

Special Education Guidance:

At Home Learning for Students with Disabilities

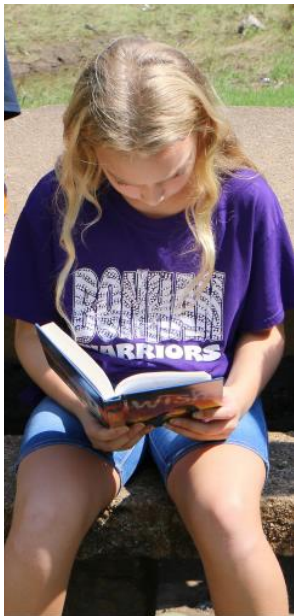


Table of Contents

- At Home Learning for Students with Disabilities1**
 - Executive Summary.....3**
 - Overview of the Supporting Students with Disabilities Supplemental to the Instructional Continuity Framework3**
- Phase 1 – Conduct Landscape Analysis and Planning Activities – Guiding Questions.....3**
 - 1.1 Assess At-Home Learning Access..... 3
 - 1.2 Assess Instructional Delivery Methods 4
 - 1.3 Assess Access for Quality Instructional Design 6
- Phase 2 – Determine At-Home Instructional Model and Monitoring – Guiding Questions.....6**
 - 2.1. Determine At-Home Curriculum and Instructional Model 6
 - 2.2. Set Grading and Progress Monitoring Policies/Procedures..... 8
- Phase 3 – Operationalize the At-Home Model – Guiding Questions9**
 - 3.1: Determining At-Home Learning Schedules and Attendance Plans. 9
 - 3.2: Adapting Staffing Models for Students with Disabilities. 10
 - 3.3 Create a plan for parent communication 11
 - 3.4 Provide Model Aligned Professional Development. 12
- Phase 4 – Provide Monitoring and Support – Guiding Questions.....12**
 - 4.1 Monitor Student Progress..... 13
 - 4.2 Providing Ongoing Teacher Supports 14
 - 4.3 Troubleshoot problems..... 14
 - 4.4 Support Ongoing Operations 14
 - 4.5 Continuously improve the instructional model 15

Executive Summary

The purpose of this guidance document is to help districts launch “at-home schools” that maximize instructional time for students and **support students with disabilities who require special education support to access academic content to maximize their learning.** The agency does not endorse any specific approach and maintains that Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must ensure students served by special education have equitable access to the same platform or provide equitable learning options.

Overview of the Supporting Students with Disabilities Supplemental to the Instructional Continuity Framework

To support LEAs developing plans to provide FAPE during COVID-19, the agency has developed guidance to supplement the Instructional Continuity Framework (link below). Continued guidance for supporting students with disabilities will be continuously posted over the coming weeks.

Phase 1 – Conduct Landscape Analysis and Planning Activities – Guiding Questions

Use the following guiding questions to assist with planning decisions to support students with disabilities in low tech and high-tech environments as well as planning for appropriate assistive technology for students with disabilities. The guiding questions in logistical planning align to the agency Instructional Continuity Framework Phase I: Conduct Landscape Analysis and Planning Activities:

- ✓ 1.1: Assess At-Home Learning Access.
- ✓ 1.2: Assess Instructional Delivery Methods
- ✓ 1.3: Assess Access for Quality Instructional Design

Phase 1 – Instructional Continuity Framework Link

1.1 Assess At-Home Learning Access. To assess existing student access to technology, including hardware, software, and connectivity (*must consider assistive technology and disability specific technology and/or platforms to meet individualized needs of the IEP*). **How is special education integrated into the district /campus/grade level technology plan?**

Access

- Are knowledgeable staff members available to support students with specific assistive technology (AT) needs?
- How will teachers and students with disabilities have access to and experience using online platforms (i.e., learning management system) and digital resources for learning?

Hardware

- What technology resources /hardware are available for teachers and staff specific to meeting the individualized needs of students with disabilities?

- What communication devices do students with disabilities typically utilize for communication? Do they have access to the devices?

Software

- What software resources are available for teachers to support students with disabilities?
- How have special education teachers been involved with the training on software programs?
- Does the district have an approved list of content-specific resources that are readily accessible by all special education teachers?
- Do special education teachers have access to the district's adopted curriculum framework?
- How will special education teachers plan with general education teachers for the delivery of instruction in an online / virtual platform?
- Has the LEA planned for a variety of presentation formats?
 - Variety of teaching methods and mediums
 - Text
 - Audio
- What software options are available for teachers to create infographics needed for visual supports for students (low incidence, DHH, AU)?
 - Flipgrid
 - Nearpod
 - Educreations
 - Edulastic
 - Flocabulary
 - Lino, Piktochart
 - NoRedInk

1.2 Assess Instructional Delivery Methods based on existing licenses/free resources and access to instructional support for all learners. For students with disabilities, review IEPs to determine the devices and supports available to students with disabilities.

Student Accessibility

In the online environment, just as in the physical classroom, the LEA is responsible for all students, including students with disabilities and language differences. When assessing platforms for accessibility, keep in mind that a platform can be accessible, but still have issues with usability. Some products and content are not created with accessibility in mind, so screen readers won't be able to read buttons, labels, headings, etc. When assessing accessibility, ensure Universal Design Learning (UDL) is the base for planning instruction in order to meet the diverse needs of all learners, including students with disabilities. When assessing platform accessibility and identifying high tech and low-tech options for learners, consider the following:

- How will the LEA consider accessibility for students with disabilities to support at home learning?
 - Deaf and Hard of Hearing

- Visual Impairments
- Deaf/Blind
- Intellectual Disabilities
- English Learners with disabilities
- How will the LEA plan for variety of presentation formats?
 - Variety of teaching methods and mediums
 - Text
 - Audio
- How is this platform accessible for students with mobility challenges?
- How are students with low-incidence disabilities accessing technology?
- How is this platform accessible for students with communication challenges?
- How does the platform interface with various forms of assistive technology?
- Does the platform support the delivery of instruction in multiple languages?
- How will the LEA support assistive technology, as documented in students' IEPs?
- What special equipment is necessary for students in the following disability categories:
 - DHH
 - VI
 - Deaf/Blind
 - Autism
 - Dyslexia/Reading Disabilities
 - Dysgraphia/Written Expression Disabilities
 - Emotional Disturbance
 - Intellectual Disability
 - Speech Impairment/Artic/Language
- How will the LEA provide for a consistent layout of the learning domain for ease of access by students with disabilities?
- How will the LEA address privacy for online learning?
 - Will the LEA have a 3rd party providing instruction?
 - What considerations has the LEA provided for FERPA and HIPPA guidance? (HIPPA will rarely come into play, correct? Is it enough to mention here? Or maybe cite to your guidance document?)
 - Is consent required for utilizing video conference for ARD meetings? What guidance has the LEA developed?

Additional Resources:

[Region 10 webpage with an assortment of digital accommodations](#)

[AssistiveWare—Language opportunities for using Augmentative and Alternative Communication \(AAC\) systems at home](#)

[The State Educational Technology Directors Association \(SETDA\)- Accessibility Materials for All Students](#)

1.3 Assess Access for Quality Instructional Design for students with disabilities.

- How will the LEA consider Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to meet the diverse needs of students?
- How will the LEA implement IEPs, accommodations, related/ancillary services?
- How will the LEA develop a structure to support students with disabilities?
 - Considerations:
 - Course and Content requirements
 - Literacy for each content area to support struggling learners
 - Assistance with formulating effective strategies for students with disabilities
 - Support system for teachers via a cohort by campus/grade/subject

Assess supports for all learners.

- Do students with disabilities already have access to digital materials as required in IEP?
- Do special education teachers have access to the same digital materials as the students?
- Have specific programs currently used by students per their IEPs been identified?

TEA Resource:

[Considerations for Selecting Online Instructional Options for Students with Disabilities](#)

Additional Resources:

[UDL Scan Tool and Template](#)

[Digital Accessibility Toolkit Assistive and Instructional Technology Supporting Learners With Disabilities](#)

[Accessibility tools for Microsoft National Center on Accessible Educational Material \(AEM\): Includes information specific to parents and families as well as educators.](#)

Phase 2 – Determine At-Home Instructional Model and Monitoring – Guiding Questions

Use the following guiding questions to assist with planning decisions to support students with disabilities. The guiding questions in Infrastructure planning align to the agency Instructional Continuity Framework Phase 2: Determine At-Home Instructional Model and Progress Monitoring, and the Planning Activities designed to support determination of the at home learning model and progress monitoring as follows:

- ✓ 2.1: Determine At-Home Curriculum and Instructional Model
- ✓ 2.2: Set Grading and Progress Monitoring Policies

[Phase 2 – Instructional Continuity Framework Link](#)

2.1. Determine At-Home Curriculum and Instructional Model by grade, eligibility category, delivery, IEP accommodations, and individualized student goals and objectives.

- How will the teacher provide direct, explicit instruction for students served by special education?

- How will special education teachers plan with general education teachers for the delivery of instruction in an online / virtual platform?
- Does the LEA have a process to easily convert to alternate formats for students with assistive technology needs, including?
 - Braille
 - Audio
 - Sign Language (video)
- Has the LEA considered ways to provide transcription for videos not captioned?
 - Closed captioned video clips
 - Learner is able to adjust font size
- Does the LEA have a designated way for instructional materials to be easily converted to meet needs of students with cognitive and intellectual disabilities?
 - Simple text and language
 - Use of infographics and pictures
 - Include background information, audio clips, video clips
- Has the LEA planned for varying formats that allow a variety of student response methods?
 - Alternate responses
 - Text to speech software
 - Speech to text software
 - Use of instructional paraprofessionals to assist students virtually
- Are the selected instructional materials self-paced digital, self-paced print, teacher-directed digital, or teacher-directed print resources?
- How will the LEA prioritize the IEPs for students when planning for instruction?
- How will special education staff be included in this process?
- How will special education staff be available to adjust content as needed with general educators?
- How can the LEA embed accommodations into the instructional materials?

TEA Resources:

[At Home Learning Resource for Students with Disabilities](#)

Additional Resources:

[Texas Sensory Support Network—Virtual Activities for Teachers and Families](#)

[Distance Learning Special Education](#)

[Institute for Multi-Sensory Education YouTube Channel:](#) Includes virtual tutoring ideas for students participating in Orton-Gillingham activities.

District Examples:

[Northwest ISD OT Site](#)

[Fort Bend ISD \(website\)](#)

[Behavior Support Resources](#)

[Dyslexia and Reading Resources](#)

[Fun Activities to Try at Home](#)

[Educational Games](#)

[Social Skills Supports](#)

2.2. Set Grading and Progress Monitoring Policies/Procedures

- How will special education and general education teachers have continued access to their students' IEP documents from home, including goals, objectives, and accommodations/modifications?
- Will the LEA develop expectations for general education and special education staff (e.g., special education teacher, teacher of the visually impaired, teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing, other specialists, related service providers) to have regularly scheduled, documented planning time together to coordinate IEP implementation, progress monitoring, accommodations, and/or modifications for students.
- Does the LEA have a protocol for how IEP progress will be measured and how accommodations will be documented by the general education teacher, special education teacher, paraprofessional, and/or related services and speech providers.
 - Select the goal statement used for instruction and progress monitoring
 - Use the current baseline for the goal selected from the IEP
- What are expectations to monitor how the student will demonstrate the skills identified in the IEP (who is doing this? Special education teacher, general education teacher)?
 - Are expectations for staff to progress monitor clearly defined? How often progress data will be reviewed (6 weeks, 3 weeks, weekly)?
 - How will data be used to adjust instruction in response to student progress?
 - How will data be used to decide if changes are needed that require an IEP team meeting?
 - Will the special education teacher compile, chart, and review the data each week to determine if instructional adjustments are needed?
- How will LEAs determine how staff will complete documents that typically require progress monitoring reports:
 - Prepare present level statements and update IEP goals for upcoming annual ARDS and/or reevaluations (general education teachers, special education teachers, assessment personnel, related/ancillary services).
 - Prepare student progress reports for parents as documented in the IEP (general education teachers, special education teachers, and related/ancillary services).
 - Track service delivery times (service providers document for future compensatory discussions that may be necessary)

TEA Resources:

[Progress Monitoring Checklist](#)

[Sample Accommodations Tracking Form](#)

[COVID 19 FAQ: Special Education Emergency Contingency Plan](#)

[TEA Fillable PDF](#)

Phase 3 – Operationalize the At-Home Model – Guiding Questions

Use the following guiding questions to assist with planning decisions to support students with disabilities. The guiding questions in instructional planning align to the agency Instructional Continuity Framework Phase 3: Operationalize the At-Home Model, and the Planning Activities designed to support operationalizing the model as follows:

- ✓ 3.1: Determine At-Home Learning Schedules and Attendance Plans
- ✓ 3.2 Adapt Staffing Models
- ✓ 3.3: Communication Plan with Stakeholders
- ✓ 3.4: Provide Model-Aligned Professional Development

[Phase 3 – Instructional Continuity Framework Link](#)

3.1: Determining At-Home Learning Schedules and Attendance Plans.

- How will the LEA develop schedules for students with disabilities?
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
- Responsibilities (special education teacher, general education teacher)
- How will teachers (general education and special education) monitor and update student schedules?
- How will the LEA develop schedule for students to follow based on instruction model?
 - Visual schedules
 - Online schedules
 - Paper based schedules/planners for parents

Additional Resources:

[Special Educators' Roles as Virtual Teachers](#)

[Visual Supports and Autism Spectrum Disorders](#)

[Simple Visual Schedule – Kentucky Autism Training Center](#)

[Daily home schedule and Activity Ideas – BIAS](#)

Sample at Home Learning Planning Templates:

[Early Childhood visual schedule - Colorado River COOP](#)

[Visual Supports and Online Modules](#)

District Examples:

[Fort Bend ISD – Sample 4th Grade Schedule](#)

[Fort Bend ISD - Elementary Parent Resources](#)

3.2: Adapting Staffing Models for Students with Disabilities. Identify staffing plan needs based on selected curriculum and instruction model. **Update roles and responsibilities** of all school and district level positions included in staffing model.

- Has the LEA developed a protocol to adapt instruction for students' IEPs by considering the following?
 - Focus on relevant content. Put learning in context, provide examples, and set clear expectations (special education teacher, general education teacher, related/ancillary service providers).
 - Choose textbooks and other curriculum materials that address the needs of students with diverse abilities, interests, learning styles, and preferences (district leadership, special education teachers, general education teachers, paraprofessionals, related/ancillary service providers).
 - Use curriculum materials that are well organized, emphasize important points, provide references for gaining background knowledge, include indices and glossaries, and have chapter outlines, study questions, and practice exercises (special education teachers, general education teachers).
 - Consider technology-based materials that provide feedback, background information, vocabulary, and other supports based on student responses (special education teachers, general education teachers).
 - Provide cognitive supports, such as summaries of major points, background and contextual information, and pre-taught key terms and concepts (special education teachers, general education teachers).
 - Provide scaffolding tools (e.g., outlines, class notes, summaries, and copies of projected materials) in both printed form and a text-based electronic format (special education teachers, general education teachers).
 - Deliver instructions clearly and in multiple ways (special education teachers, general education teachers).

- Has the LEA considered how to make each teaching method accessible to students with clear expectations?
 - Take note of the types of accessibility needs your students have. Remote learning opportunities should be developed so that they are accessible for all learners including students who are deaf or hard of hearing and/or visually impaired. This includes accessible documents, materials in braille, video captioning, signing, audio support, and descriptive videos to name a few. For more information on individual student accommodations consult with your TVI and/or TODHH.
 - Use large visual and tactile aids. Use manipulatives to demonstrate content. Make visual aids (e.g., use large, bold fonts on uncluttered overhead displays; use a computer to enlarge microscope images).

- Provide for a consistent layout of the learning domain for ease of access by students with disabilities.
- Will the LEA provide any related/ancillary services virtually?
 - Speech tele practice/teletherapy
 - Counseling services tele practice/teletherapy
 - OT/PT tele practice/teletherapy
 - Behavior Supports (BIP)

Feedback and assessment

- How will the LEA regularly assess student's progress and provide specific feedback on a regular basis using multiple accessible methods and tools and adjust instruction accordingly to continue progress and avoid frustration?
 - Minimize time constraints when appropriate.
 - Plan for variety in students' ability to complete work by announcing assignments well in advance and provide clear due dates (special education and general education teachers).
 - Provide regular feedback and corrective opportunities (special education teachers, general education teachers, parents, paraprofessionals).
 - Provide multiple ways to demonstrate knowledge opportunities (special education teachers, general education teachers, parents, paraprofessionals).
 - Monitor and adjust instructional content and methods as needed (special education teachers, general education teachers).
 - Provide samples, examples, and guides (special education teachers, general education teachers).

TEA Resources:

[TEA COVID 19 FAQ Supporting Students with Complex Needs](#)

[COVID 19 Speech-Language Therapy Services](#)

[COVID 19 Occupational and Physical Therapy](#)

[COVID 19 Providing Counseling as a Related Service](#)

[COVID 19 Supporting Challenging Behaviors at Home](#)

District Examples:

[Mansfield ISD – Special Education Teacher Expectations](#)

[Fort Bend ISD – PPCD Language Lab Expectations](#)

[Fort Bend ISD special ed services schedule – SAILS elementary](#)

[Fort Bend ISD resource schedule – Middle School Resource](#)

[Fort Bend ISD Inclusion/Co-teach schedule](#)

3.3 Create a plan for parent communication to ensure students with disabilities receive materials.

- How will LEAs communicate with parents/guardians regarding evaluation?
- How will LEAs communicate with parents/guardians regarding ARD meetings?
- How will LEAs communicate with parents/guardians regarding IEP progress?
- Will LEAs develop emergency/temporary plans? How and when will those be shared with parents?
- How will LEAs prepare high-tech and low-tech instruction expectations to parents? (who is responsible for instruction preparation?)
- Who will communicate schedule and lesson expectations?
- How will parents be notified of the expectations for students with disabilities? (special education, general education, related/ancillary service, paraprofessionals?)
- Is there a standard template for communication that will be used to document IEP goals and objectives aligned to instruction?

TEA Resources:

In Development

Additional Resources:

[OCR – FAQs on Effective Communication for Students with Hearing, Vision, or Speech Disabilities in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools](#)

[Center on the Social and Emotional Development of Young Children - Parent Training Modules](#)

3.4 Provide Model Aligned Professional Development. LEAs need to identify the digital tools, programs, and platforms currently in use by the LEA. Leveraging previously purchased or regularly used tools and platforms will provide greater continuity and consistency for students and staff.

- If LEAs are conducting ARDs virtually, what training is necessary to support this process? (teacher expectations, evaluation staff expectations, administrator expectations, privacy).
- If LEAs determine assessment components can be completed virtually, what training is necessary to support this process? (district leadership, assessment personnel, parents).
- Which trainings are necessary to ensure FERPA, HIPPA, and FAPE requirements for supporting students with disabilities? (district leadership)
- Do special education/general education teachers need general training on delivering online content instruction?
- Will special education staff require training on assistive technology a student may be accessing?

Phase 4 – Provide Monitoring and Support – Guiding Questions

Use the following guiding questions to assist with planning decisions to support students with disabilities. The guiding questions in instructional planning align to the agency Instructional Continuity Framework Phase 4:

Provide Monitoring and Support, and the Planning Activities designed to support operationalizing the model as follows:

- ✓ 4.1: Monitor Student Progress
- ✓ 4.2: Providing Ongoing Teacher Supports
- ✓ 4.3 Troubleshoot problems
- ✓ 4.4 Support Ongoing Operations
- ✓ 4.5 Continuously improve the instructional model

[Phase 4 – Instructional Continuity Framework Link](#)

4.1 Monitor Student Progress.

- How do the current monitoring tools integrate progress monitoring systems that are already in place? Are the IEPs accessible to staff to utilize?
- What protocols will leadership establish to ensure teachers are providing progress updates and monitoring of IEPs?
- How will LEAs plan for staff to document the need for compensatory services?
- How teachers will have access to IEPs in order to provide progress updates
- How will special education staff document times for service?
- How will special education staff document accommodations and IEP updates?
- What is the schedule for special education teachers to update IEPs? (when will they be shared with parents)?
- What is the schedule for documenting possible need for (?) compensatory services?
 - Weekly
 - Daily
 - Monthly
- How will compensatory services be determined based on the above documentation? (district leadership)
- When and how will the LEA consider regression/recoupment? (ESY/Compensatory)?

Additional Resources:

[Progress Monitoring Tools](#)

District Examples:

[Sample of Service Log for Special Education Mansfield ISD](#) (Word)

[Sample Accommodations Monitoring Form](#) (Word)

[Sample of Sped Accommodations Tracker Mansfield ISD](#) (Word)

[Sample Accommodations Tracker – Excel from Mansfield ISD](#) (Excel)

[Activity for Sample of Progress Monitoring](#) (Word)

[Frisco ISD Service Log](#) (PDF)

4.2 Providing Ongoing Teacher Supports

- Has the LEA provided a design process for school leaders, special education teachers, assessment personnel, related/ancillary service providers, and paraprofessionals to have a check in system in place of their instruction expectations?
- What new systems or processes does the LEA need to implement to support students with disabilities and providing FAPE?
- What daily routines and expectations will need to be created or adjusted to check daily attendance or presence of special education teachers?
- What expectations will be mandatory across the district?
- What expectations will be determined by individual campus leaders and how will ARD meeting expectations be reviewed? (special education staff, campus leadership, district leadership)
- Who is responsible for supporting special education staff? (campus leadership, district leadership)

Additional Resources:

[Council for Exceptional Children, planning for virtual instruction during COVID web resources](#)

Microsoft learning tools, building accessible learning (Ed has this link)

District Example:

[Northwest ISD Behavior Support Resource](#)

4.3 Troubleshoot problems

- Will the LEA provide a single point of contact who is knowledgeable of special education?
- Will support be available in multiple languages?
- Is there a way for students request support in different response modes?
- Will there be a place for written instructions that are accessible and understandable? Are they step by step?
- What kind of documentation or receipt, if any, will a help desk user get once they submit a ticket or support request? (special education teacher, related/ancillary services, paraprofessionals, special education leadership, campus leadership).

4.4 Support Ongoing Operations

- Has the LEA decided on necessary timelines and resources to make operational improvements in light of other priorities?
- Has the LEA has developed a protocol for regular check-ins with parents/guardians about emergency planning and at home learning expectations?
- Has the LEA considered utilizing paraprofessionals to ensure all employees are being utilized effectively and in order to provide FAPE?

TEA Resource:

[Tips for Managing Behaviors at Home - English](#)

[Tips for Managing Behaviors at Home – Spanish \(link from COVID page\)](#)

4.5 Continuously improve the instructional model

- Did the LEA plan special education staff expectations and parent communication to include information regarding Child Find, Evaluation, ARD Meetings, and IEP implementation and progress?
- Did the LEA plan for general education and special education teachers to collaborate for instructional supports?

This document provides a broad level of support to encourage appropriate development of programs and services for student eligible for special education services. However, this is not an exhaustive coverage of all issues. Discussions with appropriate staff within the district need to be held to identify existing and future supports for effective online and blended learning options built around the student’s individual learning needs.