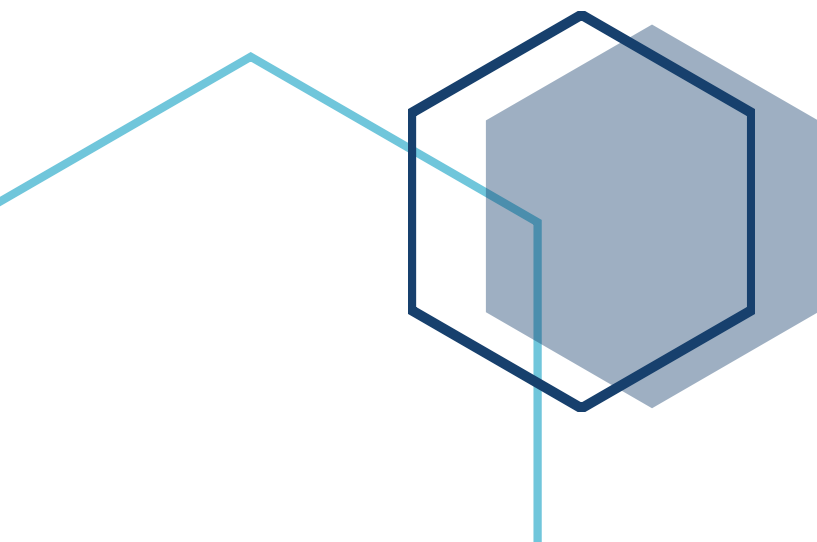




# Reset Programming for 2020-2021

Special Education Services

Huntsville City Schools





# Reset Programming for 2020-2021

## Special Education Services

### Introduction

The transition from traditional to blended learning during the Spring of 2020 forced learning communities to think forward in terms of instructional and extracurricular environments for students. In a short time, instruction shifted from being delivered at school to at home, and things radically sounded different, looked different, and felt different. This shift also extended to how students and families perceived instruction and education as an entity.

Our experiences have also taught us as a District that our families are diverse in terms of expectations regarding their student's educational experience. While many parents continue to prefer that their child attends school for face to face instruction, others desire a more flexible approach that allows their child to learn from home on a daily basis using a virtual platform for all content areas. Regardless of the path that a student takes, the District expectations will remain consistent to provide all students with instructional opportunities and platforms as well as supporting resources to ensure students receive a strong foundation at each grade level to be college and career ready.

Huntsville City Schools' Special Education Services team continues to work to locate and provide answers, options, and resources to ensure that our personnel and our families have access to all resources needed to provide instruction for the academic, social, behavioral, physical, and communication needs of our students. In addition, we are continuously adding and planning parent resources for parents and families. In this document, you will find information that addresses areas related to Special Education and may answer questions that families may have moving forward into a new school year. As a team, our mission is to provide the support and resources needed for all students to learn and grow.

### FAPE



As a District, we will continue to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students eligible for Special Education Services. Beginning August 2020, families have options for how learning will look, sound, and feel for their child, including a traditional option as well as a full virtual school option through Huntsville Virtual Academy (HVA). We also acknowledge that there may be times where additional precautions may become necessary and school closure may resume.



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### Learning Frameworks for 2020-2021

#### Traditional

- Traditional learning environment - students attend school daily on a normal schedule
- Instruction is provided by teachers in the school daily, and students rotate on a normal daily schedule throughout the school environment
- Students attend school daily on campus
- This plan is implemented when there is no indication of a current surge/low numbers of new cases for COVID-19

#### Virtual

- Non-traditional instruction that has flexibility for daily scheduling and instructional times
- Courses are delivered virtually from remote; students participate in their instruction and coursework from home and do not attend class on campus
- For students receiving therapies and services through Special Education, the IEP team may address on-site participation or therapy to meet the individualized needs of students
- This plan is implemented during high rates of daily cases/active surge
- Option offered to ALL students beginning Fall 2020 through Huntsville Virtual Academy

## Frameworks



HCS will make a good faith effort in all cases to remain compliant with federal and state timelines and mandates related to Special Education processes. In order to maintain this timeline compliance process, student assessment for the purpose of attaining or maintaining Special Education services may be completed virtually (online) and services may be delivered virtually to ensure that students are receiving services in a timely manner.



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### Child Find

Huntsville City Schools works collaboratively in a statewide effort with the Alabama State Department of Education and the Department of Rehabilitation Services to locate, identify, and evaluate children with disabilities from birth to age 21.

If you have concerns regarding a student's progress or suspect a student may have a disability, please contact your school administrator, guidance counselor, or the HCS Department of Special Education Services at 256-428-6872.

Referral and eligibility meetings as well as re-evaluation meetings will continue to be held virtually during times of elevated health concern to reduce exposure to illness in the school building.

Psychometric assessments for eligibility purposes, such as intelligence testing, achievement testing, behavior rating scales, autism rating scales, etc. may have components that are completed virtually. HCS will make every attempt to complete assessments in a face-to-face manner; however, we must also remain compliant with state and federal timelines.

## Child Find Process



Child Find is the process used in Alabama for identifying all children who may be eligible for services and referring them to Alabama's Early Intervention System. It is an important step that provides families with the guidance and support they need to make on their own behalf.



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### Instruction

Huntsville City Schools will continue Implementation and provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), including Child Find (referral and eligibility for Special Education Services) and specialized instruction as outlined in student Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), including academic, social/behavioral, and communication skills.

HCS will be implementing a digital curriculum that allows for students to participate in instruction that meets the Alabama State Course of Study content standards in both a face-to-face and virtual platform. All students, whether they are attending school or participating in Huntsville Virtual Academy, will have access to technology and online curriculum that supports this instruction. Students will receive services from both general education and special education teachers in order for them to access instruction using a digital platform and for accommodations to be made as written in the student's IEP.

Consistent and meaningful communication will be held between home and school to ensure that students are able to access instruction in a variety of settings. Special education teachers are available to families to answer questions and concerns. We recommend that families utilize email to reach teachers; however, parents/guardians may also call the school and leave a message for the teacher. All Huntsville City Schools personnel will respond to student/parent/family concerns in a timely manner via phone or email.

Intervention programs will be implemented in the area of math and reading for all K-8 students, to include before and after school tutoring opportunities to align with the requirements of the Alabama Literacy Act. Parents will receive information and training in the implementation of programs so they may access and assist during implementation using a virtual platform.

## IEP Teams



IEP teams may reconvene to discuss a student's evolving needs based on assessment data and parent feedback. The IEP may reflect changes that address academic, behavioral, or communication concerns as well as the need for additional accommodations or related services. All students in HCS will participate in reading and math assessments to identify potential areas of concern so that intervention may be appropriately planned and implemented.



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## Special Education Services

### Instruction

Additional technology as well as assistive technology has been purchased by the District to further support students on full virtual plans.

Accommodations needed for students with hearing and visual impairments to access instruction virtually will be addressed by District SPE administrators, specialists, and teachers to ensure that students are able to access instruction.

Students receiving academic instruction in specialized classroom units who are pursuing the Alabama Alternate Standards (AAS) will continue to receive academic instruction utilizing Unique Learning System and News2You (ULS and N2Y). Both programs meet the Alabama Course of Study standards for AAS.

We recognize that all students across the District may need additional intervention to address potential deficits in reading and math. To address these deficits as well as meet the requirements of the Alabama Literacy Act, the District has purchased additional intervention programs that will be used during the normal school day as well as during before and after school tutoring for students identified for these programs based on assessment data.

For students receiving services from District behavioral specialists or a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), these services may be delivered face to face and/or virtually, to include parent and family support and training. In addition, for students receiving counseling services from the District mental health partner, these services may be delivered virtually, as well, to maintain continuity of services for our students.

## Collaboration



Special education teachers and paraprofessionals will work collaboratively with general education teachers to continuously monitor and assess student progress and will communicate this progress with families in a variety of methods, including progress reports. IEP teams may reconvene to address student progress based on assessment data and make appropriate changes to reflect areas of school or parental concern.



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### Facilities

Students receiving special education services will adhere to District health and safety guidelines being implemented, required, and/or suggested to protect students and personnel to the greatest extent possible. HCS acknowledges that not all procedures may be implemented with all students due to medical, sensory, and/or other special needs and circumstances; however, protocols will be followed to the extent possible. Please refer to the District Health Services plan for a full description of required protocols and suggested guidelines for students returning to a school campus.

Under the guidance of the HCS Director of Facilities and the District Lead Registered Nurse, all HCS personnel will follow the District's protocol in relation to protecting the health and safety of our students and personnel. This information may be located on the District's web page and will be updated as needed.

Students with health plans and elevated risks with exposure to illness who have an IEP will have all plans reviewed, and if needed, an IEP meeting will be scheduled to include any additional information or accommodations. Our first priority will be the health and safety of all students and personnel in HCS.

In addition, to the greatest extent possible, students will be socially distanced during times of elevated health concerns/risks. While the District acknowledges that there are exceptions that will be made in individualized cases to meet the needs of our students who may not be able to conform to social distancing, etc., measures will be taken to protect all students to the greatest extent possible.

To accommodate students who need/require physical assistance during the school day, assignments will be made to limit the number of physical interactions with additional personnel during the time that students are at school.

## PPE



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided by the District for all specialized classroom units as well as in cases of elevated risks. This includes but is not limited to masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, and cleaning agents. In addition, protective screens may be used to limit one-to-one interaction during assessment or small group/one-to-one instruction times.



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### Transportation

Students who receive transportation as a related service through their IEP will continue to receive this service. Huntsville City Schools transportation staff will follow all health and safety guidelines and protocol as outlined by the District in order to protect the health of students and personnel to the greatest extent possible during times of elevated health concern/risks.

Parents are encouraged to assess their child's health each morning prior to the student's departure for the bus. Families are encouraged to self-report symptoms of illness, which includes cough, fever, and any other symptom that is out of the norm for their child. Students who can do so are encouraged to wear masks while traveling on the bus and while at school to reduce exposure to illness.

For questions related to Special Education transportation and change of address, please contact Sage Graves at 256-428-6872 or at [sage.graves@hsv-k12.org](mailto:sage.graves@hsv-k12.org). Concerns related to specific transportation times, routes, or a late bus contact the Transportation Department at 256-361-0919

## Student Health



Student health and safety is essential to learning. For student with health risks or concerns, school and district personnel, including teachers, health services (nurses), and administration will work together to create a plan that addresses student health concerns and provides an environment that is most conducive to learning in times of elevated health concerns/risks.





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## Special Education Services

### Health Services

Communication related to student health and wellness, both physical and emotional, is critical for supporting students both in school and at home. The District recognizes that students, families, and personnel have experienced a period of time that held many unknowns which affects people differently. We ask that parents and families reach out to their school administrator or their child's teachers to share concerns and information related to health concerns. Information is key to adequate student support, so we encourage parents and families to remain in contact with their child's school.

For students with disabilities who require a school-based health care plan or whom have specific medical conditions or needs, the IEP team case manager and school team, to include the school nurse, will review the current plan to determine if an IEP meeting is needed to create updates to the plan to be reflective of new scheduling or additional accommodations. Parents with concerns should contact their child's case manager or school administrator as soon as possible.

For students who require physical assistance during the day to access the school environment, school personnel should strategically schedule to limit physical contact with numerous individuals throughout to reduce the possibility of exposure to illness. Example: Students who need assistance with mobility and have access to physical assistance would receive this assistance from a designated adult each day rather than multiple adults providing support during periods of elevated health concern/risks.

During times of elevated health concern/risks, students and personnel are encouraged to wear masks to reduce exposure to illness; however, masks are not required for students. Parents/families are welcome and encouraged to send a mask or other protective items for student use on days when students are receiving school-based instruction.

To view changes to District health procedures, please see the District website. This information is continuously reviewed by the District and will be updated as recommended by State and community agencies

## Training



School personnel will be trained on health/safety protocol, including use of masks, gloves, sanitizer, social distancing, etc. to ensure that HCS is following proper guidelines and procedures as recommended by the Alabama Department of Public Health and Center for Disease Control (CDC).

If you have specific concerns related to your child's health, please contact the campus nurse at your child's school and also communicate with your child's IEP case manager.



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## Special Education Services

**For questions and/or concerns related to Special Education Services, you may contact personnel listed below**

### **Department Administrative Assistant**

Sage Graves - [sage.graves@hsv-k12.org](mailto:sage.graves@hsv-k12.org)

### **Department Data Specialist**

Donna Harbin - [donna.harbin@hsv-k12.org](mailto:donna.harbin@hsv-k12.org)

### **PreK/Elementary Programs**

Peggy Long - [peggy.long@hsv-k12.org](mailto:peggy.long@hsv-k12.org)

### **Middle School Programs**

Sherri Goodwin - [sherri.goodwin@hsv-k12.org](mailto:sherri.goodwin@hsv-k12.org)

### **High School/Transition Programs**

Chris Young - [chris.young@hsv-k12.org](mailto:chris.young@hsv-k12.org)

### **Director of Special Education**

Elizabeth Long, Ph.D. - [elizabeth.long@hsv-k12.org](mailto:elizabeth.long@hsv-k12.org)

## Contact



Parents and families with concerns about facilities are encouraged to contact their school administrator and/or the District Special Education Department at 256-428-6872.