



Norfolk Special Education  
Parents Advisory Council

August 13, 2020

From: The Norfolk Special Education Parent's Advisory Council (SEPAC)

To: Dr. Ingrid Allardi and Dr. Anna Eberwin-Tupper

Dear Drs. Allardi and Eberwein-Tupper:

Per our discussion with Dr. Eberwein-Tupper on Friday August 7, 2020, we provided Norfolk families receiving special education services through Norfolk Public Schools (NPS) an opportunity to submit questions related to the District Reopening Plan for the 2020/2021 school year. We encouraged families to watch the recording of Dr. Allardi's presentation to the School Committee from August 5, 2020 and read the Norfolk District Reopening Plan to understand what information has been provided prior to submitting questions.

We understand that not all of these questions have answers at the moment, and that NPS is working diligently to provide a safe and successful opening to the school year. We appreciate all that your teams and committees have done and are doing to bring our children back to in-person learning safely. These questions are provided as an overview of our local families' concerns and uncertainties as they make the difficult Return to School Intent decision next week.

The following summarizes the questions we received. To provide further transparency for our Norfolk families, we plan to share this letter on Monday August 17<sup>th</sup> with the community so families can view the questions posed by families in the district. Please note that we took care to not include any identifiable information in these questions to preserve privacy and confidentiality surrounding special education services provided in the district.

**Topic 1: Return to School Intent**

- A. For children that are medically compromised and receiving special education services, how will the selection of hybrid or remote learning impact their service delivery?
- B. Will remote learning centers for remote learning time be staffed with providers trained to support children receiving special education services?

**Topic 2: IEP Team, Educator Continuity, and Remote Learning Plan Involvement**

- A. Per the following state guidance: "*Teachers or IEP liaisons should contact the parents of their students as soon as possible to discuss how a given student's IEP services will be delivered if different than described in a student's IEP, giving particular consideration to potential changes to how and where special education services will be provided.*" -DESE 2020-08-06 Sped Directors Presentation. When will parents meet with their Team to determine a plan for remote learning?
- B. Who is a family's main Point of Contact related to service delivery and related challenges while Norfolk is operating in a hybrid/remote model?

- C. What happens with a child's IEP Team structure if a child transitions between remote and hybrid learning models? Will teachers and/or service providers change?
- D. If children cannot go back in person yet for medical reasons, will they continue to be supported (in whole or in part) by their special education teacher from previous years with whom they have a relationship (when possible or appropriate for the new grade level)?

### **Topic 3: Service Delivery**

- A. How are decisions made about service delivery times and locations for individual children?
- B. If a child is in the hybrid model, but must quarantine or is sick, how will their IEP be delivered to ensure consistent provider service delivery during the quarantine time period? Particularly for children who have difficulty transitioning to new providers?
- C. Will there be a formal or informal Team review of the efficacy of a remote learning plan within a reasonable timeframe (e.g. two weeks) of the start of school to discuss with parents whether changes need to be made to support the child's ability to access the remote learning services?

### **Topic 4: Delivery of Specially Designed Instruction**

- A. Similar with how the District Reopening Plan provided a sample schedule for a student in the general education population, we hope to see **sample schedules for Special Education students with examples of services provided on both Grid B and Grid C within the Service Delivery Grid** who might be learning via hybrid or remote model to better understand how different services will be delivered.
- B. How will NPS meet Support Staff service requirements for all students requiring dedicated aide support in a hybrid and remote learning model. Specifically:
  - o Are Support Staff able to be 1:1 on screen to help support remote learning activities throughout the day?
  - o What can families expect for support? Will there be specific times when Support Staff are available throughout the day for families?
  - o How will families that must choose remote learning for medical reasons receive Support Staff services as required per their service delivery grid?
  - o What will the Support Staff be doing in remote settings to help class-wide activities that will make this more effective than the experiences in Spring 2020. Will there be specific training for aides/families on how to engage effectively?
- C. As you are aware, children that access special education services often need supplemental materials to adequately access the curriculum. We hope you will address the following with respect to the use of these materials:
  - o How will you address multi-sensory learning needs without sharing materials?
  - o If supplemental materials (e.g. manipulatives for math curriculum) are being used to help a student learn when in person, will those materials be sent home to be used on remote days?
  - o If remote learning is required for medical reasons, will these materials be provided for full-time home use?
  - o For services that require supplemental materials obtained by families themselves, will you provide advanced notice (minimum 48 hrs) for what is needed during a given day/ week?
- D. How will NPS encourage socialization and provide services and opportunities related to social skills when complying with COVID-19 safety requirements?

- E. Will NPS provide supplemental curriculum to students who have difficulty accessing curriculum virtually on **how to engage virtually and learn effectively** in this environment?
- F. How will inclusion and least restrictive environment be achieved for children that are in substantially separate environments or those that cannot wear masks for a significant portion of their day?
- G. How will accommodations be handled related to the following (in both a hybrid and remote model):
  - o Body/movement breaks
  - o Sensory breaks/sensory diet
  - o Children who experience dysregulation from screen time
  - o Alternate workspaces when participating in in-person learning
- H. How will my children access pull out and/or push in services in both a hybrid and remote model?
  - o How will NPS preserve privacy and confidentiality of service delivery during hybrid learning while complying with COVID 19 safety standards of minimizing travel within the school building and minimizing the number of adults in a classroom at any given time?
  - o Will virtual services be provided by providers in place of in-person services during a student's Cohort's "in school" days?
- I. Could children go to school for in-person days and receive a time slot to join others in their same cohort on non-classroom days for pull out services?

**Topic 5: Social-Emotional Learning**

- A. How will social emotional learning curriculum be delivered to children remotely (e.g. Lunch bunches and other similar programs)?
- B. What are the behavioral expectations around wearing masks for children who have difficulty complying with these guidelines? How is NPS expecting to address challenging situations related to mask-wearing? Will teachers be trained on appropriate methods of enforcing mask wearing compliance, considering the behavioral needs of all children, particularly those who access special education services?
- C. How is NPS supporting children and families' mental health and will NPS have means and methods to assess the impact that hybrid or remote learning is having on the safety and well being of students and their families?

Thank you so much for your continued diligence, time, and effort during this unprecedented time. We know families receiving special education through NPS are weighing the risks posed by COVID 19 on physical health as well as the risk of the impact of remote learning on educational progress and curriculum access. We are grateful for your dedication to our NPS community and for the countless hours you have spent on this reopening plan.

Sincerely,

**Norfolk Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)**

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