

What is Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)?

Sharon Madsen
Education Consultant, DPI

May 3, 2023



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
Public Instruction
Jill K. Underly, PhD, State Superintendent

Learning Objectives

1. Review the legal definition of “specially designed instruction” (SDI)
2. Explore what sets specially designed instruction apart from other special education services
3. Discuss what SDI is, and what it is not
4. Discuss who can provide SDI



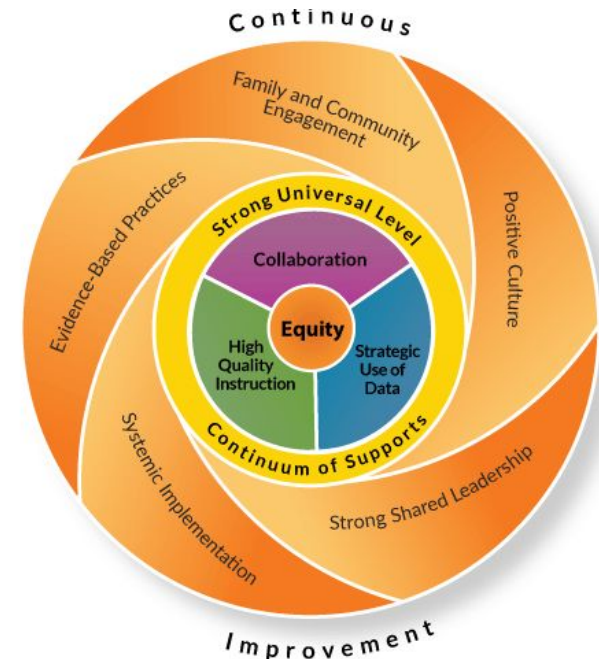
Educational Equity

Educational equity means that every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education, across race, gender, ethnicity, language, ability, sexual orientation, family background, and/or family income.

<https://dpi.wi.gov/rti/equity>

Equitable Multi-Level Systems of Support

Special education services (including specially designed instruction), exist within a district's equitable multilevel system of support (MLSS) and represents a collaborative effort between families, general educators, special educators, and other school staff to address a student's needs.



[Wisconsin's Framework for Equitable Multi-Level Systems of Supports](#)

What comes to mind when you hear the term “specially designed instruction (SDI)”?



Type in Chat

Definition and Key Features of SDI

What is Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) and Who Can Provide It?

Specially Designed Instruction Defined

“Special education” means specially designed instruction, regardless of where the instruction is conducted, that is provided at no cost to the child or the child's parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including instruction in physical education.

[Wis. Stat § 115.76 \(15\)](#)

Specially Designed Instruction Defined

Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible student, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction:

- (i) to address the unique needs of the student that result from their disability; and
- (ii) to ensure access of the student to the general curriculum so they can meet the educational standards that apply to all students within the jurisdiction of the public agency ...

[34 CFR 300.39\(b\)\(3\)](#)

Key Features of Specially Designed Instruction

- Instruction in which the **content, methodology** or **delivery** is individually adapted to address a student's disability related needs
- Allows the student to access, engage, and make progress in the general education curriculum, and meet the standards and expectations of age or grade level peers.

Key Features of Specially Designed Instruction

- Tailored to an individual student
- Provided to explicitly and systematically address a student's disability-related need(s) in academic or functional skill areas
 - SDI may include instruction in physical education, speech and language therapy, travel training, vocational instruction or other areas
- Linked to one or more IEP goals
- SDI Is not Supplementary Aids and Services (accommodations)

Key Features of Specially Designed Instruction

- SDI is a service, not a place
- May be provided in any learning environment including school, home, community, and other settings
- Provided at no additional cost to the student or student's parent(s)

Key Features of Specially Designed Instruction

- The IEP team determines and documents SDI services based on data from recent evaluation or reevaluation, a review of IEP goal progress, or other information shared with the team
- The IEP must include a clear description of the type, amount, frequency, duration, and location of the SDI
- The IEP must describe how student progress toward each annual goal will be monitored. Progress data helps guide decisions about the effectiveness of SDI services

Key Features of Specially Designed Instruction

The provision of specially designed instruction to address a student's individual needs is a right guaranteed by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)

Where is SDI Documented?

The IEP team documents all special education services, including SDI, in the Program Summary on [DPI Sample Special Education form I-4](#)

B. Special Education / Specially Designed Instruction					
Adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible student, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the student that result from the student's disability; and ensure access of the student to the general curriculum, so the student can meet the educational standards of the public agency that apply to all students. <i>For each special education service, identify the corresponding annual goal(s).</i>					
Describe	Frequency	Amount	Location	Duration	Addresses Goal(s) #

Who Can Provide Specially Designed Instruction?

- Special Education Teachers
- Reading Teachers (License 316)
- Speech and Language Pathologists
- General Education Teachers in a full-time co-teaching partnership

Is it SDI or Supplementary Aids and Services?

Area of DRN: Reading Comprehension

Scenario 1

During social studies, students are assigned to read a section of textbook to self and then participate in large group discussion. Teacher sees Student X is off-task and not reading likely because passage is beyond their independent reading level. Teacher goes to X, and for a few minutes, prompts them to use comprehension strategy cards aligned with their IEP, and reminds them to use AT (text reader) to complete assignment.

Scenario 2

During small-group English class instruction, the student's co-teacher provides X with 20 minutes of co-planned instruction and guided practice in two specific comprehension strategies aligned with the student's IEP goal. Later that day, the other co-teacher provides a 10 minute mini-lesson on the strategies in preparation for social studies class.

Is it SDI or Supplementary Aids and Services?

Area of DRN: Social Skills

Scenario 1

Student X meets in a small group with their special education teacher. The teacher provides instruction on perspective-taking strategies and respecting personal space for 10 minutes. Then the group role plays using the new strategies for 5 minutes.

Scenario 2

While on recess duty one day, the special education teacher notices Student X moving closer and closer to peers while conversing and two of the peers moving away from X each time X moves closer. The teacher gathers the students into a huddle and does a spontaneous mini-lesson on perspective taking and respecting personal space. The teacher also models how students can read social cues as well as politely prompt or cue others when they need more personal space.

Is it SDI or Supplementary Aids and Services?

Area of DRN: Communication

Scenario 1

The speech and language pathologist (SLP) is in X's English class for 30 minutes. The class is involved in small group discussions about their assigned reading. The SLP sits with X's small group and records each time they accurately answer WH questions about the reading. A few times when X gets stuck, the SLP provides X with prompts and cues of previously learned strategies.

Scenario 2

Student X meets with the SLP in therapy room for 30 minutes. SLP introduces evidence-based strategies for following multi-step directions. They go through the strategies together before practicing them. Eventually SLP gives X a 3-step direction and monitors if X follows all steps. SLP does this three more times with fading verbal prompts while using a tally sheet to record each time X follows a step in the directions.

Reflect

What comes to mind now when you think of SDI?

Type in Chat

Contact Information

For questions about the “What is SDI...” guidance document contact: [DPI Special Education Team](#)

For questions about licensing contact: [Educator Licensing](#)

Wisconsin DPI Resources

[College and Career Ready IEPs](#)

[Disability-Related Need Affecting Reading for Students Eligible for an IEP with a Speech and Language Impairment](#)

[Informational Bulletin 10.05: Frequently Asked Questions About Special Education Paraprofessionals](#)

[Informational Bulletin 10.07: Describing Special Education, Related Services, Supplementary Aids and Services, and Program Modifications or Supports](#)

[National Organizations that Support Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices for Students with IEPs](#)

[Reading Teachers and the Provision of Specially Designed Reading Instruction in Student IEPs](#)

[What is Specially Designed Instruction and Who Can Provide It?](#)