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# Updates Newsletter from the Office of Special Education

FPS Announcements <fps\_announcements@framingham.k12.ma.us>  
To: "@FPS\_ALL" <fps\_all@framingham.k12.ma.us>

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# Office of Special Education

Week of March 23rd

I hope you and your families are in good health and figuring out a new normal during these extraordinary times. I appreciate all that you are doing to remain connected to our special education students and their families. Keeping those connections is essential as we maneuver through the next few weeks. Students, staff, and families have shared many questions asking how this extended school closure impacts special education. I hope you find the resources and guidance below helpful.

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) has created a Q & A document to guide us during the coronavirus outbreak.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is responding to an outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a new coronavirus named coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The CDC has issued interim guidance to help administrators of public and private childcare programs and K-12 schools plan for and prevent the spread of COVID-19 among students and staff.



Special Education



## The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidance is below

- [Coronavirus/Covid-19 Frequently Asked Questions For Schools And Districts Regarding Special Education - March 17, 2020](#)

### Are we going to start having virtual IEP meetings?

The quick answer is "not at this time".

The guidance from the DESE says:

"We recognize that under the Governor's Order, public school districts are not currently operating. While IEP teams are not required to meet in person while schools are closed, the district may elect to conduct some business virtually. If possible, school districts could convene IEP Team meetings virtually using technologies such as Zoom or phone conferences. Districts must consider whether all IEP team members have access to necessary technology and accommodations to allow remote participation during periods of school closure."

There are many factors that we need to consider in order to provide equitable opportunities for all of our special education families and Framingham staff to participate in a virtual IEP Team meeting.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Do all of our staff and families have the necessary technology and familiarity with the technology to participate in a virtual Team meeting?
- Would all of our families be able to view or print out copies of assessment reports and other pertinent documents prior to the virtual Team meeting?
- Will we be able to ensure interpreters are not only available but also in possession of the necessary technology to participate in a virtual Team meeting?

During the week of March 9th through March 13th, there were approximately 125 Team meetings held in our schools. If we were to begin having virtual IEP Team meetings, we would need to be sure that we can provide this opportunity to all of our families across all of our schools. At this time Framingham is not able to replicate the IEP Team meeting process in a virtual platform with fidelity.

We will continue to look to the DESE for guidance in the weeks ahead.

## How can you help with engagement and academic Resources for Families?

The Special Education Department is working on expanding the engagement and academic resources, currently on the Framingham Public Schools [website](#), to include tips, tools, and links for special education students. These resources can not replace the classroom environment but will hopefully provide some guidance to families.



If you are a special education teacher or a special education paraprofessional, and have some ideas, please share them with your Special Education Team Evaluation Coordinator (SPED TEC).

Related Service Providers (SLP, OT, PT, APE, BCBA/ABA) are working on lists as we speak!

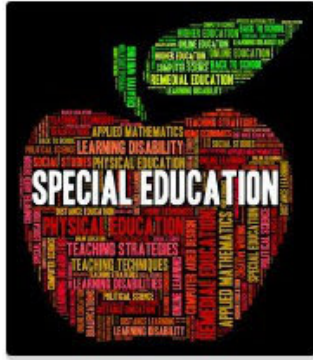
Thank you for your work on this!



**3/20/20: The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) pulled together this list of available resources that can support students and families while schools are closed.**

Educational Resources for Students and Families Some districts and schools have been, or will soon be, providing students and families with educational resources to help students continue learning while schools are closed. In addition to those resources provided by local districts and schools, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) pulled together this [list of available resources](#) that can support students and families while schools are closed. This list is not comprehensive, and DESE does not endorse these products. We are making the list available to families and caregivers as a way to support engaging students in learning while they are out of school.

Special Education Administrator Contact List



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