

ZOOM Q&A Session with Ipswich SEPAC and Parents of 504 Students

Thursday, October 1, 2020 at 4:00pm

The October 1 meeting addressed questions from parents of special education and 504 students. The purpose of sharing the Q & A from that session is to provide information for parents who were unable to attend.

Q: If I want 4 days in person learning for my child vs 2 days in person, what are the next steps?

PPS Response: In the hybrid model, the decision to add additional in-person days is made on an individual basis by the student's school team. Since public health guidance limits available space, prioritization is made for the most vulnerable population, including IEP students with intense needs, young children, children living in poverty, and those in congregate living systems. There are finite limits to space based on public health guidance. School teams are continuing to monitor student populations to see how needs can be addressed, but in some cases, we will need to brainstorm alternate solutions.

Q: 504 Plan elementary student - how are schools handling attendance? What supports are available to 504 Students?

PPS Response: Attendance is taken because it is important. Teachers and counselors are monitoring student absences so that they can be alert to any additional needs for outreach. 504 students are entitled to receive whatever accommodations or supports are in their 504 Plans. These accommodations may appear different in a remote delivery, but are nonetheless an entitlement. For example, a student with a preferential seating accommodation may benefit from check-in's in a remote delivery in order to help maintain attention.

Q: How will my child get academic support at home in dealing with remote learning?

PPS Response: There are many ways to provide this support, and so it is important to reach out to your school liaison for an individual response. Some examples have included teachers recording instructions; a counselor helping the student set up a schedule to keep track of Zoom meetings; and having the student set an alarm on an iPad or stove timer. We are actually teaching our students "Applied Executive Functioning" by helping them develop effective strategies for handling this new way of learning. Parents should reach out to teachers or 504 liaisons with any questions or issues.

Q: What if a 504 student needs constant guidance and redirection when parents are working?

PPS Response: Again, services are individualized. Please reach out to teachers/504 coordinators. Although there is not always available space for all students to have extra in-person days, there may be additional support that can be created to build independence and achieve academic self-sufficiency. Please do not hesitate to bring your concerns to our attention for assistance.

Q: My student is doing reasonably well with independent work. How do I know who to reach out to if he starts to have problems?

PPS Response: The first outreach should be either to the classroom teacher or special education liaison. Others who can be helpful include the counselor, school psychologist, or program manager, depending on who has a relationship with the student. The Team is an excellent vehicle for brainstorming strategies and supports.

Q: Are compensatory services available for 504 students?

PPS Response: DESE has three compensatory classifications: 1) General recovery support (everyone has access to mitigate educational gaps from March-now); 2) COVID-19 Compensatory Services (called CCS) for services students had already been receiving. 3) IEP Amendment - if a new need is determined, the TEAM would look at amending the IEP and develop a plan to address the new area of need. So yes, a 504 student would definitely be eligible for general recovery support, and potentially additional support if the student had been receiving services under a 504 Plan.

Q: I am not receiving SEPAC notices and could not find a copy of your invitation when I searched in my threads.

PPS Response: The actual sending address for notices sent out to families from PPS is aspen-sysadmin@myfollett.com, not ipsk12.net. You should be able to find this in your email threads. In regard to responding when you contact us, we try to reply with at least an acknowledgement within 24 hours.

Q: Who is assessing learning loss? Is it for IEP students only or also 504?

PPS Response: The special education team continues to monitor student progress. It is premature right now to begin formal progress monitoring since the students have only had 2 weeks of class so far and are just beginning to settle into relationships and routines. We use universal screenings for all students, with both formal & informal measures.

We look forward to your alerting us before small concerns become larger ones. Please keep communication lines open so we can continue to work together.