



## WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Excellence, Shaping the Future*

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Director of Student Services

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Dear Parents,

We have completed a six week period of schooling in the new COVID reality, based on our fall reopening plan. Thank you for your partnership and flexibility everyday. This letter is meant to provide an update on key projects the Student Services Department is working on.

### **Instruction During the School Day**

Based on our [Fall Reopening plan](#), the District opened for instruction on 9/14 in a hybrid model and continues in that structure at this time. In addition to that hybrid model, students in Preschool, Kindergarten and Grade One have been attending four days a week (the Preschool continues to operate a five day classroom, as well). Additionally, students who meet the district's definition of High Needs have been offered four full days of instruction. Approximately 580 of the 3000 students in WPS are attending four days a week. Starting on November 9th, all second grade students participating in the hybrid model will attend four days a week. On November 16th, all third grade students participating in the hybrid model will attend four days a week. This expansion of in person learning in general education benefits everyone, especially our students with disabilities at those grade levels who did not qualify as High Needs. Additionally, the expansion of in person school days, at the early elementary grades, provides many more opportunities for scheduling in person special education supports for students in these two additional grade levels.

### **Extended School Day/Home Service services**

Due to health and safety concerns, the District is still not providing in-home, extended school day services (at elementary often called "home services"). During this time, the District has continued to offer these services remotely, when the services were effective for students in that format. However, we will continue to work with parents of all students with extended school day services on their IEPs to provide services in the school buildings whenever possible. We have been working to expand access for students who have extended school day services (in home or school settings).

Families of students at the WABA program at the High School and the WABA programs at Downey have already been contacted to determine if they would like to access these services.

Families of students outside of those programs, that are eligible for extended school day services, are being contacted to make individualized arrangements to meet those IEP services.

### **Evaluations**

We had identified 56 students whose evaluations were delayed in the spring. 10 students were provided evaluations in the summer and completed early in the fall. As of the writing of this letter, testing is completed for 35 of the students and the remaining 21 students are scheduled to be completed by the end of January.

Starting on November 18th, the District will also begin offering additional evaluation opportunities on the remote Wednesdays to expedite completion of some aspects of outstanding evaluations. Starting with limited elementary providers, we will identify specific rooms at Downey Elementary School that will be opened on the remote Wednesdays for students in grades K - 5 and staff to complete special education evaluations. If this is a successful approach - it may be expanded to the secondary level in the future.

### **COVID Learning Plans**

The District is in the process of issuing COVID learning plans to all students with IEPs. We are using the DESE suggested letter format and the plans are being written by special educators and administrators and are being emailed to parents. The goal is for all the COVID learning plans to be emailed to all parents the week of November 9th. This document does not replace your student's IEP, but instead describes the way services are being delivered and how they may be different due to the hybrid schedule or other grouping/service structures that are different this year due to COVID. If your student's program changes during the year, the COVID learning plan will be updated.

### **Compensatory Services**

IEP teams are working to make sure that all students who are identified as High Needs have a meeting to consider the need for COVID compensatory services by December 15th. A helpful [parent letter from DESE concerning this process can be found here](#). In addition, the District will offer the opportunity for parents of all students with IEPs to engage in a discussion of potential COVID compensatory services via a meeting. For Team meetings that will happen going forward, there will be an opportunity to consider the need for compensatory services from the period of closure last Spring. While we are prioritizing the meetings of students who are High Needs this fall, we expect to continue this discussion throughout the year to ensure that every student and parent has an opportunity to engage in this process.

Finally, the district is continuing to partner with the Special Education Advisory Council (SEPAC) for programming and support. Please consider attending one or all of the [three session series of workshops on Supporting Behavior during Remote Learning](#), or any of the upcoming calendar of SEPAC meetings. Additionally, there is a [training for parents of students with Autism](#) being offered the evening of November 12th from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Additional information about these trainings and other supports and resources are available on the [SEPAC website](#).

Thank you again for your support of our teachers and staff this year as they continue to work hard to adjust to new realities and refine their services and support for your children.



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