Special Education Online

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Digital Learning Collaborative
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About These Reports

As the field of K–12 online and blended learning continues to grow and evolve, programs around the world work together to discover what works and what doesn't when it comes to all of the intricate pieces of the puzzle that makes up a school/program. No stranger to this, the Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative—consisting of the Wisconsin Department of Instruction, Wisconsin Virtual School, and the Wisconsin eSchool Network—is working on a collection of topic-based case study reports to share a variety of approaches to how the programs in their network are approaching each challenge and opportunity. The reports are not prescriptive, but intended to stimulate leaders in this space to be purposeful and thoughtful about how solutions will differ based on program structure, student demographics, staff vision, and stakeholder needs. Each report presents associated key questions; taken together, these questions may provide a framework for thinking through these related ideas and making similar programmatic improvements in special education processes and services. In no circumstance is the WDLC providing legal guidance to process, procedures, or policies. The WDLC encourages all programs to review and follow their local policy in addition to consulting local administration and legal counsel.

Introduction

This report was prepared to share practical, meaningful ideas and approaches to meet the requirements of students with special education needs and individualized education programs (IEPs) through virtual learning. This report is made up of three parts:

1. An introduction to special education pedagogical considerations, including the interaction of pedagogy and technology adapted from Supporting Students with Disabilities in K–12 Online and Blended Learning published by *Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute®*.

2. Three program case studies:

   a. Kenosha eSchool's evaluation and placement practices (forms/templates previously shared at regional events appear in an addendum);

   b. Green Bay Online Learning's local education guide (LEG) or coach role in supporting special education students within and across districts;

   c. Rural Virtual Academy's use of special education teachers in supporting students and other accommodation strategies; and

3. An appendix containing several support resources.

Impetus

The programs profiled came to the approaches described in their case studies as the interest in online learning options for students with special education designation has increased.

■ **In one case, it was a specific student who inspired a simple change in procedure.**

■ **In another, it was the expansion of requests for enrollment and a desire to have a fair and equitable means of deciding what the profile of a successful online learner with an IEP looked like.**

■ **In the third, it was the need for special education teachers to modify digital content to meet students' needs.**

What is clear from the results in these programs is that students with special needs can be as successful as traditional education students in the virtual learning environment. It is also clear that positive results have been brought about through relatively simple changes; however, those changes are the result of working toward solutions with the IEP team and other stakeholders.

An overlooked advantage of these programmatic adjustments is that *all students benefit from including students with special education designations in online courses — socially and academically*.

Areas instrumental in establishing and maintaining a comprehensive approach to providing support and services to students with special needs are briefly described below. These topics are discussed in more detail in *Supporting Students with Disabilities in K–12 Online and Blended Learning* published

by *Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute®*. That document references the Michigan Department of Education's special education IDEA resource: [Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE) with Related IDEA Federal Regulations](). The comparable resources for the state of Wisconsin can be found in the following links: [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Federal Special Education Law and Coordination with Wisconsin Law and Regulations](), [Online and Blended Learning for Families and Students](), and [Students with Disabilities]().

Pedagogical Considerations

All students benefit from the student-centered approach that online and blended learning may offer. These case studies share the experience of three successful virtual learning programs meeting the range of academic and personal needs presented by IEP students; they also illustrate that students in special education experience the same advantages and challenges faced by traditional education students. For example, individualized responses to students' particular requirements are a hallmark of virtual learning so the precedent is set and the structure accommodating to expand the way courses and materials are further adapted for different requirements. As with any traditional education student, not every program is appropriate for every special education student, nor will virtual learning meet every student's special learning needs.

Evidence from all three programs suggest that in addition to their academic successes, the personal and social successes of students who are part of these programs are life-changing. Online learners interact without knowledge of what impairments other students may have — visible and invisible — because they learn about each other without the usual challenges characteristic of traditional face-to-face environments. There is no clique effect when students don't see each other or issues of labeling and targeting. The impact of the sense of belonging contributes to the change in self-confidence for these students, and the benefits have an effect on the families as well.

Pedagogy and Technology

Personalizing and adapting course materials and assessments requires special education teachers and LEGs have knowledge of adaptive and assistive technology — as much if not more than the instructing teacher. While some course and curriculum materials are more easily adapted to special needs requirements, others require more extensive support services or assistive technology.

District Policy and Procedures

Programs and students benefit when there is a process for evaluating fairly whether a student with special education needs has the skills and behaviors to be successful and whether the requirements of the student's IEP can be met in the virtual course. Another area for district attention is the effective means of communicating necessary information to the online provider, traditional and special education teachers, and other members of the IEP team — including the student and the parent.

Professional Development

Special education teachers and other members of the support team require ongoing training and professional development to support students with special needs effectively as technology changes and the variety of circumstances grows. Offer the support team the same opportunities to build, expand, and maintain their skills and abilities using adaptive and assistive technology, modifying course materials and assessments, and addressing specific special education requirements.

Financial Considerations

Competition for limited financial resources is always a challenge. Programs sometimes have to cap student enrollment because programs do not have the financial resources to provide the staff necessary for support. The Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative is a means of doing more with expertise within the district and the network partners, including the sharing of vital resources and being a voice to communicate successes and challenges with the legislature.

Stakeholder Engagement

The stakeholder group for students with IEPs is broad and deep, including virtual and face-to-face relationships. Special and traditional education teachers, counselors, social workers, parents, students, LEGs, technologists, administrators, aides, curriculum specialists all contribute to student success. Complete engagement of all the stakeholders is necessary so everyone is kept aware of the students' progress and well prepared to support the students and the IEP team. As mentioned previously, people who are knowledgeable about specific special education issue, are experienced with the course technology, are familiar with assistive technology, and have the capacity to adapt materials and assessments need to be involved with the problem-solving.

Stakeholder Roles

Students are not always aware of their abilities but need to learn to self-advocate and provide feedback as do many traditional students. It is important that all students receive mentoring in developing these skills, but those with special needs may require additional support. They also benefit from orientation to online learning and a more informed perspective, as all students do.

Instructional staff need training specific to working with students with special needs and extensive knowledge of student support resources in addition to assistive technology.

LEGs/Mentors/Coaches must develop relationships with the students and understand the technology of instruction and support to be able to problem-solve with and for the students.
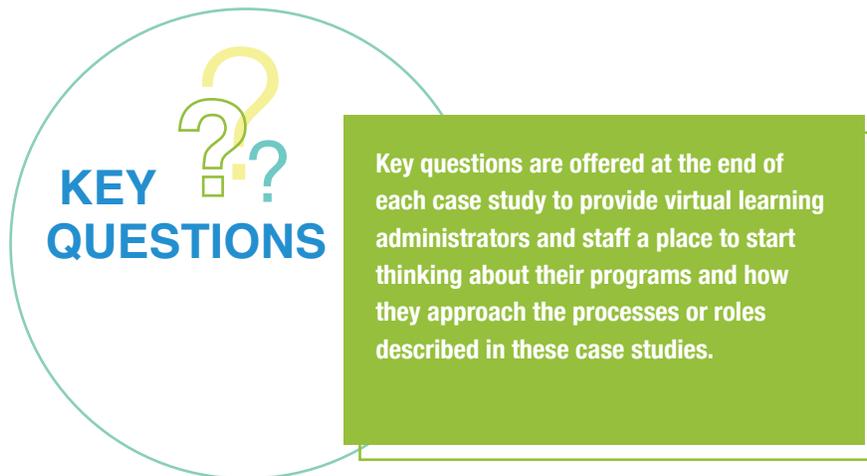
Parents may act as coaches at home and need preparation for using the technology, from the learning management system or LMS to the assistive features added to the course. They will need different kinds of support, including a secure connection to the support team, familiarity with available services, and sometimes, daily crisis management.

Administrators are important participants in program planning and decision-making, setting the tone and expectations, and supporting the team.

Online providers and course designers can and do make a great difference in course and material adaptability and accessibility. While online course customers may not have thought of the providers and designers as part of the special education team for virtual learners, it is important to understand what providers have done to meet individualized student needs and to know whether they are committed to the Universal Design in Learning framework.

Outcomes

The stories about academic and social success for online learners with IEPs are plentiful. The ingredients are not surprising: program and staff planning, connected and engaged stakeholders, relationship builders, well trained support teams and LEGs who are relationship builders, knowledgeable decision-makers, reliable technology, and sufficient financial, material, and human resources. It is the opinion of the programs profiled that many students with special needs have a new opportunity for academic and social success through online and blended learning, provided they have the skills and right supports. Successes in a virtual environment build self-confidence that can lead students with IEPs to accomplishments not open to them in a traditional face-to-face environment.

KEY QUESTIONS

Key questions are offered at the end of each case study to provide virtual learning administrators and staff a place to start thinking about their programs and how they approach the processes or roles described in these case studies.

Case Studies

#1 Virtual Learner Evaluation and Placement Practices

KENOSHA ESCHOOL

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The Impetus Behind the Approach

Wisconsin has 39+ instrumentality virtual schools. Kenosha eSchool is one of them. The number of special education students enrolled in virtual schools was significantly less compared to the percentage enrolled at traditional face-to-face schools. Dan Tenuta, Principal of Kenosha eSchool wondered who was deciding which students have access to online options and how the decisions were being made. He wanted to address the gap and offer a thoughtful way of making an enrollment decision.

Kenosha is the third largest school district in the state; since Kenosha eSchool is an instrumentality charter school, students may go on a waiting list to enroll as a full time student. Administration found that many requests to enroll students in the eSchool were due to special circumstances, often unrelated to educational issues. During the 2017–18 school year, interest in establishing an evaluation and assessment practice came about to put a formal, data-driven process in place to determine which students were good candidates for virtual learning. Staff created a rubric that evaluates the students in terms of basic skills, motivation and persistence, and self-regulation (see Appendix X). This process is a way of thoughtfully working with students that have legally-binding IEPs, to make sure that they can receive the appropriate supports in an online environment. It is a means of making a fair evaluation based on documentation and information from people who know the student.

The System and the Process

To create the tool, staff used an affinity technique (see Appendix X) to develop a rubric for fairly evaluating a student's academic achievement, such as reading, writing, and math skills, and functional performance, or communication skills, motivation and persistence, and self-regulation. The maximum points are stipulated, as are the degree to which the student exhibits the skill or behavior. The process starts with a review of the rubric and compiling of student information as suggested in the accompanying guiding questions. Then staff look at the student's IEP and adjust the scores based on the supports available. The rubric draws attention to the areas where students and supports are well suited to an online environment and where there are gaps.

Kathleen Garcia, Kenosha eSchool special education teacher, often contacts students' previous specialized teachers or case managers who document quarterly students' progress toward IEP goals to provide information about how they're doing throughout the school year for each goal. Garcia also looks

at standardized test scores, work samples (if they are available), their attendance, their report card, and parent-teacher notes. Staff want to have as clear a picture as possible of how the student is performing academically and functionally.

Tenuta sees the rubric as the best way to compile and organize sufficient data about the students objectively. Once completed, the rubric is a comprehensive look at how they are doing and whether they would be able to be successful in their 100% virtual environment.

The tool can be revisited and tweaked as different schools use it. Each district can adjust the tool or create their own, based on their own school, students, and program, assigning different weights or points to the categories that suit their purpose. For example, a blended setting where they could provide more face-to-face support for special education students might weight elements differently based on how they deliver their program.

Stakeholders and Feedback

Tenuta emphasizes that the people making the decision about a student's enrollment in a full time virtual school really have to understand what the virtual environment is and how it works. They wanted to make sure that people who understand what a virtual school instructional program looks like are the ones making the decisions about it. Program stakeholders include the special education teacher, district liaison, administrator, counselor, school social worker, and the special education program support teacher who is a district person assigned to act as a liaison between the district and Kenosha eSchool. The program support teacher attends IEP meetings, makes sure that they are meeting the IEP standards, and that everything is correct for that legally-binding document.

> *"The whole point of offering online learning is to provide opportunity for our students. As we come across new circumstances, new situations, we have to be ready to adapt to meet the needs of those learners if this is going to be an opportunity for all."*
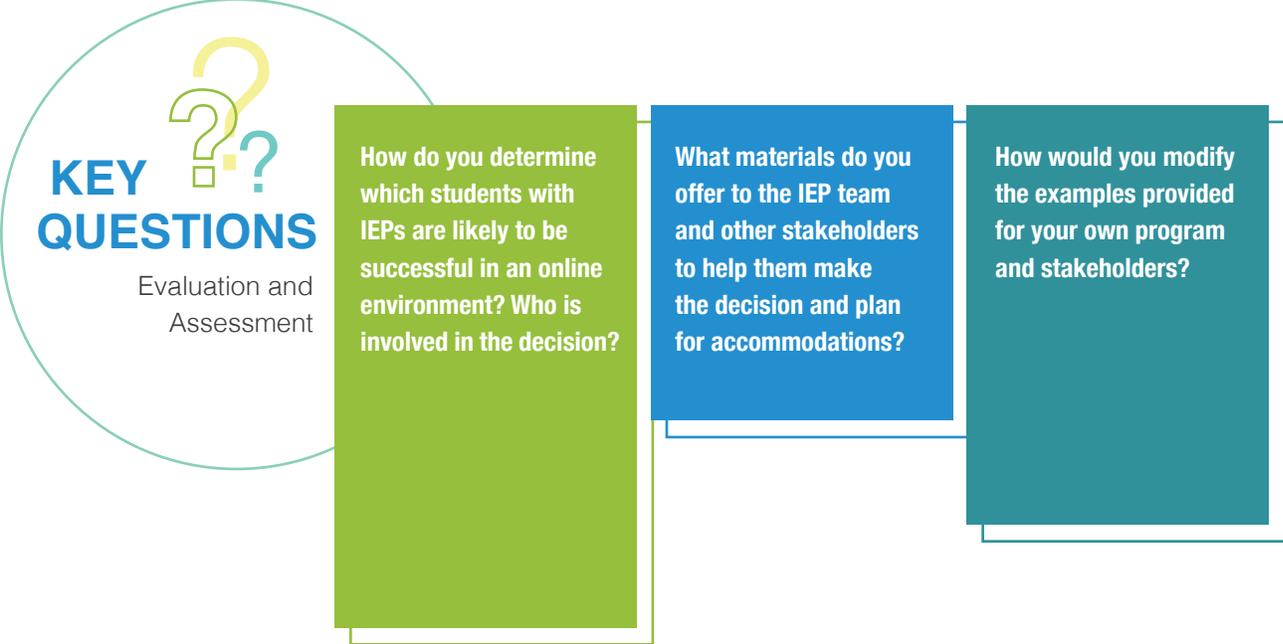
Successes and Challenges

Garcia explains that the rubric provides a logical look at whether a student can be served in a virtual environment. Ultimately, the IEPs are legal documents and the IEP team makes the decision. Kenosha eSchool is a public school that everyone should have access to and staff want to serve as many kids as possible, but the challenge is making a thoughtful decision that supports the student when others may not fully understand the evaluation process or the online environment.

Staff see that stakeholders are understanding the process and perceive that the process is fair. Parents, students, administrators, and staff see that decisions are based on data, there is evidence of available supports improving student scores, the rubric and stakeholder involvement make sense, so the decision is well founded and not considered arbitrary.

Changes and Adaptations

As interest in online options for elementary students grows, the evaluation and assessment tools will need to be altered to reflect what is appropriate for younger students. Should other situations arise, administration is poised to consider additional resources and support.

KEY QUESTIONS

Evaluation and Assessment

How do you determine which students with IEPs are likely to be successful in an online environment? Who is involved in the decision?

What materials do you offer to the IEP team and other stakeholders to help them make the decision and plan for accommodations?

How would you modify the examples provided for your own program and stakeholders?

GREEN BAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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The Impetus Behind the Approach

Alison Manwiller's says Green Bay's approach to supporting students with IEPs grew organically with the growth of online learning in the district. Initially, most of the students taking online courses were interested in taking advanced courses and didn't have identified special education needs, so supporting online learners with IEPs wasn't an issue. Now students with a wider range of learning needs are participating. Prior to 2018, Green Bay schools had no mechanism for counselors to indicate that a student interested in online learning had an IEP. Working with a particular student referred by a counselor in 2017 prompted a change. Manwiller began to think about ensuring that the district be poised to provide the kind of support that special education students need. The soft change began in 2017 when they had a couple of students with IEPs in summer school. They were proactive in determining who those students were before the summer began so that they could plan for and provide sufficient access to an IEP teacher at a time when so many teachers are gone.

Manwiller's goal is to make sure that the student's needs are met. She must know if there is an IEP in place and who the IEP teacher is. Following a similar process for identifying students interested in NCAA eligibility, the referring counselor uses a district document that indicates the student has an IEP, as well as the name of the IEP teacher and an email for that teacher. Manwiller makes the connection between the IEP teacher and the network teacher so that they can communicate about accommodations and other student issues as soon as possible.

> *"Our valedictorian was a student with special needs. In a traditional classroom environment, he couldn't process information fast enough to finish daily homework in a timely manner. In the online environment, he flourished. That's probably our capstone highlight: we had a valedictorian at our high school with an IEP. It points to how and why flexible learning environments like this can make the difference for kids that don't fit in the mold of a traditional school environment."*

The System and the Process

The local education guide or LEG is a coach who provides extra support to online learners, developing relationships with the students and taking the time to get to know what the students' strengths and challenges are. A student's IEP reveals learning and social challenges, so the LEG gathers data, going into the online program's student information system to look at grades and feedback, review login frequency, and see what work or units the student has attempted or completed. With this deeper understanding, the LEG can then clarify with the students what is happening from their perspective, get feedback about what's working and what isn't, and determine what additional support the student needs or strategies they can implement together. More specifically, Manwiller watches to see that the

student is progressing at an appropriate rate and receiving scores commensurate with what would have been received in other face-to-face classes to make sure the student maximizes learning throughout the course. When she sees that there might be something amiss, she can be proactive in meeting with that student to understand better what's going on and problem solve. Relationship is an important element of success. Manwiller spends face-to-face time with students who are challenged by whatever aspect of online learning seems to be limiting their ability to really understand and progress.

Manwiller says not many students with IEPs take virtual courses because many don't possess the independent learning behaviors and the academic skills to be comfortable — and successful — in the online environment. John Dewey Academy of Learning is a project-based charter school in Green Bay where students who have IEPs are being supported by a special education teacher as their coach. The IEP teacher already knows the students and has facilitated the agreement with them and their parents and is poised to have that ongoing communication with the network teacher. Manwiller's role is to be a facilitator, to support the IEP teacher, to answer questions, and to be a liaison between John Dewey and the network.

Stakeholders and Feedback

Manwiller, like many who support online learners, wears many hats: liaison, coach, teacher, registrar, program coordinator, and stakeholder. Green Bay is a very small program with about 70 students in the current school year and only two of the 70 with IEPs, taking courses online. To initiate this approach to support, other stakeholders — including school counselors and district administrators such as the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, and the directors of pupil services, technology, secondary teaching and learning, and special education — were engaged in reviewing all related processes.

Successes and Challenges

The big challenge as Manwiller sees it is that communication with the network teacher isn't face-to-face which creates other challenges when the student and teacher do not know each other. Establishing a relationship is a challenge which is further complicated by distance.

With the new referral process, the staff know before the courses begin what the students' needs are and can begin identifying supports for their learning. The teachers signify success for the program because they want to do what's right for students and are willing to put in a little extra time to support them. Full time face-to-face teachers who teach online as adjuncts are being challenged to think of different ways to accommodate learners in an online environment, too. Those who have been working with students with special education needs have had to push themselves, but there's a willingness to grow, to come up with different ways to make it work.
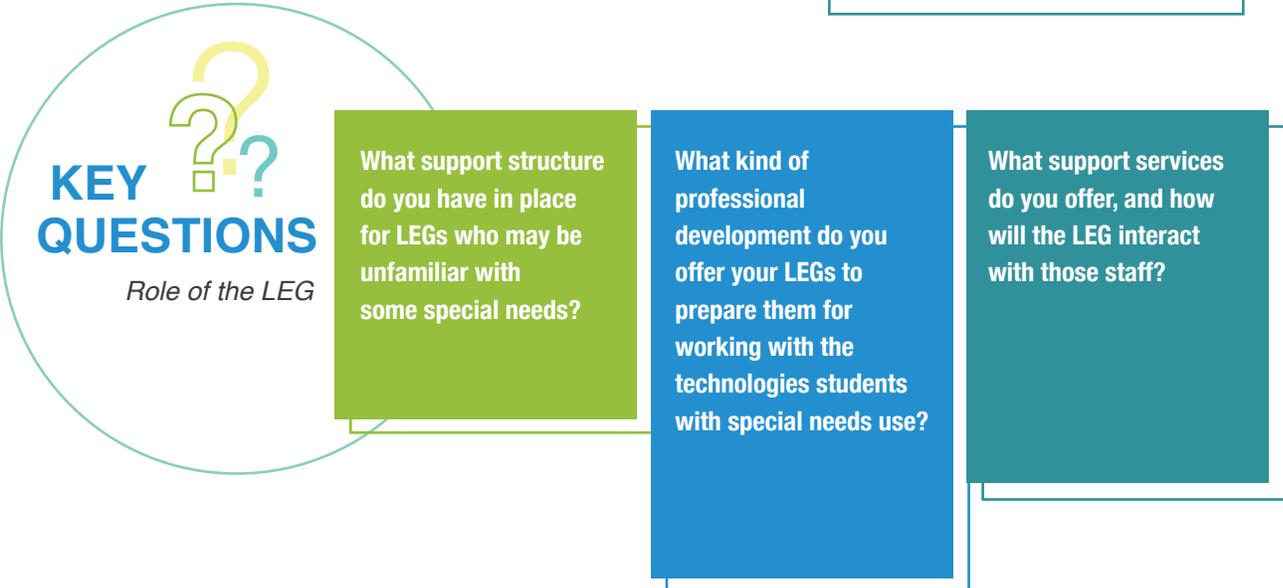
The student that triggered this new system represents the most important kind of success: student success. The student finished that first course, then took another course the second semester, and had success in that one as well.

> *"A student with autism walked into prom a few years ago, hung out with friends that he had been in class with all year. None of the other students knew that he had autism. A girl asked him to dance. His mom was there and burst into tears in the hallway because she recognized that in a traditional school, that probably never would have happened ... What we can only measure subjectively, we've seemed to reap the greatest benefits on."*

Changes and Adaptations

Decision makers have to think about who the stakeholders are, what the unintended consequences of any changes are going to be, and what the benefits may be. Any changes that have been made thus far have been primarily student-centered. Staff maintain focus on who the changes will serve and what the benefits are and have deliberately chosen to keep processes simple so as not to discourage students or place them in circumstances that are not good for them.

"One size doesn't fit all, as we know. Particularly with this population. The most gratifying stories come from kids who have struggled in a face-to-face environment who gained confidence and a voice and feel a part of something that they've not been able to feel a part of before. That's a tremendous gift."

KEY QUESTIONS
Role of the LEG

What support structure do you have in place for LEGs who may be unfamiliar with some special needs?

What kind of professional development do you offer your LEGs to prepare them for working with the technologies students with special needs use?

What support services do you offer, and how will the LEG interact with those staff?

#3 The Special Education Instructor's Role in Supporting Virtual Learners

RURAL VIRTUAL ACADEMY

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The Impetus Behind the Approach

About 15% of the Rural Virtual Academy (RVA) population has an IEP. Charlie Heckel, RVA's administrator explains that out of necessity, staff and administration needed to hire special education teachers and train them so they could modify the digital course content to meet students' needs and make it possible to service those students. The first special education teacher was hired in 2010 when the number of special education students trying to enroll in the RVA reached critical mass. The role of the special education teacher has expanded since then—from helping write IEPs for pre–K through 8th grade in 2010 to modifying assignments and providing assistance to special education students from pre–K to 12th. Currently special education teachers have a co-teacher credential and a maximum caseload of 25 students so that the teachers can meet with students as often as needed, usually daily.

The System and the Process

Some students take classes online, and some attend classes with other students, same-age peers, similar to a traditional school setting. Students with learning disabilities received modified assessments and coursework designed and implemented by the special education teacher in conjunction with the regular education instructor. Assistive technologies, such as screen-readers and speech-to-text, are also employed for students requiring this level of support. For students with significant cognitive delays, they may be actually attending live instruction classes, but they're there for socialization and to participate in and be part of the group; however, the actual content that they're working on may not be in the course.

In addition to support from regular education and special education teachers, students have access to other supports—from related service providers to the in-building personnel to the school psychologist to community counselors—depending upon the students' needs. RVA builds a resource room class into special education student schedules from middle school through high school. Students receive credit for going to get direct personalized assistance in completing their work, navigating through their materials, and working on behavioral and academic skill development. With this strategy, everyone has an extra teacher in many of their classes supporting online learners. Frequently, students without IEPs access the resource rooms for extra academic help.

Heckel and Sara Holewinski, RVA Principal, emphasized that due to the significant level of modifications these students may require, the special education teacher needs to have at least the same level of training as, if not more than, the online instructors in how to operate and manipulate the LMS and the digital content in order to modify those courses and assessments to meet students specific needs. They may modify the length of the assignment or create problem starters. They may create a Google Doc

assignment which would supplant or replace the actual assignment while covering similar content as the regular education students.

In addition, special education teachers help find resources, tools, and accommodations for students to use online. After they review the IEPs and give the students a placement test, the special education teachers find content or curriculum to meet students' needs and may also customize curriculum. Not all of the resources are online; RVA does offline materials to students as well to meet their IEP goals.

Stakeholders and Feedback

RVA works in cooperation with 26 partner school districts, maintaining a constant flow of communication and information to administrators, special education directors, the special education teachers within those partner districts, and parents. Other RVA teachers, the special education and the regular education teachers, and the school psychologist work closely with each other to help all students. The students have a significant voice in the school, at their IEP meetings, and in their daily interactions to help staff gauge where students are, how they're doing, and how staff can make student learning more successful. The RVA distributes surveys to students and parents throughout the year to get their feedback and talks with the special education team often to see what challenges and struggles they have and what things they would like to see added. The parents are in a constant feedback loop, often communicating with a teacher or program support person daily. Every three weeks, RVA does progress checks which are sent to the consortium districts and the parents, but the special education teachers do a little bit more than that, explains Holewinski. All the special education teachers get quarterly days off from instruction. On IEP day, they contact parents, go over IEP goals, the students' quarterly goals, and have direct communication with the parents and the students about their progress.

> *"The people making decisions really have to understand what the virtual environment looks like and how it works. People have no idea of how virtual schools and other alternative programs work, and then they make decisions that don't make any sense. We wanted to make sure that people who understand what a virtual school instructional program looks like are the ones making the decisions about it."*

Successes and Challenges

Students see a lot of success with RVA. When they leave the traditional classroom, some distractions are gone, they get to set their own schedule, and they have a little more flexibility. They work one-on-one with a home mentor, and they have the daily support of a special education and a course teacher. Retention is very high. Often, students choose not to return to the building; if they do, it's for just a couple of classes. The special education program has been so successful that RVA often has to cap enrollments because the special education teachers' caseloads are full.

RVA students benefit from a social aspect not always evident in a brick and mortar setting, because RVA offers a lot of different events, such as dances and other gatherings, which are open to students from all the consortium districts. The other students don't necessarily know someone is a special education student; they just fit right in.

RVA faces two primary challenges. One is financing. It is felt that the state of Wisconsin doesn't always allow enough money behind each student to be able to reduce caseloads further. While 25:1
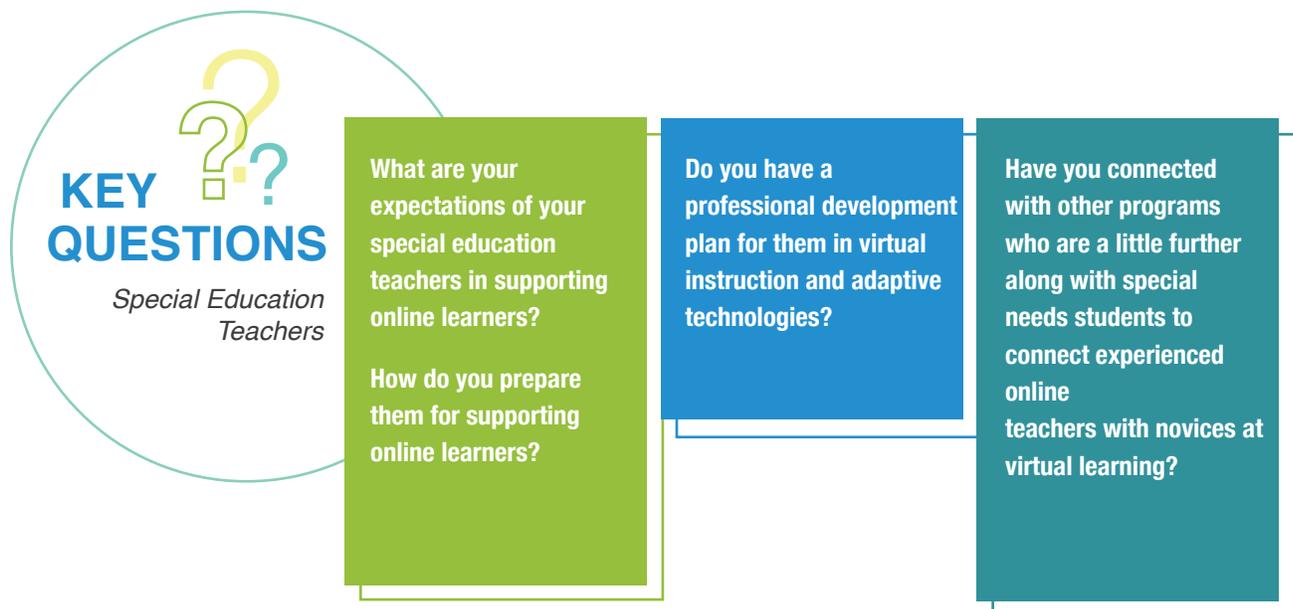
is good, students would reap greater benefit if caseloads even lower. Secondly, it's hard to support students who have certain social, emotional, and/or behavioral disabilities such as anxiety and depression at a distance. Their home environment may not be what's best for them either so providing community resources and the type of counseling that they need in this learning environment is sometimes a challenge.

In their surveys, parents routinely point to the teachers as why they choose this option for their students. The flexible learning environment coupled with the teacher and parents' integral involvement with their children's learning means the parents feel more connected. In this setting, where they can see the daily struggles that they would not be able to see if their children attended a traditional school, RVA parents get to experience all the successes and help mitigate the crises. This new relationship to their children and their learning makes parents feel good about what they're doing and who their kids are and contributes to the self-confidence students feel when they're successful in their learning.

Inspired by results of a consortium district with a similar idea, RVA opened on-campus learning centers in other consortium districts where students with or without IEPs, who are learning at home, primarily, have the opportunity to go on campus in their local school district for parts or all of their day if they choose, to receive academic and social supports in-building. They can take advantage of breakfast and hot lunch programs, activity periods and social engagement. With a financial incentive to partner districts as encouragement, more centers are opening and being embraced by district, administration, teachers, and families.

Changes and Adaptations

RVA's record of success with students who need extra help when they have special needs has spread fast. Administrators anticipate a need to add staff and more intervention layers on top of the learning centers. Eventually, the special education team will begin conversations about the frequencies with which students with an IEP would go to their learning centers to receive direct counseling or direct academic support.

KEY QUESTIONS
Special Education Teachers

What are your expectations of your special education teachers in supporting online learners?

How do you prepare them for supporting online learners?

Do you have a professional development plan for them in virtual instruction and adaptive technologies?

Have you connected with other programs who are a little further along with special needs students to connect experienced online teachers with novices at virtual learning?

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the WDLC partners below for sharing their experiences. For more in-depth information about the programs profiled, see https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/imt/pdf/WDLC_PartnerProfiles.pdf

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Appendix A

Key Questions

Key questions provide virtual learning administrators and staff a place to start thinking about their programs and how they approach the processes or roles described in these case studies.

Evaluation and Assessment

How do you determine which students with IEPs are likely to be successful in an online environment? Who is involved in the decision? What materials do you offer to the IEP team and other stakeholders to help them make the decision and plan for accommodations? How would you modify the examples provided for your own program and stakeholders?

Role of the LEG

What support structure do you have in place for LEGs who may be unfamiliar with some special needs? What kind of professional development do you offer your coaches to prepare them for working with the technologies students with special needs use? What support services do you offer, and how will the LEG interact with those staff?

Special Education Teachers

What are your expectations of your special education teachers in supporting online learners? How do you prepare them for supporting online learners? Do you have a professional development plan for them in virtual instruction and adaptive technologies? Have you connected with other programs who are a little further along with special needs students to connect experienced online teachers with novices at virtual learning?

Appendix B

Academic Achievement Categories

Reading
- Decoding – Process of translating print into speech by matching a letter to their sounds and recognizing the patterns that make syllables and words
- Fluency – Read a text accurately, quickly, and with expression
- Comprehension – Process text, understand its meaning, and incorporate it' context

Writing
- Produce a complete sentence (with correct sentence structure) and complete paragraph (with accurate topic sentence and detail) all on appropriate topic
- Use correct writing conventions (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar)

Math
- Computation – Basic arithmetic (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)
- Reasoning – Higher order thinking skills used to analyze a complex or multi-step problem

Functional Performance Categories

Communication
- Social Pragmatics – Understanding sarcasm, reading social cues such as facial expressions and idioms
- Self-Advocacy – Communication of needs and asking for help

Social Interactions – Peers/Adults

Persistence/Motivation
- Time Management (Attendance) – Can the student manage their time and prioritize the work
- Attending to tasks – How long is a student able to stay focused on the task at hand (ultimately this can help to determine if the pace of a class will go too fast)
- Work Completion – Is the student able to do the work independently without a lot of teacher/adult support

Self-Regulation/Coping skills – Can the student emotionally regulate themselves and self-calm when in situations that cause anxiety or stress
- Sensory Needs – does student have access to resource such as movement breaks, items to provide sensory input such as gum/candy for oral sensory needs, fidgets for concentration and calming, heavy work to support ready to learn behaviors

Fine and Gross Motor Skills – can student use and physically manipulate the technology available to them, whether low or high tech

Anger Management/Self-Control

Appendix C

Admission Scoring Rubric: Special Education

Student Name:						

School:		Current Grade Level:				

POINTS POSSIBLE	CATEGORY	RATING SCALE	POINTS	PRE SCORE	DATE OF IEP EVAL	POST SCORE
30	**Reading/Writing** Decoding Fluency Comprehension	Advanced	30		Date:	
		Proficient	20			
		Basic	10			
		Minimal	0			
25	**Math** Computation Reasoning	Advanced	25		Date:	
		Proficient	15			
		Basic	5			
		Minimal	0			
20	**Communication Skills** Self-Advocacy Social Interactions	Exceeds Expectations	20		Date:	
		Satisfactory	15			
		Improving	10			
		Needs Improvement	0			
15	**Motivation/Persistence** "Self-Starter" Time Management	Exceeds Expectations	15		Date:	
		Satisfactory	10			
		Improving	5			
		Needs Improvement	0			
10	**Self-Regulation Skills** Learning Style Coping Skills	Exceeds Expectations	10		Date:	
		Satisfactory	8			
		Improving	5			
		Needs Improvement	0			
100	Points Possible	Total Points Awarded				

Recommend Enrollment: Yes / No

Rationale:

Guided Discussion Questions

Reading/Writing
- How are the student's decoding skills? (Can student translate print into speech by matching a letter to its sounds and recognize the patterns that make syllables and words?)
- Can the student read fluently? (Can student read a text accurately, quickly, and with expression?)
- How are the student's comprehension skills? (Can student process text, understand its meaning, and incorporate its context?)
- Can student produce a complete sentence with correct sentence structure?
- Can student write a complete paragraph appropriate for grade level? (Is the paragraph on the appropriate topic? Does it begin with an accurate topic/introduction sentence? Does the paragraph have supporting details?)
- Does the student use correct writing conventions? (Is the spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar correct?)

Where to find data suggestions:
- Standardized test scores
- Have teacher perform a Basic Reading Inventory (BRI)
- Student work samples
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP) progress notes

Math
- Can student perform basic arithmetic? (How are the student's addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division skills?)
- How are the student's math reasoning skills? (Does the student have high order thinking skills when analyzing a complex or multi-step problem?)

Where to find data suggestions:
- Standardized test scores
- Student work samples
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP) progress notes

Communication Skills
- Does the student possess self-advocacy skills? (Can the student communicate their needs and ask for help?)
- Does the student interact appropriately with their peers? Does the student interact appropriately with adults?

Where to find data suggestions:
- Student informal observation
- Student work samples
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP) progress notes
- Parent/teacher notes

Motivation/Persistence
- Is the student a "self-starter?" (Does the student initiate working? Is the student able to do the work independently without a lot of teacher/adult support?)
- Does the student exhibit positive time management skills? (Can the student manage their time and prioritize their work?)
- Does the student enjoy working independently?
- How long is a student able to stay focused on the task they are working on?
- How is the student's attendance record?

Where to find data suggestions:
- Student informal observation
- Student work samples
- Student report card/attendance record
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP) progress notes
- Parent/teacher notes

Self-Regulation Skills
- Can the student emotionally regulate themselves and self-calm when in situations that cause anxiety or stress?
- Does the student exhibit self-control when frustrated?
- What type of learning style does the student prefer? (Visual-spatial, Aural-auditory, Verbal-linguistic, Physical-kinesthetic)

Where to find data suggestions:
- Student informal observation
- Student interview
- Parent/teacher notes

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