



Special Education Parent Guidance (May 2020)

FHSD Teachers, Intervention Specialists, and Service Providers have completed eight weeks supporting our students with disabilities through remote learning. We have heard great examples of good work to accommodate and service our students. Please take the opportunity to review these important reminders, updates, and requirements related to the end of the school year.

We continue to receive state and federal guidance as it relates to supporting our special education students during this COVID-19 school closure. Please understand that federal and state guidance continues to be updated regularly.

Reminders:

- With the virtual pathway established for all students, Forest Hills provided educational services to students with disabilities to ensure equitable access to education and a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). We have made a good faith effort to determine how FAPE is provided. The circumstances for each family and provider were considered during this unprecedented time.
- General education teachers have been in communication with intervention specialists, ESL teachers, gifted specialists, and reading specialists ensuring we have accommodated our diverse learners.
- It has been clear that we could not provide special education services in the same manner they are typically provided, while also balancing health and safety. This has been a time for all of us to find ways to work together to continue to serve our students in the best way possible. We have considered the nature and duration of the services provided during this closure on a “case-by-case” manner, depending upon the needs and circumstances of our individual students.

- When developing programming for our students, we considered how we deployed FAPE to the extent practical through phone contacts, virtual conferences, direct small groups, or 1:1 interactions. Considerations included what was written in the IEP, the structure and routine in each family's home, and the most effective ways to communicate and collaborate with parents. A rote approach for services applicable to all students was not acceptable. The development of programming was individualized and considered both the child's circumstances as well as the circumstances of COVID-19 (i.e. school closure, stay-at-home orders, etc.).
- FHSD providers have documented communications with parents and the services that have been offered/provided.
 - SDI service time per section 7 on your child's IEP may not have been deliverable in light of COVID-19. It has been expected that the focus be on student needs, accessibility to general education, and the IEP goals/objectives while documenting services provided in alternate delivery formats.
- Related service providers have had the same expectations in terms of their contacts, service delivery, and documentation. They also considered "to the extent possible" their services and how they could be delivered in an alternative delivery format.
- Additional considerations made for Students with Disabilities:
 - Was work accessible and accommodated for students?
 - Were there ways to tailor the work to make it individualized?
 - When working with our students with disabilities... "What was the purpose of the procedure and how can we achieve that purpose ***in light of the current circumstances?***"
 - The focus was to address the goals and objectives on the IEP in the best way that we can, under the circumstances of the student and provider.
 - Resources, tools, and activities that were aligned to student needs, per the IEPs were provided to support engagement in their learning.
 - "Teletherapy Services" were services provided via phone, video conferencing, email, or other telecommunication methods. Teletherapy services did not imply services will be provided in the same manner as prescribed in the IEP.
 - Regular and diligent efforts, via email, phone, or video chat, to reach out to families/students occurred.

PROGRESS REPORTS (May 2020):

- Progress Monitoring during the mandated school closure was designed in tandem with the district's remote learning plan. It will be documented on a Prior Written Notice (PR-01).
- This summary will include information from March 17- May 19 and provided to parents on Friday, May 22, 2020.

Extended School Year vs. COVID-19 Support Services (Compensatory Services):

- Extended School Year (ESY) Services are provided on an individual basis, and deemed necessary for the provision of FAPE (a Free and Appropriate Public Education).

As noted in Ohio's operating standards, ESY services are determined as a means to prevent significant regression of skills or knowledge retained by the child so as to seriously impede the child's progress toward the child's educational goals; and, extended school years services are necessary to avoid something more than adequately recoupable regression. Regression is determined based on whether the child reverts to a lower level of functioning, as evidenced by a measurable decrease in skills or behaviors that occurs as a result of an interruption in educational programming (i.e. significant break). Recoupment is determined based on whether the child has the capacity to recover the skills or behavior patterns, where regression occurred to a level demonstrated prior to the interruption of educational programming. In addition, determination should be based on whether the child's difficulties with regression and recoupment make it unlikely that the child will maintain the skills and behaviors relevant to IEP goals and objectives. [FHSD ESY Guidance 2020](#)

Data to determine ESY eligibility will be collected from the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year to March 13, 2020 (at the time of the mandated school closure).

- **COVID-19 Service Support (referred to currently as Compensatory Services):** These compensatory services will be determined on an individual

basis after the mandated school closure period. If applicable, a review date will be scheduled to determine if critical skills have been lost during the period school was closed (3/17/2020-5/22/2020). Documentation of the team's good faith efforts, circumstances in the light of COVID-19, and documentation will be considered at this time.