

Linn-Mar Return to Learn Special Education

Return to Learn Options – The district has not yet released which plan they will be starting school with. This will be discussed at the August 10th School Board meeting.

1. On-Site Only

A face-to-face delivery model for all students. This pathway includes safety measures that include facial coverings, distancing, and additional cleaning.

2. Online Only

A continuous learning model delivered online. This would only be required in the event of a school closure by the Governor, the Iowa Department of Public Health or the Linn-Mar School Board.

3. Hybrid

A flexible learning model where some students will receive instruction face-to-face and some will be provided instruction online. We have two hybrid options for the district:

- Hybrid A: Family Choice
 - i. Families that are not comfortable returning to on-site school for COVID related reasons can apply to participate in online learning as part of this hybrid model. Linn-Mar will provide eligible students with online learning taught by a certified Linn-Mar teacher. To apply for this hybrid option, [please click here](#). This option will close after August 11th.
- Hybrid B: Still determining but considering A/B Model. Students would be assigned a cohort and attend on their assigned A or B day. Students would have on-site learning 50% and online 50%.

IEP Meetings

Currently, the District has determined to conduct all IEP's virtually until school safety measures can be relaxed. All families will need to have IEP meetings near the beginning of the school year. There are three focus areas for this IEP meeting:

1. Updated Data from Spring
2. Services and Supports for Virtual/Hybrid Learning
3. COVID-19 Recovery Services

Updated Data: The district is obligated to get updated information on student IEP goal areas. We will use screeners, diagnostic assessments and goal progress monitoring updates to assist us with this. The screeners and diagnostic assessments are available to be given to all students who are not meeting academic standards. If you elect for your student to NOT take these assessments, please contact a Student Support Services Director.

Services and Supports for Virtual/Hybrid Learning

The Iowa Department of Education added a new page to the IEP. A sample of this page can be found [HERE](#). The purpose of this documentation is for the IEP to discuss what instruction and services/supports would look like for the student in a virtual/hybrid setting. The team is to start by discussing what are all students receiving in regard to instruction in a virtual/hybrid learning environment. Next, the team looks at how is the student able to access this instruction? Third, are there different needs the student has in a virtual/hybrid setting or no longer need in a virtual/hybrid setting? What are the services, supports and activities the student will require to make progress in a virtual/hybrid setting? Finally, what are the goals the IEP team is going to focus on and how will those be monitored? More information from the State on these guiding questions is found [HERE](#).

COVID-19 Recovery Services

COVID-19 Recovery Services are services that are provided in addition to services and supports that was not taught, as well as the compounding effects of those skills not being taught due to closures related to COVID-19.

In determining COVID-19 Recovery Services, the IEP team calculates the effects of lost opportunities for instruction and other services by analyzing the individual's performance data. IEP teams should:

1. Compare data describing the individual's performance when schools closed to data describing the student's current performance.
2. Identify the gap between where the student was and where they are currently.
3. Review provision of current special education services and supports and the effect of those services on closing the gap.
4. Identify any additional recovery services that will be needed in order to close the gap.

More information on COVID-19 Recovery Services can be found [HERE](#). IEP teams will more than likely not have all of the data to make COVID-19 Recovery Services decisions. However, the IEP team should discuss what data the team will be looking at when they do consider the need for these services. COVID-19 Recovery Services may be provided at any time up to one year after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Timeline of IEP Meetings

The Iowa Department of Education is recommending all students with IEPs have a hybrid/virtual plan developed by the IEP team and documented on the new IEP page prior to their annual review. At Linn-Mar we will be working with the timeline of completing all of our IEP meetings to focus on these three topic areas by October 2nd, 2020. To prepare for this IEP meeting, we suggest you start gathering now what worked well and did not work well in a virtual setting for your student.

FAPE Considerations for Return-to-Learn

Regardless of the delivery model used (On-Site, Continuous Learning/virtual, or Hybrid), districts must ensure that eligible individuals receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). FAPE is determined individually based on a complex intertwining of concepts, meaning that FAPE will look different for each eligible individual. Additionally, an individual's FAPE may look different in Continuous Learning/virtual and Hybrid Learning environments than in an On-Site Learning environment. For example, two of the key components of FAPE are to meet the standards of the state education agency (SEA) and include an appropriate preschool, elementary, or secondary school education. If an elementary school is providing one hour of virtual instruction a day to first grade students, the amount of special education a first grader in that school receives in a Continuous Learning environment will be different than the amount the same receives while in an On-Site environment. Additional guidance from the State can be found [HERE](#).

Service Delivery

IEP teams will need to navigate between appropriate methods of service delivery for students in a virtual/hybrid learning model. These services *can and may* change throughout the school year and between settings as teams determine what is required to best meet student needs. One service delivery method for on-site learning may not be appropriate or meet the students needs in a virtual/hybrid learning model. Scenario examples can be found [HERE](#).

Masks

Questions have been asked around face coverings. Face coverings will be required for all staff and students ECBP-12th grade. Preschool students will need a face covering if they are utilizing district transportation. There are three exemptions to this mandate: (1) health reasons, (2) due to a disability, (3) religious exemption. This district is currently working on a waiver for one of the three reasons above.

Teacher Connection

Your student's IEP teacher will be reaching out to you prior to school starting. They will be connecting with you to see how your family is doing and if there is anything the District can assist you with during this difficult time. Your student's IEP teacher will also be asking you questions around virtual instruction to help prepare for your fall IEP meeting. An IEP meeting will be set once the school team has all of the necessary data to hold a meaningful IEP meeting.

Additional Resources

Grant Wood AEA Family & Educator Partnership (<https://www.gwaea.org/parents/family-educator-partnership-fep>)

[Iowa IDEA Information](http://iowaideainformation.org) – newly released website from the state – (iowaideainformation.org)

[Summary of Procedural Safeguards](https://iowaideainformation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Parental-Rights-Summary.pdf) – (<https://iowaideainformation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Parental-Rights-Summary.pdf>)