

March 31, 2020

Dear Parents and Families of Students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs):

During this time of school closures due to COVID-19, it is extremely important for families and schools to collaborate and communicate regarding services for students with disabilities. Any actions taken by the district regarding closures are for the safety of all students, families, school personnel and community members. As Ware Shoals school district determines the most appropriate steps to ensure student and staff safety, we want to provide you with guidance relating to students with disabilities and their services.

The United States Education Department understands that, during this national emergency, schools may not be able to provide all services in the same manner they are typically provided. While some schools might choose to safely, and in accordance with state law, provide certain IEP services to some students in-person, it may be unfeasible or unsafe for some institutions, during current emergency school closures, to provide hands-on physical therapy, occupational therapy, or tactile sign language educational services. Many disability-related modifications and services may be effectively provided online. These may include, for instance, extensions of time for assignments, videos with accurate captioning or embedded sign language interpreting, accessible reading materials, and many speech or language services through video conferencing.

**What will happen to my child's services when a school is closed, but educational services continue to be provided through nontraditional means such as distance learning?**

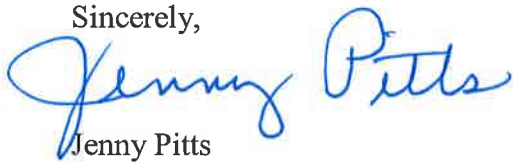
1. Ware Shoals school district has elected to utilize nontraditional methods to provide educational opportunities to the general student population; and therefore, the district also must ensure that students with disabilities have equitable access to the same opportunities, including the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education. The district and schools will work to ensure that all students receive services to the most practical and reasonable extent possible.
2. Although special education or related services may need to be adjusted, the district is providing IEP services through alternative means, such as curriculum-based schoolwork packets, online learning, or some other distance learning adapted to the student's needs and location.
3. This is not a change in placement for your child. This is a temporary adjustment in service delivery for all students due to the current natural emergency.
4. Once schools reopen, the IEP team will be responsible for reviewing how the closure impacted the delivery of special education and related services to students with IEPs. Each student's IEP team must make an individual determination to decide whether the student requires compensatory education to make up for any skills that may have been lost because the student did not receive educational benefit due to missed special education services.

5. If annual reviews, reevaluation reviews, or eligibility determinations were due during this time, alternate means such as conference calls or video calls will be utilized to hold these meetings.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. During this time, email is the best way to reach me at [jpitts@gwd51.org](mailto:jpitts@gwd51.org) or Maria Tyre at [mtyre@gwd51.org](mailto:mtyre@gwd51.org). You can also call the district office at 864-456-7496, ext 1102 or 1104.

Please stay safe! We look forward to seeing you and your child as soon as safely possible!

Sincerely,



Jenny Pitts

Director of Student Services

Ware Shoals School District 51