

Dear Parents/Guardians/Caregivers,

As you are aware, Agawam Public Schools are closed schools through April 6, 2020. At this time, we continue to collaborate with officials on the state and local levels for guidance as to moving forward during this closure, and are also planning for additional updates to our practice in the event that the closure is extended by the state. In the meantime, the following district guidelines are in effect.

Learning Opportunities:

Agawam Public School staff are providing all students with additional practice and review materials to keep them engaged in learning and to prevent substantial regression of skills. There should be no new concepts being taught. This decision is based on the understanding that students will not have access to their typical learning methodology, supports and accommodations during the closure period; and that students have varying levels of support at home. We are also mindful that students are working in busy homes, sometimes with parents or guardians who are working from home. We are trying to ensure that students have equal opportunities to access the learning opportunities provided by their teachers.

Special Education and Related Services:

Special Education teachers and related service providers should be checking with families to be sure that students can access and engage in the activities that have been provided by their general education and special education teachers. Special Education teachers also are working with general education teachers and are connected to Google classroom. They continue to be a resource for the students with whom they work and have reached out to those students and families. It is our hope that your children are accessing the learning opportunities that have been provided by your child's school, which will help them maintain their current skill levels. Special education teachers should be monitoring the virtual classrooms and can give students direction and feedback on how to access them.

New Referrals/Initial Eligibility/Evaluations/Annual Reviews:

Agawam Public Schools, along with other schools in the Commonwealth, are temporarily halting initial evaluations, re-evaluations, annual reviews, and plan distribution timelines for all students with IEPs and 504s during school closure. This means that as soon as schools open again, the timelines will commence as is required and agreed upon by state and federal regulations.

Virtual Meetings:

Agawam Public Schools will not be conducting virtual IEP or 504 meetings at this time. If we remain closed beyond April 6th, this decision will be re-examined.

Moving Forward:

Even though there are many opportunities for your children to engage in learning digitally and in print, there will clearly be a lot of work to be done when we reopen. We are actively looking at how we can schedule IEP meetings and testing with minimal disruption to the teaching schedule. We will be working with local and state officials in order to talk about best practices when we return.

Erin Walsh, our Supervisor of Special Services, and I continue to work with administrators in this district, as well as at the state level, to share information and determine what is the best way to move forward in this trying time. We will continue to update the staff and community of any changes to special education services.

Respectfully,
Tony Fazio
Director of Special Education