



LAWRENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Office of Student Support Services
Mary A. Toomey, Ed.D. - Assistant Superintendent



March 30, 2020

Dear Families and Parents of Students served through Special Education in the Lawrence Public Schools,

I write to share information from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (MA DESE) This should answer some questions you may have regarding your child's special education services while school is not in session due to COVID-19. I also want to update you on our plans for providing remote learning services during this extended closure period.

The Lawrence Public Schools (LPS) dedicated the week of March 23rd to designing and implementing a plan to provide every family with a dedicated WIFI enabled device (Chromebook or IPAD) along with Internet access to support learning while schools are closed. The district also posted helpful resources and links to no-cost learning supports on the LPS Webpage. Please continue to visit <https://www.lawrence.k12.ma.us/> for updates and additional resources. Look for the "LPS Learning at Home" link.

In the coming week your child's special education teacher, along with all educators who provide direct service to your child, will be communicating with you to share additional materials and/or strategies to support your child to access the curriculum and school work. The teacher assigned to your child will be available daily for office hours between 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM on the days that coincide with the school calendar. Related Service Providers (Speech, OT, PT, etc.) will be in weekly communication or interaction to support IEP goals and objectives. Counselors will be in on-going communication or interaction with students and/or families by email and/or telephone once a week.

On March 21, 2020, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) within the U.S. Department of Education (DOE), issued a [supplemental fact sheet](#). In this unique and ever-changing environment, OCR and OSERS recognize that these unprecedented circumstances may affect how all educational and related services and supports are provided, and the Department will offer flexibility. With support from MA DESE, LPS plans to provide a FAPE (Free and Appropriate Education) within the context of the need to protect the health and safety of students and staff and to the extent feasible. This could include, as appropriate, special education and related services provided through remote instruction virtually, online, or telephonically. Some examples of how we may offer students a FAPE virtually include; use of video conferencing for direct instruction, providing students with accessible materials, having teachers call students to explain lesson materials, and/or offering related services such as speech-language services through video conferencing. Our educators may also be available for consultation and to provide helpful resources.

Included with this letter is a detailed **Special Education Remote Learning Plan for Educators and Families** that we anticipate will support your child while Learning at Home. If you have any additional questions please reach out to your child's special education teacher who will serve as your primary point of contact for special education related questions while schools are closed. You may also email the Special Education Director assigned to your child's school. A director contact list may be found at the LPS webpage in the Office of Student Support Services section.

My best to you and your family,

Mary A. Toomey

Mary A. Toomey, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent