

# Special Education Update: For School Committee

Presented by: Sarah Mochak

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# What is happening during PD?

- I met with special education faculty and staff on the first day of school to provide guidance and updates
- Special education teachers and related service providers are attending PD
- Special education teachers and related service providers are meeting as building teams and as specialist teams (SLPs, OT department, etc)
- Student specific teams are meeting to develop COVID-19 Special Education Learning Plans
- Special Education Coordinators are providing guidance to new staff and are assisting with student-specific planning
- Principals are reviewing student needs and reassigning paraeducators, as necessary

# Proposals for Outdoor Services

The following proposed protocols have been submitted to the Superintendent. They were developed using DESE and DPH guidance and reviewed by our District Nurse and School Physician.

- Preschool evaluations
- K-12 evaluations
- Kindergarten screening
- Occupational and Physical Therapies
- 1:1 instruction for students in Rise and Soar

# COVID-19 Special Education Learning Plans

- Teams will be developing a COVID-19 Special Education Learning Plan for each student to document how IEP services will be delivered remotely.
- Families will be contacted beginning this week to learn about their child's learning plan and offer input
- Plans include information about how each service in the IEP will be delivered synchronously and/or asynchronously

## Remote special education services must include:

- A regular and consistent schedule of classes, interventions, services, and therapies as required by the student's IEP, offered synchronously (live) and/or asynchronously (on demand)
- Structured learning time designed so the student can access state goals and state standards
- Frequent interactions with teachers and other staff members

# Evaluations: Update

- **School closure in the spring prevented districts from conducting the required evaluations related to eligibility for special education**
- A proposal to conduct evaluations outside at the school buildings has been submitted to the Superintendent (includes kindergarten screening)
- Meeting, this Wednesday, with Presence Learning to learn about using their online platform to conduct virtual evaluations
- It is likely necessary to conduct some evaluations in-person during the winter months; prior protocols will be revised and submitted to the Superintendent

# Special Populations: Who are these students?

“the Department urges schools and districts to prioritize in-person instruction for two particular groups of students with disabilities: preschool-aged students, and students with significant and complex needs. Remote learning is often more challenging for these students” from July 9, 2020 DESE guidance

- Students already identified as “high needs” through the IEP process on the IEP form entitled “[Primary Disability/Level of Need-PL3](#).” **Such students must meet at least two of these criteria:**
  - Services provided outside of the general education classroom;
  - Service providers are special education teachers and related service providers;
  - Special education services constitute more than 75% of the student’s school day;
- Students who cannot engage in remote learning due to their disability-related needs;
- Students who primarily use aided and augmentative communication;
- Students who are homeless
- Students in foster care or congregate care; and/or
- Students *dually identified* as English Learners. (though we are proposing all English Learners)

# Special Populations Planning

- Families from our specialized programs were contacted regarding whether or not they would send their child for in-person learning; we will repeat again later in September
- Procurement of PPE and plexi-glass dividers
- *Identification of necessary staff; will include both special education teachers, general education teachers, paraeducators, and related service providers*
- Ongoing discussion of where programs will be housed
- Health and safety protocols are being refined and will be submitted for review to our district nurse, school physician, and city Health Agent prior to being submitted to the superintendent
- Deadline for plan completion: September 22, 2020





## Additional factors to consider for in-person learning for special populations:

- Schedule (full day, half day, days/week)
- Lunch?
- Transportation