



# Ipswich Public Schools

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PAYNE SCHOOL BLDG.  
ONE LORDS SQUARE  
IPSWICH, MA, 01938  
TEL. (978) 356-2935  
FAX (978) 356-0445

**DR. BEVERLY HEGEDUS**  
**DIRECTOR OF PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES**

March 30, 2020

Dear Parents of Special Education Students,

I am writing both to thank you for your patience and support during the pandemic closures and also to provide an update regarding the most recent information available from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Commensurate with Governor Baker's extension of closings through May 4, 2020, our Senior Associate Commissioner, Dr. Russell Johnston, has shared updated guidance regarding supports for students with disabilities. The main shift will be a movement from learning support to remote services.

Our guiding principles for providing these services are highlighted below:

- The **safety** and well-being of our students, their families and District staff members influences our service delivery. It is not feasible for safety reasons during the current period of school closures to provide, for example, hands-on physical therapy, occupational therapy, or in-person reading services. However, many specialized instructional opportunities and related services may be modified to be effectively provided by sending resources and supports home to students or offering them to you online or telephonically.
- **All** students will receive **FAPE**. For special education students, the specific services to achieve FAPE will **look different** from traditional IEP services because they are necessarily being delivered remotely. It is important to emphasize that federal disability law permits **flexibility** in determining how to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities. The determination of how FAPE is to be provided will be different in this time of unprecedented national emergency.
- Remote learning can encompass a **wide variety of teaching** formats. While technology can be a supportive tool, we will also consider ways that student learning can continue offline. This includes exploring the natural world, activities to support the Ipswich community (with appropriate social distancing), and engaging, hands-on projects and artistic creations that stem from your children's own passions and experiences
- For students in out-of-district (OOD) public and private special education placements, the programs themselves will be taking a leadership role in providing services for your children, but you are always welcome to check the resources available on the Ipswich Public Schools homepage, or communicate with your District liaison regarding ways in which you can additionally individualize these resources to fit your student's abilities.

Please also feel free to reach out to your school Program Manager, your child's liaison, or me. We are all working together with the same goal in mind: providing services to your child during a time of uncertainty and upset.

Thank you for collaborating with us during this challenging time. Please check the PPS homepage regularly. I will plan to keep you updated regarding any changes recommended by DESE.

Sincerely,

Beverly H. Hegedus, Ed.D.  
PPS Director