

Returning to In Person Learning- Students With Disabilities DeSoto Parish School Board

DeSoto Parish School Board (DPSB) began the 2020-2021 school year on August 5, 2020. DPSB is currently implementing a hybrid schedule, which includes both virtual and in person instruction on alternating days, for the majority of students in the district and full virtual learning for those who do not want to participate in in person instruction.

To ensure proper implementation of CDC social distancing and sanitation guidelines, DPSB operated in person instruction on an A/B schedule for all students in grades prek-12 for the first two weeks of school. Beginning August 17, 2020, all students in grades prek-5 participating in in person instruction (including students with disabilities in these grades) will be on campus Monday-Thursday and virtual instruction on Friday. This schedule will allow DPSB to begin offering more in person instruction while also remaining in compliance with CDC guidelines and will be reviewed on a regular basis to determine any necessary adjustments based on state and local healthy and safety guidelines.

Considerations for Students with Disabilities

A recent brief by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education notes that:

*“Least restrictive environment (LRE) is determined by a student’s IEP team and is based on the defining principles of special education law and the presumption that the general education environment with nondisabled peers is the first choice for educating all individuals with disabilities..... It is important to note that while **the COVID-19 pandemic has not changed the individual student’s right to LRE** it has changed how the general education system operates. These operational changes require local school systems to determine how they will maintain each individual student’s LRE in the new context in which they are operating.”*

DPSB is committed to maintaining each student's LRE as we continue to phase back into in person instruction. Students with disabilities will participate in the same instructional models as their general education grade level peers (unless the parent chooses to participate in the DPSB virtual learning program) with all accommodations and modifications outlined in their IEP.