



# Hiawatha Valley Education District

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## Altered School Day Information and Guidance

Students receiving special education services have the same rights to access public education as students who do not receive special education services, including the right to attend school for a full day. Students who receive special education services must attend school for the same number of hours and minutes as their non-disabled peers, unless the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines otherwise based on the individual student's unique needs relating to their disability.

By altering a student's school day, it may raise concerns regarding Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**When to use Altered School Day:** Altered School Day can only be utilized when the student's IEP team determines the shortened day is necessary to address the student's unique needs relating to their disability.

**Example of Altered School Day:** A student has medical needs in which the student is physically unable to tolerate a full school day and the IEP team determined there are no other ways to meet the student's needs, including providing additional supports and services.

**Documentation of Altered School Day in the IEP:** Following the IEP team discussion and determination, the following information must be documented in the IEP on the *Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)* page and in the *Altered School Day* section of the *Services Page*:

- An explanation of why the student's disability-related needs require a shortened day.
- Plan for the student's return to school for a full day, including a plan to meet more frequently to review student data and determine whether the student is able to return to school full-time.

The IEP team must appropriately monitor a student receiving a shortened school day, by **meeting more frequently than once a year**, and as often as necessary to review the plan and to determine when the student is able to return to school full-time. The student should return to a full day as soon as he or she is able, and under most circumstances, a shortened day should be in place for only a limited amount of time



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An Altered School Day is **not permitted** for the following situations:

- An altered school day cannot be implemented for all students with disabilities or for a certain group of students with disabilities.
- An Altered School Day cannot be implemented based upon transportation related issues.
- The decision to implement an Altered School Day cannot be made solely based upon parent request. The IEP team must conduct a meeting and agree upon an Altered School Day based upon the individual student's unique needs related to their disability.
- An IEP team cannot utilize an Altered School Day for administrative convenience such as staffing shortages.
- A student's instructional time cannot be reduced in lieu of a suspension or expulsion, as a form of punishment or discipline, or in order to manage student behavior.
- Attendance cannot be conditioned upon the student taking medication or receiving treatment, therapies, or other outside services.

When student behavior is a concern, the IEP team must develop an IEP that addresses the student's individual behavioral needs, as identified in the Evaluation Report, through annual goals, related services, and supplementary aids and services. The IEP must document and provide positive behavioral interventions, supports and strategies. IEP teams are encouraged to utilize a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and consider the development of a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) or a Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP) in these situations.