



R.S.U. # 19 Special Services Department
PO Box 40
182 Moosehead Trail
Newport, Maine 04953
Phone: (207) 368-5091 ext 5 Fax: 207-368-2192

Liz Mares, Director of Special Services
Robyn Lessard, Assistant Director of Special Services
Keri St Peter, Administrative Assistant
Karen McNerney, Administrative Assistant

Re: Change in Special Education Eligibility

Dear Parents,

On January 21, 2021, the Maine Department of Education released an administrative letter announcing that, effective immediately, "Maine will...provide FAPE to eligible students until their 22nd birthday." This administrative letter is available online, at <https://mainedoenews.net/2021/01/21/administrative-letter-change-in-the-ending-age-for-special-education-eligibility-effective-immediately/>.

For many years, Maine law and regulation have provided that a child may receive special education services up until the end of the school year in which the child turns 20, or until the child achieves a regular high school diploma, whichever comes first. The January 21st Administrative Letter amends the age limits for special education eligibility from the end of the school year in which the student turns 20, to the day that the student turns 22 years old.

It is important to note that Maine law remains clear that students who are awarded a regular high school diploma are no longer eligible for special education services, even if the student is not yet 22 years old. Because most high school special education students meet our standards for a high school diploma, we believe this change in eligibility will not affect the vast majority of our students.

We will continue to discuss graduation requirements and your child's likely date for graduation at high school IEP team meetings, often in the context of transition planning. If you have questions at any point about your child's educational services or their likely graduation date, please do not hesitate to reach out to their special education case manager.

Best wishes for a safe and productive rest of the school year,

Liz Mares
Director of Special Services
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