

# Winthrop Public Schools

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August 14, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers,

According to DESE Guidance on Fall 2020 Special Education Services, 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:

- Students already identified as “high needs” through the IEP process on the IEP form entitled “Primary Disability/Level of Need-PL3.” Such students must meet at least two of these criteria:
  - Services provided outside of the general education classroom;
  - Service providers are special education teachers and related service providers;
  - Special education services constitute more than 75% of the student’s school day;
- 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;
- Students who are in foster care or congregate care; and/or
- Students who are dually identified as English Language Learners

Using the above guidelines, Special Education personnel will work to further analyze IEPs for each student. The District is using this analysis of students’ IEPs in conjunction with the above DESE criteria for prioritizing in-person learning for students with complex and significant needs, taking into account what is feasible within the health and safety guidelines. The document below identifies questions and answers regarding Special Education, 504 services and pre-school as they relate to the opening of school.

Q. What is the approach for students with an IEP?

- As recommended in DESE Guidance, The District will provide services through the “Instruction and Services” mode of delivery. This includes synchronous (live) and asynchronous (recorded) instruction. “Resources and Supports” will be used to supplement instruction only. The “Instruction and Services” mode of delivery includes the following components:
  - A regular and consistent schedule of classes, interventions, services, and therapies as outlined by the student’s IEP, offered synchronously or asynchronously

- Structured learning time designed so that the student can access the state standards.
- Frequent interactions with teachers and other trained staff members to ensure participation

Q. How will IEP and 504 meetings be handled moving forward?

- Given the social distancing requirements and in order to reduce the number of people in school buildings, IEP and 504 meetings will be held remotely via video conferencing or telephone.

Q. My child was due for an evaluation during Spring 2020 and due to school closure that evaluation was not completed, what are the next steps?

- The District will work with families to meet timelines or agree to extensions for Initial Evaluations, Re-evaluations, and IEP Team Meetings as needed. At the start of the school year, Team Chairpeople and Liaisons will be reaching out to families to discuss evaluations and rescheduling of team meetings from the Spring.

Q. What is the plan for holding IEP meetings once school resumes?

- Once school resumes, Team Chairpeople and Liaisons will work with families and school staff to schedule outstanding meetings. All meetings will be held remotely via video conferencing or telephone.

Q. My child does not meet the criteria for the definition of “high needs” however is a student with a disability, what will services look like for my child in the hybrid model?

- Students will receive in-person services either M/T or Th/F in the hybrid model. Services may be both in-person and remote. An emphasis will be placed on providing as many services in-person as is safely possible.

Q. My child meets the criteria for “high needs” and receives most of their services in a sub-separate setting, however, there is an element of inclusion in their IEP. How will inclusion service be provided if my child is expected to remain in their sub-separate cohort?

- IEP teams will make every effort to safely include students in inclusive settings. This may look different during the upcoming year.

Q. What is the criteria by which students will be identified to get in-person services/schooling under the hybrid model?

4.5 days in-person instruction:

- Students identified as High Needs on the PL3 page
- Sub-separate placement on the PL1 page

Students will receive the majority of their IEP services in-person. If services are going to be delivered differently, parents will receive notification.

4 days of in-person instruction-Two of the following criteria:

- Students identified as Moderate Level of Need on the PL3 page and a sub-separate placement on the PL1 page
- Students who primarily use aided and augmentative communication
- Students who are homeless
- Students in foster care or congregate care
- Students who are dually identified as English Learners; SEI Lvl 1 and 2
- Students who cannot engage in remote learning due to their disability-related needs

Students will receive their IEP services both in-person and remotely. If services will be delivered differently, parents will receive notification.

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

- Yes, but at a reduced number due to social distancing requirements and size constraints of the classroom.

Q. What will the schedule for preschool be?

- 5 full-day program will now run on a 2-day schedule M/T or Th/F. Students with IEPs will attend according to their IEP. An emphasis will be placed on providing as many services in-person as is safely possible. If the district must run in a remote model, there is no option for remote learning for role model peers.
- The AM ½ day program will now run M/T/Th/F. Students with IEPs will attend M/T/Th/F mornings. An emphasis will be placed on providing as many services in-person as is safely possible.
- The PM ½ day program will run M/T/T/F afternoons and W mornings. An emphasis will be placed on providing as many services in-person as is safely possible.
- For all programs, if services will be provided differently parents will be notified.

Q. Will preschool tuition be reduced for the 2020-2021 school year?

- Yes, the 5 full day program tuition will now be \$2480 for 2 days and \$1240 for the half day program.

Q. How will parents be made aware of the service delivery for their child?

- Parents will receive notification of the service delivery for their child as soon as possible. Staff are working to develop cohorts and schedules for students. While DESE requires that all agreed upon IEP services are implemented, it is understood given the current health and safety requirements services will look different. Like the spring, the District will be using written plans (different than the IEP) to communicate with families how and when services will be delivered.

Q. How will teachers, ESPs, and 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 6 ft space?

- Staff will wear a mask 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.

Q. Will staff be traveling between schools?

- To reduce the number of teachers and students in a classroom, it is possible that special education teachers and related service providers may provide services remotely from within a school building.

Q. My child is on a 504 and receives related services by appointment. Will my child receive in-person services?

- To limit the number of visitors to the school buildings, all related services will be provided remotely.

Q. Will students receive 504 accommodations during remote learning?

- Yes, a free and appropriate public education (“FAPE”) under Section 504 is the provision of equal access to the educational environment which continues during remote learning. Students with existing Section 504 Accommodation plans are entitled to accommodations, and/or support that will allow for equal access to the provision of distance learning. Each building 504 Coordinator will review their assigned students’ plans and work with each student’s teacher(s) to review the necessary accommodations.

Q. Are there exceptions to the mask wearing policy implemented by the District?

- Students PK-12 are expected to wear masks in school. Exceptions to mask/face covering requirements must be made for those 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.

Q. Do parents have to provide masks for their children?

- Masks/face coverings should be provided by the student/family, but all schools will have available face masks for students who need them.

Q. Do students need masks on the school van/bus?

- Yes. Students are required to wear masks. Drivers and monitors are aware that students are sometimes unable to wear masks or keep masks on for the duration of the ride. Drivers and monitors are also offered additional PPE if needed. The PPS Office will be reaching out to families that have students who are currently receiving specialized transportation via the IEP process soon.