

COVID-19 School Closure

Q & A for Special Education Employees

Evaluation/IEPs:

1. Are case managers responsible for confirming whether families have appropriate tech for video conferencing?

Great question, yes. This is a part of our first parental outreach from case managers. We will be providing guidance regarding the information we would like to know to facilitate our ability to plan.

2. Is Zoom HIPPA compliant? Yes
3. Can folks still communicate in a PNW that IEP/Eval meetings would follow our return from this closure within the 30-day window?

We have received guidance from OSPI against sending out blanket PWNs about timelines and services. As such, we have communicated that there is flexibility in IEP and Evaluation deadlines. However, to support teachers and reduce workload upon return we have provided a variety of ways to hold these meetings and provided guidance to ensure legal compliance.

4. How do you advise rewriting IEPs/conducting evals without current student data under these circumstances?

All teachers have been trained, are required to use, and have access to an online platform for data: Progress Track. Teachers should have data in this system that they can report on from prior to the school closure. When reporting data towards goals, teachers can report that data is based on progress monitoring data collected prior to the school closure. Teachers are required to take and report data a minimum of once per month, while data may not be from this week or last week, it will be recent enough to guide team decisions on student progress and goal setting. Teachers also continue to have access to their classrooms, if they want to pick up other forms of data monitoring.

5. If using personal phones during this closure, can folks leave their work number for call back and check work voicemail remotely rather than sharing personal phone numbers with families? Will folks be reimbursed for use of phone data?

Based on our previous communication, it is not our expectation for teachers to share personal contact information with families. When a teacher chooses to use a personal telephone, we have provided information about how to block that number (*67).

Teachers can share work numbers and check messages remotely as a way to protect personal information. They can also access their building and classroom to use VPS telephones as well, provided they utilize social distancing requirements. While we have generated creative ways to support ongoing education and family collaboration, employees will need to maintain consistency with the district's policy/procedures on maintaining professional staff/student boundaries. Personal cell phone use is only one option of many. If a teacher has limited data on their cell phone, then perhaps e-mail, Zoom, or using district resources would be a better fit.

Other:

1. What is the deadline for WA-AIM submissions?

Per OSPI, if a student has completed or partially completed the WA-AIM, teachers must submit whatever has been completed before April 3 at 5 PM.

Maintenance of Skills:

1. When must I begin work around contacting families of my students to begin reviewing optional VPS SPED resources, compiling optional resources of my own and/or developing optional materials for families to support student skill maintenance?
All information shared pertains to teachers returning on Wednesday the 25th. Our intention, based on requests from staff for direction, has been to share information prior to return so that staff can, if they choose, seek clarity and reduce anxiety about next steps. Teachers are able to share resources with families for the maintenance of skills starting on 3/25. However, some teachers will wait until 4/6 to share resources based on their initial contact with parents between 3/25-3/27. On-line resources will also be posted to the VPS website for families.
2. Am I required to complete the lunch and planning time form?
No. The form will remain so teachers have the option of communicating with us and each other when they are available for collaboration.
3. How do I request interpreter support with initial family contact March 25-27?
Interpreter information was provided on 3/19 in the SPED FAQ document.
4. What is the purpose for initial contact with families March 25-27?
Possible topics and questions to ask will be shared in an email on 3/23.
5. What if families request to pick up resources/materials rather than having them sent via email?
This would be provided on a case-by-case basis and coordinated by the case manager in collaboration with their area manager as needed.
6. How do I ensure families have access to accommodations I cannot send via email, such as manipulatives?
The state and federal government has provided flexibility around the delivery of services. Case managers can conference with families and coach/train them to deliver accommodations in the home. Currently, Special Services is working on a plan to provide access to students who have technology needs. This plan will be shared with VEA and staff once it is developed.
7. Am I required to complete the student tracking form?
Yes. This is an OSPI document that allows us to track the delivery of services for each student and then make decisions related to ESY or compensatory education.
8. Am I required to document parent contact?
Yes. We have to document parent contact and collaboration to assess ESY and compensatory services after the school closure for each student. This is based on information shared from OSPI.
9. What is required of me regarding teacher/RSP office hours?
This requirement has been adjusted. Teachers and related service providers should have ongoing office hours available for students and families (times may be flexible based on individual needs). They will then be utilizing the parent contact log to record their time spent with students and families. Clear communication regarding when families and peers can reach you, is essential during these unprecedented times.
10. How often am I required to communicate with families?
Teachers should contact each family once a week. Related Service Providers should contact families once every two weeks.
11. How should Related Service Providers provide resources/materials for students on their caseload for whom they provide direct services vs. those for whom they consult?
This would be provided on a case-by-case basis and coordinated by the case manager/related service provider. If their services are consult, then they would need to coordinate with the appropriate gen. ed. teacher and provide support as they would if they were in a building.

12. What is expected of my paraeducators during this time period?

Area Managers will communicate with paraeducators around any work responsibilities they have during this time period, in accordance with the VAESP-VPS MOU.

Paraeducators who normally participate in clinicals may continue doing so during the closure.

13. How can the specialists assigned to each group of SPED programs support us?

You can lean on these specialists for continued professional development and coaching.

In addition to consulting with your Area Manager, you can also lean on these specialists as thought partners as you create and send resources to families. They may manage the ongoing collection of resources, review the quality of resources with teachers, problem solve instructional delivery questions, etc. These specialists are peers and will not play a supervisory role.

14. Who do I contact with any further questions or concerns?

Please contact your Area Manager by phone or email with any questions or concerns.