybrid, or in-person). This includes:

- Does the student require extensive review to demonstrate previously learned skills?
- Does the student demonstrate inconsistencies in performance?
- Does the student demonstrate previously mastered or partially acquired skills present pre-COVID closure?

Teachers may gather data using informal and curriculum-based measures to determine baseline skills. This data will inform instructional planning and is not considered a formal evaluation therefore does not require parental consent. Teachers may also undertake a review of IEP goals and progress to compare to pre-COVID closure data.

Educational data **from classroom instruction, benchmarks, and curriculum-based learning are all important to consider.**

The use of standardized norm-referenced measures to determine progress is not recommended.



Recovery Services

IEP Teams should use individual student progress data and data about LEA offerings during COVID closure and upon return to school when considering services. **The need for COVID recovery services should be based on whether or not the student continued making progress in the general education curriculum, or alternative course of study specified in their IEP, or toward meeting their individualized IEP goals and/or if any significant regression occurred during the period of school closure.**

COVID recovery services should be unique, individualized to the student, and determined by the IEP Team. Educators should carefully document the COVID recovery services provided to students with disabilities and monitor and track individual student progress. **COVID recovery services do not need to be a minute for minute replacement for services that were not provided during the building closures.** The LEA should not treat COVID recovery services as extended school year services or require that the services be delivered in only one specified manner.

- After 6-8 weeks of instruction (virtual or in person), IEP Teams should consider individual student data to document recoupment of skills or persisting skill deficits.
- The IEP team should consider the student's progress compared to the progress of all students during the extended school closure. Also remember that skill loss and recovery of skills may vary by grade and subject matter.
- The determination of COVID recovery services is made by the IEP Team **after a careful review of student performance and data including pre-COVID closures, student participation and performance during COVID closures, and performance upon return to school.**
- **This means that IEP Teams will need a period of time to gather data on the student's performance and assess their skills in relation to pre-COVID closure and their learning rate compared to peers and with consideration of the educational experiences being offered by the LEA.**

Assessment and Progress Measurement



Questions on Assessments and Progress Measurement

- How will data be collected for IEP goals? Will that be done by parents, through virtual teacher evaluation? Will parents be trained on data collection?
- Will case carriers or Student Support Coordinators proactively reach out weekly to parents to check in and ensure needs are being met (for the first few weeks of school) or is APS expecting parents to reach out only if there is an issue?



IEP Goal Progress Monitoring

Teachers and related service providers are responsible for collecting data and monitoring progress on students' IEP goals. This can include a variety of qualitative and quantitative data points. Parent observations and input are valuable sources of information when determining if students are generalizing skills, but parents are not required to collect data.

Communication with Families

Case carriers will develop communication plans with each of their families. The frequency and level of communication may vary across families depending on the parent's preference. Families should always feel comfortable reaching out to their student's school if there are concerns or questions.

Technology



Questions on Technology

- Is there a way to record a teacher's instruction for the students so that students can access the material after class if there are questions, if there are connectivity issues, and/or if the student is having difficulty attending?
- Is there a plan to require a standard platform in Canvas so that all teachers are required to assign work in the same way/time/place, starting from the beginning of this school year?
- Previously, teachers were able to utilize software that allowed live monitoring of student iPad activity. When used properly, this was beneficial to an easily distractible student with ADHD. Will parents be provided the ability to use this software in order to provide in-home monitoring for online learning?
- For kids who do not currently have an APS-issued device, when should we expect them?
- Is it your expectation that all learning can be completed on APS-issued devices? If so, how do students access needed information that is blocked on APS devices such as YouTube videos (which are occasionally assigned by teachers)?



Responses to Technology Questions

APS will ensure all students are issued a device by the time school begins on September 8th.

Recording

Teachers will be able to record lessons for students to access outside of the scheduled class period.

Standard Platform

Schools are working with teachers to build consistency in Canvas courses. Teachers will be providing instruction to students and parents on the location of information in their Canvas courses.

Monitoring

- Parents can make use of the Apple Classroom app to monitor and control their child's device.
- The parent must have either an Apple computer or an iPad. When they open the app on their device, they will be able to send an invite to any iPads that are within the Bluetooth range.
- The student would accept the invitation on their device and the parent will be able to begin monitoring and controlling the device.
- The use of Classroom by parents will have no impact on any other APS services.
- For the app to work, the child must be within the Bluetooth range of the parent's device. (Approximately 30-40 feet)
- Additionally, IS is piloting a new content filtering system that provides parents with greater reporting granularity.

YouTube-Currently, YouTube is available to High School students only (age 13 and older). Elementary and Middle School teachers are advised not to use YouTube videos for student instruction. It is our expectation that all instruction can be completed on APS devices.



All teachers, assistants and staff will be engaging in 2 weeks of professional learning.

Some of the key areas will include:

- Strategies to engage learners virtually
- Building a classroom community virtually
- Canvas, Teams, SeaSaw, Nearpod
- Core Vocabulary
- Lexia Reading

Arlington Tiered System of Supports (ATSS)



Update on ATSS In the Fall

This fall schools will continue to utilize the ATSS framework in a virtual setting to ensure that all students are receiving the targeted instruction they need. With the guidance of the ATSS office, schools will continue to virtually refine and adapt the 5 main components of ATSS including 1) rigorous, differentiated Tier 1 instruction, 2) universal screening and assessment, 3) progress monitoring, 4) research-based interventions, and 5) data-based decision making.

Each school's Student Support Team will be available to collaborate and support teachers in determining how to support the needs of all students virtually. Collaborative Learning Teams (CLTs) will continue to meet on a weekly basis to analyze individual student data/progress and adjust instruction accordingly. More information about Student Support Teams, CLTs, and additional processes APS uses to support students can be found in the *Student Support Manual* .

APS staff will continue to offer a wide variety of interventions for students in need, including but not limited to Orton-Gillingham and Zones of Regulation, in a virtual setting.



In Closing

In keeping with the spirit of collaboration, we hope you found this Town Hall helpful in clarifying questions and concerns that you had.

Thank you to our Panelists!

Resources:

APS Reopening FAQ

<https://www.apsva.us/engage/planning-for-reopening-schools/reopening-faq/>

Parent Resource Center:

<https://www.apsva.us/prc>

SEPTA Website - Updating soon!

<https://www.arlingtonsepta.org>