



FAQs: Special Education

What is the instructional model for students with an Individualized Education Program?

The Hingham Public Schools will work to provide all services delineated on students' active Individualized Education Programs (IEP) through in-person and remote instruction. Students will be provided with a regular and consistent schedule of classes, interventions, services, and therapies offered in-person, synchronously, or asynchronously. Students will also have frequent interactions with teachers and other faculty and staff to ensure participation. It is anticipated that the delivery of some services will look different or change as the district responds to health and safety requirements.

The Hingham Public Schools will strive to provide in-person services to as many students as possible. Those students with significant and complex needs, as well as preschool children, will be prioritized for receiving in-person instruction. Students with complex and significant needs include those students already identified as "high needs" through the IEP process, students who cannot engage in remote learning due to their disability-related needs, students who primarily use aided and augmentative communication, students who are homeless, in foster care or congregate care, and students who are dually identified as English learners.

My child is on an IEP. Will they automatically be included in the A/B cohort?

The A/B cohort is designed for students with specified high needs based on the prescribed services in student's active IEPs. Students on IEPs will not automatically be included in the A/B cohort. However, individualized determinations will be made to support our students with disabilities to the maximum extent possible.

My child is not classified as “high needs” however is a student receiving special education services via an IEP, what will services look like for my child in a hybrid model?

Students will receive services both in person and remotely. An emphasis will be placed on providing as many services “in-person” as feasible during the morning and afternoon sessions.

My child meets the criteria for “high needs” and receives the majority of their services in a substantially separate setting, however they are entitled to inclusive services. How will inclusion services be provided if my child is expected to remain in their substantially separate cohort?

Due to the constraints resulting from physical distancing, IEP teams will make every effort to include students in inclusive settings, even if it is through remote access.

If my child is to receive services remotely, what will that look like?

Remote instruction will be more robust than it was in Spring 2020. Students will receive a regular and consistent schedule of classes, services, interventions and therapies. Students will engage frequently with teachers, therapists and support staff. Synchronous lessons will be delivered via teleconference and/or video conferencing in conjunction with asynchronous lessons.

My child attends a private school and receives “services only” through the Hingham Public Schools. How will services be delivered?

In an effort to maintain cohorts and reduce the visitors to the school buildings, most itinerant services will be provided through video or phone conferencing. Some drop-in services may be delivered in-person.

As of October 19, 2020

Will my child be able to receive specialized instruction and services as directed by their IEP remotely?

Yes, there will be both in-person as well as remote specialized instruction and services.

How will parents be communicated what percentage of IEP services are in person vs. remote?

Notification regarding individual student special education service schedules will be shared with parents.

If a family opts to participate in a remote learning model will they still be eligible for IEP services?

If a parent chooses a remote learning model, special education services will be scheduled as remote or as in-person drop in sessions as determined by the family and special education providers.

Will there be role model peers as part of the preschool program?

Community peers will be phased in if health and safety metrics allow during Phase 2 of the district reopening plan.

My child was due for an evaluation in the spring of 2020 and due to school closure that evaluation was not completed, what are the next steps?

IEP teams will be prioritizing evaluations based on necessity for completion and date of consent. The district will continue to work with families to meet timelines and agree to waive or extend initial evaluations, re-evaluations, or Team Meetings as needed.

As of October 19, 2020

How will special education evaluations be completed?

In July, the district began scheduling in person evaluations. While we made much progress toward completing the overdue evaluations from the spring, we have many more to complete. We will continue to work with families to meet timelines or agree to extensions for Initial Evaluations, Re-evaluations, and IEP Team Meetings as needed. At the beginning of the year, Team Chairs will be reaching out to parents to discuss evaluations and rescheduling of team meetings.

How will Team meetings be held?

Team meetings will be held virtually to limit the number of people who enter the school buildings.

My child was referred to the district preschool program through Early Intervention and turned three during the time of school closure. Services are currently being offered through Early Intervention until October 15, 2020. What is the plan moving forward for determining eligibility for EI referrals?

The Team at the Special Education Preschool program is reviewing each and every referral as an individual case. The district will continue collaborating with EI, who is assisting with providing updated information in regards to continued service delivery and child presentation. The Team will be contacting families to either schedule evaluations or to schedule a Team meeting to utilize available information to determine eligibility prior to October 15, 2020.

If a student has a hearing disability, will the teacher wear a face shield instead of a mask?

According to DESE guidance released July 9, 2020, a clear mask or face shield may be worn by staff so students will be able to see the speaker's lips. The Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is working on resources to address FM system use and will disseminate these when they are available. The District has also purchased a number of non-fogging clear face masks including [the clear mask](#) recommended by both Children's Hospital Department of Audiology and the Clarke School for Hearing and Speech.

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Are there exceptions to wearing masks or face coverings?

Exceptions to mask/face covering requirements must be made for those for whom it is not possible due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors. Face shields may be an option for students with medical or behavioral challenges who are unable to wear masks/face coverings.

Do parents need to send their students onto the bus or van with a mask?

Yes. HPS policy states that all students are required to wear masks. The drivers and monitors are aware that students are sometimes unable to wear masks or keep masks on for the durations of the ride for the duration of the time. Drivers and monitors are also offered additional PPE (gowns and shields) if needed.

How will toileting assistance be provided for students requiring such service?

Additional PPE (personal protective equipment) will be provided for staff that assist students in the bathroom.

How will teachers, teaching assistants as well as related service providers of students with complex needs deliver services when close proximity and physical prompting is needed? Will they still be required to have a 3 or 6 ft. space?

Staff will wear a mask and/or shield and other PPE as warranted by situation protocol provided by DESE's Guidance on Fall 2020 Special Education Services. Staff will be trained on the proper use of PPE. In these scenarios providers may need to be within a closer proximity.

My child receives transportation as a related service in the IEP. Will transportation be provided for "in-person" services?

If families are unable to transport their child to and from school, transportation will be arranged with the district's chosen transportation company. Students riding on a transportation vehicle will have to follow all health and safety protocols put in place by the transportation company and DESE including but not limited to wearing face coverings and

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social distancing. For parents that choose to provide transportation for mileage, mileage forms will be provided and should be submitted on a monthly basis. If a parent begins the year by transporting their child and decides that district transportation is necessary, please provide the district with notification and expect at least a 72 hour turn around for transportation to be arranged.

What are COVID-19 Compensatory Services (CCS) and how are they determined?

Recently, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released three types of supports to help students with IEPs recover from school disruptions caused by the school closures from March to June. The first, General Education Recovery Support, are those supports available to all students, and include, but are not limited to, counseling and tiered academic interventions. The second, COVID-19 Compensatory Services (CCS) are those that have been identified as a need to address regression or the consequential effects of delayed, interrupted, suspended, or inaccessible IEP services. The third, New IEP Services, are based on the team's determination that additional special education services are needed to address new areas of disability-related need.

Students with disabilities who did not receive or were unable to access any special education services during the suspension of in-person education are likely to require CCS and should be prioritized. Other students with IEPs, including students with significant and complex needs, are also likely to require CCS and should be prioritized for consideration. For these priority populations, the Department recommends that CCS determinations be made as soon as possible but not later than December 15, 2020.

Given that students and staff will need to acclimate to a new instructional environment this fall, the Department recognizes that for many students not in these priority populations, the individualized determination of the need for CCS will be informed by a period of initial observation, a period of re-acclimation to learning, and a review of data on recovery of learning loss and progress. Using data available from multiple sources, IEP Teams will determine whether, and to what extent, the student recouped the lost skills and/or behaviors or has made effective progress, and whether and to what extent the student needs CCS.

Determinations of CCS by the IEP Team must be based on information provided by the parents and educators, including data and information available from other sources, and be information-based, individualized determinations. CCS are not necessarily a 1:1 correspondence to missed IEP services but are identified following the individualized determination of a student's need.