



Robert Woerther, Ed.D.
Director of Special Education

Memorandum

To: Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart, Superintendent
From: Dr. Robert Woerther, Director of Special Education
Date: July 30, 2020
Subject: COVID-19 Special Education Update - #1

Guidance for 100% Virtual Instruction

Special School District has been working closely with Hazelwood School District to provide special education services to students with IEPs. SSD Administrators have been planning with Hazelwood Administrators for the virtual start of the 2020-2021 school year.

- Dr. Woerther, Director of Special Education, has been working with the Assistant Superintendents on curriculum, professional development opportunities, and other related items to ensure a successful start of the school year.
- SSD Administrators participate in district wide planning meetings as well as planning meetings with their building administrators.
- Professional Development support on virtual instruction is being planned for special education staff.
- Systems to monitor quality of instruction, as well as accountability of services are being developed to ensure students are receiving the appropriate level of service.
- Dr. Woerther answers a variety of parent / family questions within 24 hours. Contact is made either by phone or email depending on the situation.
- Area Coordinators communicate with staff and families providing resources and answering questions daily.

The information below is intended to provide guidance to our families and staff for distance learning.

Disclaimer:

- SSD will continue to provide updates as required
- Be mindful that plans are evolving as information becomes available
- Understand SSD's Guidance Plans may be subject to change
- As often as needed, contact Administration for more information and support

Guidance for Distance Learning

The information below is intended to provide guidance to our families, staff and partner districts for distance learning.

- IEPs for students will be held virtually using Zoom
- SSD will adhere to DESE requirements for holding IEP meetings

100% Virtual

All students would access learning remotely. Technology will be provided to all students whose families agree to access. Students will be provided learning experiences through live virtual sessions as well as learning activities and assignments through Google Classroom. For families who opt out of using technology, learning packets will be provided with clear instructions and expectations. A postage paid envelope will be provided for families/students to return completed work for grading and progress monitoring purposes. Staff would report to their assigned buildings at standard report times for work. If buildings are closed, staff would work remotely and follow those procedures. Staff would follow the expectations listed below.

Expectations

- **Distance Learning Plan Expectations**
A distance learning plan will be created every other week with lesson activities and proposed schedules sent to families. Special Education Teachers will provide weekly updates to parents and families. There should be at least 5 learning activities(elementary classrooms could be unit-based covering many subjects/secondary would be subject specific) to be completed independently through Google Classroom/or through packets for those who have opted out of technology or whose needs are best met through physical materials, per week across a variety of subjects. Teachers will provide 3 live group lessons per week. Additionally, office hours will be 1 hour per day at various times throughout the week. These live sessions and office hours can be 1:1 with family

permission. One half day a week will be available for collaboration, planning, building access (if staff are working remotely) and paperwork. Plan time and lunch should be scheduled into the day. Assignment completion will be monitored, graded, and feedback given. Teachers should have assessments that provide evidence of learning aligned with course expectations. **Grades will be based on activities as well as assessments.** When a student is not attending the live sessions and/or not submitting the assignments the teacher will contact the school designee (ex. Social worker; counselor) for follow up. Area Coordinators will provide support to staff, students and families daily.

- **General Education/Co-Taught Classroom**

Teachers will collaborate to directly support instruction in the class via modifications and accommodations as listed in the IEP – outcome would be supporting students to finish the expected assignments and goal attainment. Office hours will be held daily at varied times throughout the week to support student learning.

- **Resource Classroom**

Teacher will provide 5 learning activities, 3 live virtual lesson formats per week, based on curriculum area(s) in the IEP (using time below) to support progress of learning. As well as 1 hour daily office hours at varied times throughout the week. Outcome would be supporting student's goal attainment and access to the general education curriculum. Teachers should consider time needed to introduce/reinforce new skills based on time above.

- **Self-Contained Classroom**

Teacher will provide 5 learning activities including 3 in a live virtual format per week, based on curriculum area(s) in the IEP (using time below) to support progress of learning. As well as at least 1 hour daily office hours at varied times throughout the week. Outcomes would be supporting student's goal attainment and new learning. Teachers should consider the time needed to introduce/reinforce new skills based on the timetable above.

- **Related Service**

Service providers (Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapist, Speech and Language Therapists, Social Workers) will work with the case-manager to provide necessary related instruction/support for students. This also means providing direct scheduled virtual learning sessions. The number of sessions and activities would be proportional to the number of service minutes indicated in the IEP. These sessions could be small group sessions or one-on-one with family permission. Office hours will be held daily at varied times throughout the week to support student learning.

- **ABA (Applied Behavioral Analysis)**

Associates will provide 2 live virtual sessions per week, monitor para programming and provide programming proportional to the number of service minutes indicated in the IEP, as well as 1-hour daily office hours offered at varied times throughout the week. ABA will keep family contact logs that will be shared with the student's case manager.

- **Facilitators**

Facilitators will offer open office hours for support the first and last working hour of each day. In addition, facilitators will attend virtual lessons to offer feedback and support to new

teachers. Facilitators will be available as requested by teachers and administrators to support teachers with virtual learning. Facilitators/Coaches not assigned Academy One Teachers will complete 5 learning activities to be added to the academic toolkit per week.

- **Effective Practice Specialists**
EPS will have open office hours the first and last working hour of the day. EPS will check in with teachers of their targeted area weekly. EPS will support teachers, families and administrators with virtual learning, schedules and best practices and complete a daily log reflecting staff contact and content.
- **Area Coordinators**
AC will offer open offices hours at various times of the day throughout the week. AC will seek assistance from EPS or Facilitators for teachers needing support with distance learning. AC will check in with new teachers daily and complete a daily log reflecting staff contact and content. Area Coordinators will meet with teachers no more than once weekly outside the instructional day.
- **Directors**
Directors will check in with Area Coordinators and Liaisons daily to help support and problem solve and complete a daily log reflecting staff, family and partner district contact and content. Directors will provide communication and updates to teachers weekly. Directors will meet with Area Coordinators weekly outside the instructional day.
- **Case Manager**
Case managers will coordinate with all service providers and be the primary family contact for all services. Additionally, case managers will be responsible for the development of the distance learning plan (DLP).
- **Paraprofessionals**
Paras will support instruction as directed by their teachers, including preparing materials, data collection, supporting live sessions and instructing small groups. Paraprofessionals will assume the role of teacher as a substitute as directed for teacher absences.

Distance Learning Resources

[Distance Learning Plan Training](#)

This video will walk you through the process of creating a distance learning plan.

[Academic and Related Services Toolkit](#)

This resource has activities that teachers and related services can use. The activities can be sorted by grade level, support level and subject area.

[Google Classroom Training](#)

This link allows you to register for a professional learning on creating and utilizing a Google classroom. There is a link on the registration to access the recorded training.

[Google Classroom Support for Families](#)

This link is a document that gives families the basic information about navigating Google Classroom.

Video for using Google Classroom, how to use a Chromebook and computer basics coming soon.

[Zoom Support \(PDF\)](#)

This guide gives you the basics of participating in a Zoom session.

[Best Practices in Virtual Learning](#)

This document gives you best practices for virtual learning that will support you in providing virtual learning. This includes sections for teachers and other related service areas.

- [Best Practices for Virtual Learning: An Overview \(Video\)](#)
- [Relationships Matter \(Video\)](#)
- [Develop a Plan for Offline Learning \(Video\)](#)
- [Real-Time Meetings \(Video\)](#)
- [Responsive Feedback \(Video\)](#)

[DESE Distance Learning Strategies for Missouri Teachers by Missouri Teachers](#)

This is a link to information about a series of videos.

[The Critical Six for Virtual Learning](#)

This is an overview of what universals look like in a virtual setting.

- [Universals for Distance Learning Videos](#)
- [Universal Virtual Classroom Supports](#)

[Alternative Method of Instruction for SSD Schools \(PDF\)](#)

This document explains the alternative method of instruction plan for the SSD schools.

Distance Learning Tips

The chart below gives some timeframes for Special Education virtual learning sessions.

Grade Level Special Education – Resource/Self-contained Class (5-8 classes daily)	Minimum time for Special Education	Maximum	Recommended Length of Sustained Learning
Pre K	5 minutes/day	20 minutes/day	3-5 minutes
K	5 minutes/day	20 minutes/day	3-5 minutes

1-2	5 minutes/day	20 minutes/day	5-10 minutes
3-5	5-10 minutes/day	30 minutes/day	10-15 minutes
6-8	Class: 10-20 minutes/day Total: 60-90 minutes/day	Class: 15-30 minutes/day Total: 90-180 minutes/day	1 subject area or class
9-12	Class: 20 minutes/day Total: 120 minutes/day	Class: 45 minutes/day Total: 270 minutes/day	1 subject area of class

The chart below gives some time frames for Career and Technical Education virtual learning sessions.

Grade Level	Minimum time for Career and Technical Education	Maximum	Recommended Length of Sustained Learning
10-12	Class: 30-35 Minutes Daily	Class: 45-50 Minutes Daily	1 subject area of class

Here are some additional tips for distance learning:

1. Keep it simple: you are not right there to clear up misconceptions so have very clear instructions and utilize only one or two resources.
2. Set up quick checkpoints for students: this allows you to quickly engage with students when they need support – (example – watch this video and do a 3-2-1 and submit 3 things you learned; 2 things that you knew; 1 question you have).
3. Create a learning schedule for your students to follow to help with organization and improve executive functioning skills.
4. Create opportunities for students to discuss what they are learning with families- for example take the unit you are working on and have them discuss the idea with their family to get more information and share it through discussion or discussion board.
5. Provide personal touchpoints – we need human interaction through email, video messages, phone calls to the family; messages to them through your online learning system; comment on their work.
6. Video read alouds are a great way to engage your students – could be a quick book or article – gives them a way to see you.
7. Have students journal about their experiences of learning at home (ex. What are some ways you solved a problem today?)
8. Create videos of your lecture (short and sweet and to the point) allows students to hear your voice and have that connection.

9. Even when you give a live lesson, consider do a quick recording of the content you covered to post. It is hard to judge in a virtual environment if students are really focused and understanding and sometimes they need to go back and hear the content again. In class they would ask you or a peer a clarifying question, but here they can go back and review the content again.
10. Be visible and present in your online class – post announcements; post and respond to questions on the discussion board – make some fun like what your favorite food is; grade and give feedback in a timely matter – shows the assignments are important.
11. Set clear expectations – students should know exactly what you are teaching and what they are supposed to do as a result.
12. Make sure online content is organized with the things they are currently working on in the front or top so they do not have to search – make sure to include links to important documents so it is easy to get to.
13. Include visuals – embedded relevant images or short video clips.
14. Make expectations clear: have a place where the directions are written down; provide a quick explanation video; provide a rubric; show examples of student work.
15. Scaffold learning activities: if they are working on a project that they need to do a recording, have them do a low-stakes practice with the recording; if you intro a graphic organizer or tool make sure you provide a model and move to a guided practice to give feedback before you have them use it for a high stakes grade.
16. Provide examples: a variety of examples with explanations can help the learner grasp a concept – in class if they ask a question, you explain the concept a different way or give a different example so make sure you have a variety that will work for many students.
17. Be flexible with your expectations – everyone is learning this together and there is a lot going on that you may not know- so be flexible.
18. Communicate frequently in ways that the family or student have indicated is a good way to communicate – examples include posting announcements; a quick email; text from school-approved number or system like Remind or Class Dojo.
19. Consider doing a quick video recapping your lesson for those students who were not able to attend the live session and post it in your Google Classroom.
20. For your in-person virtual lessons invite a special guest to participate such as the principal or a related service provider – they love seeing the people from their school environment
21. Make sure you are setting aside some time each day just to breathe.
22. Send encouraging messages to your families – find activities that they can do around the house together, make sure they know that we are there to support them; tell them to make it work for their family.
23. Send your students fun and interesting stuff: This helps keep them engaged. For example, find a Minion video of laughter.
24. Treat every teacher, student, and parent with kindness and empathy because you don't know how has COVID-19 changed their lives.