Virtual Implementation for Peers as Partners in Learning

CHALLENGES/QUESTIONS	POSSIBILITIES
What are the options for providing course content to participants?	• Provide opportunities for pre-teaching and experiencing the technology prior to the start of the course, using the district's specific platform. • Front load lessons on virtual platforms for asynchronous delivery. • Use Remind.com to "invite" students to groups. • Smaller groups can meet synchronously. • Allow early access to course content for students. • Remember that lessons are provided throughout the year – not intended to be completed prior to serving in classrooms (basics include lesson 1.1 and an understanding of where to go to find ideas for support). • Students serving in brick and mortar schools must adhere to guidelines for distance, masks, and other measures put in place by districts to ensure student safety.
Is it possible to still offer the course if synchronous class attendance by the peer and peer support isn't possible?	• Yes. Peer support students can participate in PPL course content in the same manner as other electives, and direct peer support can be provided when in-person conditions are more favorable.
Are FERPA laws violated if we identify those students with disabilities to target?	• Students are assigned to specific classes, not to specific students. They are assigned because a student needs support, and they are directed to work with others as needed. • Share that there are learning differences and a need for support, and don't spotlight a student's disability. If students choose to share as friends, they can.
My virtual platform allows visual meetings but only if originated by teachers, not students.	• Connect with general education teacher(s) of selected classes, or individuals who schedule the students, to brainstorm ways peer support students can meet with peers, in groups or individually. • Consider how paraprofessionals access classes – can peer support be assigned the same way?

Teachers don't know the student personalities to assign them to peers.	• Complete interest inventories prior to assignment of students to classes. Determining students' areas of strength/interest will assist in assignment to specific classes. • For the first couple of weeks, focus on foundational classwork and get to know the students synchronously before assigning them.
Is parent permission needed for student use of communication platforms or social media?	• If used as means of providing class supports, yes. • If done as a peer/classmate, not any more than they need permission to communicate with other friends.
What are the virtual scheduling options?	• Schedule the support student with PPL course number along with the supported class. • Make sure the course is available as needed. This might be just one period, depending on the number of students in program. • Ensure that the general education teacher "shares" virtual classroom with PPL teacher of record (TOR), peer, or both. • Provide access for both PPL TOR and general education teacher to the virtual class. • Consider break-out rooms for student group work, while teachers or paraprofessionals "float" in rooms for supervision. • Virtual "office hours" can be held by TOR and can include assigned peers and others who need support. • Use of multiple "pods" in the main room for peer supports in real time, with adult supervision.
What are other possibilities for student interaction if the focus of support is socialization?	• Create a lunch bunch – students connect via virtual platform to socialize during "lunch time." • Dance party – open a link for additional socialization opportunities at other times of the day.
What are some ideas about grading and attendance?	• Google form – use a QR code for peer support student to check-in to the virtual room. • Follow up regularly for assignments not submitted via virtual classroom. • Require comments on other students' submissions to some or all response prompts as part of the grade. • Post the reflection journal topics as discussion posts, and structure them as ongoing assignments requiring feedback and expanding comments to other students' discussions.