



WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Westport Families:

Most importantly, I hope this communication finds your families healthy and well. I know that this is a very difficult time for many families, especially for families of students with disabilities. Special education teachers and related services providers are working hard to engage their students in learning opportunities and in communication over the course of each week. Classroom teachers are incorporating accommodations and modifications as appropriate. Please be sure to reach out to your school team if you have any concerns about how your child is accessing learning; the team will do its best to be responsive to your concerns. Please also share successes with your child's teachers and service providers. It brightens a teacher's day when they receive a photo, video or just a story about their students; they miss seeing them every day! As always, also feel free to reach out to me through email.

I am in communication with state Directors of Special Education and the State Department of Education multiple times each week. Recent guidance from the state has led us to the decision that we will not be conducting annual review or triennial review Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings or Section 504 meetings while schools are closed. Teachers and service providers are working tremendously hard to develop and implement this new way of learning, and we need to keep them focused on implementing our learning plan. We will continue to provide learning opportunities as described in the district plans by level, as well as the Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) plan. The federal Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services has suspended all timelines related to PPTs so please be reassured that even though your child's IEP or 504 plan may be past its end date, IEPs and 504 plans will continue to be in effect until a PPT or 504 meeting can be held when school reopens.

Next week you will be receiving information about the possibility of providing some special education or related services in a small group format, using various forms of district technology. I have asked school teams to hold off on implementing this practice for now, as there are concerns about student privacy. However, there are times when this practice would be appropriate for specific students as determined by service providers. Given possible student privacy concerns, we are developing guidelines for families around this issue that families will need to agree to. There will be an opt-out document if you do not want your child to participate in such groups.

I continue to be grateful for your partnership with our school teams while they work to keep students engaged in learning. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if I can be of any assistance.

Stay well!

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