



April 13, 2020

Dear Parents of Students with Disabilities:

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced public schools into a situation that we have never encountered before. As a parent of a student with an IEP, I am sure you have many questions about how the current school closing will impact special education. I am sharing the following information with you to hopefully answer some of your questions.

**Will I have my child's IEP meeting?**

Our special education teachers have been instructed to proceed with scheduling and holding annual IEP meetings within timelines. The IEP meetings will be held via phone or Google Hangouts/Meet which is a video conferencing option in which IEP team members can participate. Your child's special education case manager will be in contact to set up the meeting. Only annual or initial IEP meetings will be held. Meetings to revise IEPs will take place when school reopens unless parents request otherwise. Annual and initial IEPs will be reasonably calculated as if schools are open. HCPS Continuity of Learning Plan for Special Education will be followed until schools reopen (see attached plan).

**Will my child's eligibility or re-evaluation process continue?**

We will continue holding Eligibility meetings, via phone or Google Hangout/Meet. Testing will only occur with parent permission and if school staff feel they are able to get valid and reliable testing completed. School division staff will be in contact with you soon to discuss the best options for your child. Testing will resume on a larger scale when the Governor lifts the school closure. The Office of Special Education will be asking parents to provide consent to extend the 65-day timeline so that special education evaluations can be completed when school resumes.

**How will signatures and consent be obtained for virtual meetings?**

Parents will be asked to provide both verbal permission at the conclusion of the virtual meeting and written permission will be requested via email or text stating your agreement or disagreement with the IEP or with the eligibility determination. When schools reopen, we will make arrangements to get signatures on all documents. If you would like a copy of any documents before schools reopen please let your team know and it will be sent to you via email (with your permission) or mailed.

**Will special education services be provided for my child while school is closed?**

Schools are closed. There are no special education services provided during a school closure. HCPS Special Education Department will be working within the parameters and in collaboration with the plans that have been developed for all students in HCPS and within

guidance provided by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs and Virginia Department of Education. Please see the attached plan (HCPS Continuity of Learning and Program Plan-Sped)

**Will students receiving instruction via homebound or home-based continue to receive services?**

No. Schools are closed which means homebound and home-based instruction will not take place. However, students will receive the same instructional learning opportunities as their peers through packets or learning modules.

**Will make-up or compensatory services be provided for students with disabilities after school re-opens?**

When school resumes, HCPS staff will review how the closure impacted individual students. If the data collection process determines there is a need to consider compensatory services, IEP meetings will be scheduled for this purpose. Parents can also request an IEP meeting for this purpose. Decisions about compensatory services will be made on an individual basis.

**Will there be ESY or summer school?**

ESY and summer school options for students with disabilities will follow HCPS' plans for summer school. These decisions will be made in light of the circumstances prior to the summer and with guidance from VDOE and the Governor. More information will follow at a later date.

As always, we appreciate your support and cooperation. If you have questions or concerns about the learning opportunities please talk with your student's case manager. If you have any specific questions that are not answered above, please feel free to email me at [sthorpe@harrisonburg.k12.va.us](mailto:sthorpe@harrisonburg.k12.va.us).

Sincerely,

Sandi Thorpe  
Director of Special Programs