

Progress Monitoring in Remote and Online Learning Environments

The rapid pivot to alternative instructional models to ensure the health and safety of our K-12 students has required all stakeholders to rethink how to ensure meaningful educational opportunities. Students with disabilities often require instruction that is unique and individualized to meet learning needs. The addition of special education services provides students with key supports necessary to make progress toward learning goals. However, the Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) established to ensure proper implementation of services most likely were not developed for multiple instructional modalities (onsite, hybrid, and remote/online) necessary to continue education during times of government-imposed quarantine and social distancing requirements. It is the responsibility of IEP Team to ensure students with disabilities are benefiting from educational activities in order to make academic and functional gains. However, the shift from onsite (in-person) instruction to remote and online learning has been found to negatively impact some student learning outcomes. It is critical that IEP Teams take a proactive approach to progress monitoring and goal setting while the student is learning in the home and online.

Special Education Case Managers and Related Service providers must continue to document the student's current level of performance throughout the school reopening process, across the continuum of school reopening models. Documentation of progress monitoring data is necessary to evaluate student progress across the school reopening models.

The ***Collection*** of meaningful data for progress monitoring the learning priorities at school and at home during remote and online learning is critical¹. Doing so helps to assure that a student is progressing in gaining knowledge and skills regardless of where instruction happens. By collecting data on the same or modified IEP goals information is gained both about the student's skill levels and how they are ***generalizing across both environments***, which is an important consideration for establishing meaningful learning. ***It is expected that the data collection plan will look different between school and home with the latter being simplified and streamlined to fit into family routines and practices,***

¹ Reopening Washington Schools 2020: Special Education Guidance suggest IEP teams use the SC Process Steps p. 36
<https://www.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/public/specialed/pubdocs/Reopening-WA-Schools-2020-SpEd-Guidance.pdf>

Considerations for students with disabilities and moving to remote and online learning environments:

1. The change in *instructional delivery, learning environment, change in learning and personnel supports, and additional skills required for technology* use most likely will require the collection of new baseline data related to student academic and functional performance.
2. IEP Teams should ensure that students have accessible hardware and software. This may require a formal or informal assistive technology assessment, technology training for both parent and student, and the addition of specialized equipment. Close progress monitoring of assistive technology and training is necessary.
3. Research shows that once students that struggle to access digital content the risk of disengagement increases. It is possible that new IEP goals may need to be developed based on initial baseline data accompanied by frequent monitoring to ensure appropriate supports are in place.
4. Beginning progress monitoring activities as soon as students move to remote and online learning is critical to student success.

Questions related to planning for Progress Monitoring and Reporting²:

1. How will IEP Teams measure, evaluate and improve communication efforts of staff at all levels to ensure that teams are collaborating as needed to meet student and family needs?
2. What internal controls are needed to ensure ongoing progress monitoring for students with disabilities, including protocols for identifying and responding to lack of progress, across the continuum of reopening models?
3. How will the IEP Team ensure all interventions include data collection prior to intervention and regular progress monitoring during the intervention to determine if the student is responding to the intervention?
4. What training is needed to support remote and online service delivery, collaboration and progress monitoring data collection?

² Items were in part taken from the Special Education Planning Guide for Reopening Washington Schools 2020

Tips for Progress Monitoring in remote and online learning environments³:

- **Explore** all assessment possibilities recognizing that conducting in-person assessments may be limited during school building closures.
- **Maintain** documentation of what services were *offered*.
- **Maintain** documentation of what services were *delivered*. [Student Progress Monitoring Tool for Data Collection and Graphing \(Excel\)](#)⁴
- **Maintain** documentation of student “attendance” to the extent possible (if online learning is being offered, how often did the student log in, what work was produced during that time, etc.). Student records should align with district guidelines on attendance.
- **Understand** what are appropriate measures of student engagement/participation are for the remote and online learning environment. Behavioral domains such as “logging in” are frequently used to determine engagement. IEP Teams should establish other ways to identify student engagement/participation by observation of affective and cognitive domains.
- **Determine** what aligns to IEP goals and how to gather solid data on IEP progress to support this determination in the best way possible.
- **Manage** the data gathered.
- **Analyze** the data compared to the student’s progress at the point school building closures took place to ensure the COVID-19 impact is made clear.

Progress Reporting in remote and online learning :

- Progress reports should be provided consistent with the way they are specified in the individual student’s IEP and in the method the district normally provides progress reports to parents ***unless the IEP Team in collaboration with parents determine other means for reporting due unforeseen unique circumstances.***
- Progress data should include the level of performance for each goal/objective, based on various forms of data collection. ***Data collection methods will most likely need to be adjusted based on instructional delivery method and instructional setting.***
- Each report requires a summary of the progress towards the goal (or objective).
- Reports may also note: goal met, minimal or limited progress, or unable to contact student or collect data.
- ***If there is a problem collecting data the IEP Team should work swiftly to address the problem.*** Include comments in the progress report to note any changes in access to school reopening models, for example: ***“Due to COVID-19 and state-mandated health directives on Sept __, 2020, data and progress summary information has been collected by the following as available: report card information, informal assessment data, formal assessment data, district or site-based assessments, educator-made assessments, as well as distance learning activities, including both digital and print-based sources.”***

³ This section includes content adapted from the [IDEA Best Practices during the Covid-19 Crisis](#) (Spring 2020)

⁴ The National Center on Intensive Intervention at AIR provide tools and evaluation tools for <https://intensiveintervention.org/resource/student-progress-monitoring-tool-data-collection-and-graphing-excel>