



Dear Parents and Guardians,

Although this summer has been unique as we experience an unprecedented time in history, I do hope that you were able to find time to relax and that this finds you healthy and well. We are starting the 2020-2021 school year with many questions and this can create uneasiness and stress. Although we do not have answers to some questions coming forth at this time, I wanted to provide you with information that we do have.

The needs of students with disabilities are of the utmost importance as we plan for the 2020-2021 school year and the Integrated Services team has been working diligently to ensure equity and access for all students. Integrated Services (IS) has identified needed resources in materials, personal protective equipment (PPE), technology and instructional strategies to best support our students and staff, at this point in time, for the 2020 – 2021 school year. Beginning in the first week of August, staff will be provided with multiple opportunities to engage in professional development to enhance instructional strategies for any phase of learning that might occur. Staff will also have opportunities to collaborate with colleagues to discuss best practices, find solutions for students and instruction, as well as answer questions that they may have regarding the 2020-2021 school year. Poudre School District is committed to ensuring compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and we are also committed to meeting the individual needs of each student.

All students with a disability in Poudre School District (PSD) will follow the District plan whether attending school in person, partial in-person/remote or the online option unless the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) team determines that the student's needs are to be met differently. As plans for the opening of the 2020-2021 school year are carefully developed, Integrated Services understands the importance of ensuring the health and safety of our students and staff, with special consideration given for our most vulnerable students.

- Most students with disabilities will attend school just as they did previously.
- Students with disabilities who spend the majority of their school day in general education classes will follow the same schedule as non-disabled peers in their identified cohort, while also engaging in the services identified in the IEP.
- At times, some students attending a brick-and-mortar school may receive specialized instruction and related services through online technology or

“teletherapy”.

- Students with disabilities may attend the online program, PSD Virtual, if they are able to access the content with accommodations and modifications as determined by an IEP team. Please see the information below regarding this process.
- As students with disabilities return to school, we realize that this may produce a variety of emotions. Students may be excited to see their friends and teachers yet also be anxious for many reasons. Students may want to come to school yet be afraid to leave family, may fear exposure to illness or may have difficulty with changes in routine or transitions. Staff will welcome their students while supporting their social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs. Building relationships with students will be key to support successful future learning.
- When appropriate, an IEP team will update IEPs to meet student’s individual needs.
- Evaluations and re-evaluations will take place in accordance with IDEA timelines.
- Individual Education Plan (IEP) team meetings have been and will continue to be held when they are due either in-person or remotely based on current Health Department information.
- Integrated Services has continued to monitor state and federal guidance regarding services to students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 during the COVID 19 pandemic. We will continue to follow any guidance that comes forth.
- In an effort to reduce the spread of Covid-19:
 - Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) will be provided and worn by staff at all times in accordance with the Larimer County Health Department guidelines;
 - Specialized Service Professionals who serve multiple buildings will work to reduce building transitions each day. Related services such as OT, Speech/Language, etc. may be delivered directly or through the use of technology (teletherapy);
 - Equipment, supplies, and materials will be designated for individual use and sanitized based on Health Department standards;
 - All Integrated Services staff will follow guidance from the District’s Health Services team when addressing students’ health/medical needs;
 - Students with disabilities will wear masks and employ physical distancing to the greatest extent possible. If this is difficult for a student, an IEP team meeting may be called to discuss meeting the student’s needs in light of health and safety concerns.
- The best place to find the most updated information can be found here:
 - [*The PSD COVID-19 response web page is updated;*](#)
 - [*Larimer County Department of Health and Environment website;*](#)

- *Questions? We have answers - Find the latest information on our [COVID-19 FAQ web page](#).*
- PSD has created a [Frequently Asked Questions guide](#) to answer the most common questions we receive. Please check out the FAQs.
- For more information to assist our students who access special education and related services through Integrated Services, please visit the Integrated Services main webpage <https://www.psdschools.org/programs-services/integrated-services>.

Integrated Services and the Virtual Learning Option

The Exceptional Children’s Educational Act of Colorado (ECEA) indicates that a change of placement occurs when a student transfers from a brick-and-mortar school to the Virtual Learning option due to Covid-19 or to an online school, thereby requiring the IEP team to conduct an evaluation in accordance with the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) criteria related to a change of placement in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

Ref: ECEA: 4.03(8)(b)(ii)(A)(III) Significant Change of Placement: The child transfers from a brick and mortar school to an on-line program or vice versa. The administrative unit for the entity sponsoring the on-line program is responsible for conducting the reevaluation and convening the IEP Team to determine whether the on-line program is an appropriate placement for the child.

In order to remain in compliance with the ECEA Rules in Colorado during remote learning due to Covid-19, the IEP team will adhere to the following procedures to assure District compliance with the ECEA Rules:

- If the parents of a student on a current IEP request Virtual Learning (e.g., learning delivered in an online format) for their student during the Covid-19 pandemic, the school will initiate the re-evaluation process by requesting consent for evaluation from the parent(s) or guardian(s).
- The school-based team will conduct the evaluation and hold an IEP meeting to determine if the student’s special education and related service needs can be provided in a Virtual Learning format.
- A special education teacher from the Virtual Learning format will attend the IEP meeting along with the student’s current special education case manager and all other required members of the IEP team.
- The student's building-based special education case manager will consult with the Virtual Learning special education teacher regarding specific student needs.
- If the parents request that their student return to learning in a brick-and-mortar building, the school-based team will again conduct an evaluation and hold an IEP meeting to change services accordingly. A re-evaluation will also be required if the school district discontinues the Virtual Learning format.

Remember, we are all adapting the best way we know how, so be gentle with the

expectations you place on yourself and others. And, ask for help if you are having a tough time and remember you are not alone. Know that we are aware of the many challenges and want to be part of creating solutions and success for our students. The best connection for families is with school staff working directly with your child and you. Specific questions regarding your child's education are best answered by this team. If our leadership team can be of assistance, we are certainly very happy to help in any way we can.

Please take good care of yourself and your family. Although the challenges of this time are deep, I hope that you can also find the good in the world.

Sincerely,



Sarah Belleau
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