

## Implementation guidance for alternative methods of instruction (AMI) days for students with disabilities

The state legislature passed into law the ability for districts to use [alternative methods of instruction](#) on days when there is an unexpected school/district closure beginning with the 2020-21 school year. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will develop the process for putting this law into practice. The Office of Special Education is providing this guidance regarding the implementation of this practice for students with disabilities.

	<b>Key considerations for students with disabilities during flexible instruction days</b>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the implementation of AMI days with all staff, including administration and general and special education teachers.</li> <li>• Discuss school closures with parents in advance. Explain the expectations for their role with AMI assignments. Reach out to parents of students with disabilities early in the school year to develop a plan for AMI days.</li> </ul>
Planning/Plan Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives from special education and other at-risk populations must be included in the district development team from the very beginning (i.e., special educators, nurses, counselors, school social workers, school psychologists).</li> <li>• Considerations:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What is the overall district/school plan for AMI days?</li> <li>○ What standards, activities, technology, etc. are teachers using?</li> <li>○ What methods of instruction will be used?</li> <li>○ What are the expectations for rigor and lesson quality?</li> <li>○ How will AMI be monitored for all students?</li> <li>○ What level of completion is expected in order to count as an instruction day, how many hours should these lessons take, how long do the students have to return the lessons?</li> <li>○ What is the plan for parent communication?</li> <li>○ As the above questions are answered, special education staff will be able to determine which plans and resources can be modified and can identify areas that will require supplemental or additional planning for students with disabilities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Pre-Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the training needs of staff, parents, and students before implementation of AMI days. Possible needs include the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Overall district AMI plan.</li> <li>○ The way specially designed instruction would be provided for students with disabilities on the AMI days.</li> <li>○ How to plan for supports students will need including technology and assistive technology needs.</li> <li>○ What pre-teaching may need to occur (i.e., self-regulation skills for independent learning, use of technology to access material).</li> <li>○ Parent training on how to make accommodations or modifications, what is expected of the students in the coursework, and how to access the necessary technology, if appropriate.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Lesson Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lessons must be preplanned. Remember, providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) may look different for students with disabilities. Considerations for lesson design include the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How many lessons will be needed?</li> <li>○ What standards are being addressed?</li> <li>○ What are the expectations for rigor and quality?</li> <li>○ By whom and how is quality going to be monitored?</li> <li>○ Will alternative activities be allowed for lessons when students will not be able to independently complete them in the typical format (i.e., independent living activities like cooking or transition planning activities like job searches)?</li> <li>○ How might lessons/activities be differentiated rather than completely changed?</li> <li>○ What accommodations or modifications will be needed?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How will individualized education program (IEP) goals be incorporated into the lessons?</li> <li>○ Will technology be used and, if so, to what extent?</li> <li>○ Will the student need direct instruction from a teacher for these lessons? How will that be accessed?</li> </ul>
IEP Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● IEP teams will need to determine how best to meet each student’s needs for AMI day assignments at the beginning of the school year (i.e., consider sensory impairment needs, availability of support needed, available technology access, etc.).</li> <li>● IEP teams need to discuss and document, within the IEP, the following things: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Method of participation.</li> <li>○ Goal(s) to be addressed.</li> <li>○ Accommodations/modifications, including how documented.</li> <li>○ Related Service needs, including how documented.</li> <li>○ Technology needs, if appropriate.</li> <li>○ Level of support available from those at home.</li> <li>○ Direct Instruction needs and how delivered.</li> <li>○ Communication with teacher, if needed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● IEP teams will need to decide what and how compensatory services will be delivered if it is determined that a student’s needs are so significant that even with accommodations or modifications, AMI lessons are not appropriate.</li> <li>● Missouri will need to determine how AMI information will be documented in the IEP and revise the state’s model forms.</li> </ul>
Related Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider the impact on related services during AMI days. Be sure to include contracted staff when considering this impact.</li> <li>● Some related services may be delivered through the use of technology on AMI days. Document this on the IEP.</li> <li>● Related services that cannot be provided at home may need to be made up when school is back in session.</li> <li>● Consider drafting flexibility into the IEP by stating the amount of services to be delivered with language that allows for flexibility. (i.e., instead of writing 30-minute sessions three days per regularly scheduled week, consider writing, 90 minutes delivered in sessions lasting at least 30 minutes every regularly scheduled week.)</li> </ul>
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure technology, if used for AMI days, is accessible.</li> <li>● Ensure parents are trained on the instructional use of technology and how to assist students who use adaptive technologies.</li> <li>● Ensure teachers are trained on the specific forms of technology and the platforms to be used on AMI days based on decisions made by the IEP team for student participation.</li> </ul>
Debrief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Debrief immediately following an AMI day. What went well? What did not work? What do we need to do differently next time?</li> <li>● Solicit feedback from parents, students, and staff. Recall the IEP team if the current plan for AMI days is not working.</li> </ul>
Other Suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Practice for an AMI day before one is actually needed. Gather feedback from parents, students, and staff. Make adjustments to plan via the IEP as needed.</li> <li>● Set a date for when the first round of AMI materials will be provided to parents and students; schedule dissemination of other rounds of materials unless they will all be distributed at once.</li> <li>● Prepare students ahead of time by thoroughly explaining the concept of AMI days and teaching prerequisite skills. Use social stories for students who have difficulty with change or new expectations.</li> <li>● Focus on communication with parents and caregivers early and often in the planning process.</li> <li>● Consider the use of online resources available for both general and special education students.</li> <li>● Create modules/lessons with accessibility in mind.</li> <li>● Save modules/lessons in multiple formats (i.e., pdf, google, epub).</li> <li>● Plan lessons which incorporate assistive technology if the student is using AT in everyday lessons.</li> <li>● Reiterate the availability of assistance so students and parents can contact a teacher during AMI days. Schedule “check-in” times for each student and/or general “office hours.”</li> <li>● Although students may need some learning packets or manipulatives to complete activities, these should be individualized and not the same for every student.</li> </ul>