



# **COLCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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*The following information is being provided as an update to the March 24, 2020, memorandum titled, Continued Educational Opportunities and Special Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This information was provided to districts from Bryan Klimkiewicz, Special Education Division Director*

## **Meaningful Participation for District Staff and Parents**

PPTs must be able to make well-informed decisions, as a team, based on complete and accurate information. Before a PPT meeting is scheduled, districts and parents should discuss the availability of the specific data that are needed to have a meaningful, productive discussion. If the district has access to written information that will be discussed at the meeting, such as evaluations, teacher reports, progress monitoring reports, or a draft IEP, this information should be securely sent to the parent, where possible, at least three days before the meeting. This will allow a parent to seek clarification regarding questions in advance of the meeting. Draft IEPs will be emailed to parents prior to the PPT to ensure meaningful participation.

## **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Districts should confirm that school staff and families have a space that is quiet and distraction free for the duration of the PPT meeting. This will help to safeguard student privacy and confidentiality, and help support each team member's attention and meaningful participation. Given the practical barriers with people being at home, districts should collaborate with parents to schedule and adhere to an appropriate length of time for the meeting. It will be helpful to honor the parent's time constraints and explain to parents in detail any time limitations that may exist for district members of the team, and offer to arrange a parent conference to discuss concerns that may not be addressed in that particular PPT meeting.

## **Annual Reviews**

The purpose of an annual review is to review the student's progress towards the IEP goals and objectives, consider any new data/information, and develop an IEP for the upcoming year. If, after reviewing the factors outlined above, the district and the parent agree to convene a PPT meeting to conduct an annual review, any revisions to the IEP should be written for implementation in a regular school building and as if schools were operating normally and not for temporary situations like the current extended school closure.

The Bureau of Special Education (BSE) recommends documenting the IEP special education and related services start/end dates consistent with the district's practice when schools were operating normally. Most commonly, the start date of the IEP services is either 15 days from the PPT meeting date for "12 month anniversary IEPs." Any special education or related service with a spring 2020 start date should be provided to the student to the greatest extent possible during the period of school closure. In addition to having the date of the meeting recorded on the IEP document, a notation should be made in the "Meeting Summary" section on page 2 of the IEP that the meeting was held telephonically/virtually during the COVID-19 school closure.

Suggested language for Prior Written Notice Actions Proposed: ***This IEP has been developed during the time of school closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The IEP has been developed for implementation within a regular school building and is based on the currently available information and will be reviewed within a reasonable period of time once the student is back in the school building and the team has an opportunity to collect information regarding the student's educational functioning. The district will implement the continued education opportunities aligned to the IEP to the greatest extent possible during the school closure.***

There may be cases in which (1) the required district staff, the parent, or the student may not be available, (2) there are issues with technology for participating remotely, or (3) there is limited access to relevant data, impeding the purpose, which is to develop an IEP for the student. In such cases, the PPT meeting should be scheduled and held as soon as it is feasible to do so, even if the one-year deadline has already passed. The student's current IEP would remain in effect until a PPT convened and revised the IEP.

As an interim measure, a district should pursue alternative means (e.g., parent conference) to fulfill the purpose of the annual review and review with the parent any data/information that is available about the student's progress towards the IEP goals and objectives, and any other information regarding the student's challenges and strengths at this current time. This information will be useful for both the district staff and the parent with regards to the implementation and ongoing review of the continued educational opportunities.

### **Three-year Reevaluations (i.e., "Triennial Reviews")**

If the district is unable to access the student for necessary assessments recommended by the TEAM, the team will document this and the triennial testing will resume as soon as school resumes. The student's current eligibility and IEP will remain in place. The PPT will convene (e.g., within a reasonable amount of time after the student is back in the school building) to conduct the reevaluation, determine continued eligibility, and revise the student's IEP as appropriate.

**Please complete the attached Google Form for feedback**

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc\\_S0rc6L0NsAuG4j2tmLvD5UfXQu5ybkxEP hoyLr\\_Urr8DIQ/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc_S0rc6L0NsAuG4j2tmLvD5UfXQu5ybkxEP hoyLr_Urr8DIQ/viewform?usp=sf_link)