

March 19, 2020

First, I would like to thank all the parents who have been reaching out to show their appreciation for the work staff have been rushing to put together for our children with special needs. We appreciate your support and patience and recognize that how we support students with special needs will evolve and change as we respond to the changing conditions in our community and world.

The Office of Pupil Personnel Services has been working in partnership with district leadership and The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to establish engaging and structured activities for our students in special education during this unprecedented school closure. As I had mentioned earlier this week, I will continue to provide updates to families as we work with DESE on special education topics.

Immediate focus this week has been ensuring special education teachers begin to build and establish meaningful activities and enrichment for students. In the coming week, staff will be communicating with families regarding the students they serve and activities for home. As you will see in the attached Q&A from DESE, the supports being offered align with the district and state focus on keeping students engaged in meaningful activities, and are not meant to be a whole replacement for special education services in your child's IEP, as school is not in session.

The Team Chairs and Principals and I are working with all staff, across special education disciplines, to ensure that students have access to activities in ways that make sense for families. We are being creative, starting small and hoping to find new ways to continue to engage students over time. Related therapists are reaching out to parents regarding activities that align with IEP goals. Special education teachers are sharing enrichment activities related to your child's special education areas of need. Please use your child's liaison as your primary point of contact regarding:

A: accommodating and modifying activities your child's general education teacher is assigning, and

B: as a resource for engagement and extension activities that align with IEP related areas of need. (learning and academic, behavioral, social, related therapies)

Online opportunities for ELA and Math are being set up this week. Self-contained program staff and preschool teachers are working on more comprehensive ideas and activities to engage children. They will be reaching out to families directly. We greatly appreciate your flexibility and patience during this time, and want to know we are here to answer any questions or concerns.

We will be trying to offer opportunities for families to participate in Team Meetings on a virtual platform. If you have a pending Team Meeting, expect to hear from your Team Chairperson about the feasibility of a virtual meeting. DESE is providing continued guidance on how this closure impacts IEP regulatory timelines.

If you did not get my email on Monday, and want to be sure to be on listserv, please email me: smaselli@miltonps.org. In that document I outlined some of the immediate resources available to families and children.

If your child is supported in an out of district placement, please know our out of district Team Chairs will be in constant contact as school closures/reopenings unfold daily. If your child's special education private school is open, please know Milton will provide transportation. These private schools are taking their own lead on providing educational experiences for students in their care.

Attached please find the latest DESE Q&A. As more information unfolds, we will share. Look for updated info in each Principals email on Mondays.

Please not not hesitate to be in touch with me or your child's Team Chair with any questions or concerns..

Thank you,

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