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May 20, 2020

Dear Parents/Caregivers,

I hope that you and your families are staying healthy and safe and finding opportunities to enjoy the lovely spring weather. It is hard to believe we have been away from our school buildings and engaged in remote learning from home for two months. We are all eager to return to school and hope to receive guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) soon. In the meantime, I'd like to share some important updates to assist with navigating the next phase of remote learning and special education.

IEP Meetings, Evaluations and Timelines

Since the beginning of school closure and throughout remote learning, we have continued to hold IEP meetings. In fact, we have had more than 200 IEP team meetings by phone or video-conferencing since mid-March. We anticipate that nearly every Annual Review meeting that is due between now and the last day of school (June 19th) will be held.

In a recent update, DESE advised school districts that IDEA procedural timelines remain in effect. If your child had an initial eligibility or re-evaluation meeting in process at the time the school buildings closed, you will receive communication from your child's special education liaison. Our goal is to maintain clear communication and collaborate with families around timeline extensions as necessary. We have been working to determine in what manner we can continue to conduct evaluations of students while school buildings are closed, taking into account public health requirements.

Our talented school psychologists, special educators and related service providers are learning more about tele-assessments and determining the best way to address assessments during this time. We will consider individual student circumstances and work with families so that we can determine how best to move forward with initial and reevaluation meetings. If a student's IEP expires during the period when in-person instruction is suspended, the current IEP remains in effect until a new IEP is developed.



Extended School Year

DESE has advised all districts to develop contingency planning for Extended School Year (“ESY”), including a plan for continuation of remote learning for ESY as well as a “readiness plan” for on-site instruction if it becomes available. If your child’s IEP includes ESY services, you will be receiving communication from your Special Education Coordinator or Liaison in the next few days with more information.

Remote Learning and Special Education - Parent Feedback Form

We have developed a parent survey to gather your feedback on how you and your child are doing with remote learning, with a particular focus for students receiving special education and related services. We encourage you to complete the survey as your feedback is extremely valuable to both assess the work that has been done and for future planning purposes. To access the survey, click [here](#).

May and June SEPAC Meetings

There are two remaining SEPAC meetings this school year, May 21st at 10:30am and June 16th at 10:30am. Please visit <http://www.needhamsepac.org/> for more information and the Zoom Meeting link.

We recognize that this is an incredibly challenging time. We are working hard to support Needham students and families and adjust our work in special education to the realities of remote learning. I truly appreciate your feedback, collaboration and partnership.

Sincerely,

Julie Muse-Fisher
Executive Director of Special Education

Cc: SEPAC
Mary Lammi, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
Patricia Mullen, Special Education Director, NHS
Rebecca Sparrell, Preschool Director
Special Education Coordinators
NPS Principals