

Avoiding Mock Sheltered Work Settings in Schools

Overview

Implementation of Senate Bill 810 (2025) reinforces Oregon’s ongoing commitment to **competitive, integrated employment for students with disabilities** and requires districts to renew their understanding of sheltered work models and how these models can inadvertently appear in school programs. As districts align policies, practices, and instruction with SB 810, it is essential to distinguish allowable pre-vocational instruction from activities that replicate sheltered or segregated work settings.

This guidance clarifies how school-based activities must be structured to ensure instructional purpose, inclusion, and alignment with post-secondary employment outcomes, and to avoid practices that resemble sheltered work.

Mock Sheltered Work Settings – Prohibited Practices

[OAR 581-015-2930](#) newly defines **mock sheltered work settings**.

- (b) “Mock sheltered work settings” are prevocational training activities that are:
- (A) Conducted during the school day;
 - (B) Performed only by students with disabilities;
 - (C) Closely resembles the vocational work tasks performed by adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities or both (I/DD) in Sheltered Workshops, including activities:
 - (i) designed to fulfill the demands of a contractor, business, charitable organization, school or school district, retail store, or other entity; and
 - (ii) performed by individuals without compensation or in exchange for subminimum wages; and
 - (D) Not part of an instructional sequence, such as teaching generalization of skills. Instructional sequence does not include instruction that consists solely of the activities described in all of (A), (B), and (C).

What Is an Instructional Sequence?

An instructional sequence is the deliberate and effective ordering of instruction to help a student learn a skill. It involves task analysis, systematic instruction, and disability-specific supports that result in skill acquisition and generalization. A vocational instructional sequence must:

- Be aligned with the student’s measurable post-secondary goal of competitive, integrated employment;
- Be connected to transition services based on the student’s preferences, interests, needs, and strengths (PINS);
- Include periodic progress monitoring to ensure skills are not practiced beyond mastery; and
- Evolve over time as students gain proficiency, and new vocational goals are identified.

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Examples of Prohibited Mock Sheltered Work Settings Activities

1. A sheltered workshop contracts with a school district to label packages at a high school. Only students with intellectual disabilities perform the work, the activity is not part of an instructional sequence, and students are paid subminimum wages.
2. A school-operated coffee cart is staffed only by students with disabilities. While students learn work habits, the activity is not aligned to individual IEP goals or a documented instructional sequence and generates funds for the program.
3. Students with intellectual disabilities are assigned to shred papers for the school without pay. The task fulfills a school's need, excludes nondisabled peers, and is not instructional in nature.

These activities are **prohibited** because they are:

- Conducted during the school day;
- Performed only by students with disabilities;
- Similar to sheltered workshop tasks that fulfill organizational needs without compensation; and
- Not delivered as part of a documented instructional sequence.

Examples of Pre-Vocational and Transition Activities That Do Not Constitute Mock Sheltered Work Settings

1. Students with and without disabilities work together to stuff envelopes for a school-wide fundraiser. Participation is inclusive and not limited to students with disabilities.
2. A voluntary school recycling program includes students with and without disabilities. For some students, sorting activities are included for a limited time as part of an instructional sequence aligned to post-secondary goals.
3. A school-based deli employs students with and without disabilities side-by-side, compensates all students at minimum wage, and aligns work duties to IEP-based vocational goals.

These activities are **appropriate** because they:

- Are inclusive of students with and without disabilities;
- Do not replicate segregated sheltered workshop models;
- Provide minimum wage compensation where applicable; or
- Are embedded within individualized vocational instructional sequences.

Other Considerations: Expectations and Student Progress

Students with intellectual disabilities can achieve competitive, integrated employment when provided appropriate instruction and high expectations. IEP goals must be individualized, informed by age-appropriate transition assessments, and reviewed regularly. Repeating identical vocational goals year after year without progress review is not best practice.



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Instruction should continually challenge students to develop new skills and experiences that lead to successful post-school outcomes.

Contact Information

For questions or clarification regarding transition planning and mock sheltered work settings, please contact:

- Shava Feinstein, District Support Specialist for IDEA Programs: Shava.Feinstein@ode.oregon.gov
- Regional Transition Network Facilitator: https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/SpecialEducation/GeneralSupervision/Documents/sped%20directors/TNFRegions_Map.pdf