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Wareham Public Schools

Office of Student Services
Multi Service Center
48 Marion Road
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<http://www.warehamps.org>

May 8, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I trust this email finds you and your loved ones healthy and safe.

This is a difficult time, and as we continue to navigate this new reality, we want to provide you with some important updates about your children's Individualized Education Plans, and what Wareham Public Schools will be doing to support your children throughout this pandemic.

Things have looked very different for us all during these unprecedented times, and WPS Special Education Staff has been working diligently during the past few weeks to provide support, resources, lessons and videos to you and your children, in an effort to support their needs, assist them in working towards their goals, and access this virtual learning world. Our related service providers have been checking in and supporting in a variety of ways including Zoom, Google hangout, individual phone calls and countless email conversations in an effort to provide services and support to all of the students on their caseloads. We know that the multiple email updates, phone calls and virtual learning can be very overwhelming, not just for our students, but for parents and guardians as well.

After participating in weekly update meetings with the Commissioner of Education, State Heads of Special Education, and Director's Across the Commonwealth and the country we are prepared to continue our effort to make sound decisions that are in the best interest of our students and families. We also need to be mindful to make decisions that move us forward, but provide safe, secure and confidential platforms that are accessible to all of our families, regardless of current circumstances.

We have chosen to remotely hold **IEP meetings** for students who would have had these meetings occur between March 13 and the end of this 2019/2020 School Year. We will begin scheduling those meetings in the coming weeks in order to be able to keep your student's IEP services and supports active. The Team will be discussing current levels of performance and proposing the next steps as they relate to your student's progress.

Please note that if you signed a consent to evaluate, or your student was due to have a three year evaluation during the closure, we do not intend to conduct evaluations during the closure, but for extremely limited or unusual circumstances. In almost all cases we

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do not feel that we can perform comprehensive evaluations virtually equitably or with fidelity under the current circumstances. If your child's evaluations were completed prior to the closure, your meeting will be held. These evaluations that fell during the closure period will be prioritized once school is back in session, and will be completed as soon as possible. If you believe your child's evaluation can and should be conducted, please contact my office and we will review each case individually and advise you accordingly.

The following information is important for you to know:

- Meetings will be offered in a secure teleconference service or you may choose a Google Meet format. Directions to access both of these platforms will be forthcoming.
- There is no fee or cost to families to use this service.
- You do not require any special technology, nor any WiFi to access your meeting. Any telephone landline or cell phone will work.
- You have the right to waive, in writing, having this meeting virtually. If you choose not to have a virtual meeting, you will be placed on the priority list for a team meeting once schools are back in session. In this case, your child's IEP services remain in place until the team is able to meet in person.
- Due to the current pandemic, in order to facilitate discussion during the IEP meeting, we will be providing you with a draft copy of your child's IEP prior to the scheduled meeting date. This is not a final document, it is simply a starting point, and is meant to be changed and added to at the virtual meeting.

In the coming weeks, school/grade level building liaisons or their secretaries will be reaching out to you to schedule your virtual meeting. In the interim, if you have any questions, please reach out to them via email.

Be well and stay safe!

Melissa