

**Dr. Keith Laser, Superintendent**  
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**Chris Baribeau, Director Of Special Services**  
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**August 21, 2020**

**Dear Parent/Guardian:**

It is with great hope that this letter finds you healthy, safe and enjoying this beautiful summer weather. Our Administrative Team has worked diligently, since school let out in June, to ensure that our students and their families have flexible, meaningful and safe educational options for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year. As of last week, all four local school boards in the AOS have adopted the proposed frameworks for returning to school. The intent of this letter is to provide you with details illustrating the interplay between the fall plan and the implementation of special education services in AOS#98. The information contained within this newsletter will depict a clear, systematic approach for a smooth reopening and provide you with a comprehensive preview of anticipated practices for the upcoming school year. Please note the information provided is aligned to the most current guidance and is subject to change due to the fluidity of the pandemic. The Special Services Department will continue to monitor and assess the guidance provided by the Maine DOE. We will be steadfast in implementing all of the necessary requirements to protect the health and safety of our students, families, educational staff and the overall community. As always, thank you for your on-going support and patience as we work to effectively address the extremely challenging dynamics. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me should you have any additional questions or concerns. Enjoy the rest of your summer!

Sincerely,

*Chris Baribeau*

Chris Baribeau  
Director of Special Services  
AOS#98

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### **AOS#98 SPECIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT VISION**

The AOS# 98 Special Education Department aims assure students receive reasonably calculated and individualized programming designed to provide a meaningful educational benefit. We will establish a systemic approach to nurturing student strengths while promoting a growth mindset intended to defy perceived limitations. We recognize each student as a unique and capable learner. Our differentiated practices will incorporate effective collaboration between the experts of content (content area teachers) and experts of process (special education staff) resulting in the maximization of student time in the least restrictive environment.

### **OUR COMPASS: COUNTY HEALTH & SAFETY RATING**

At this time all of the counties in Maine have received a rating of green. We anticipate the Covid-19 rating being updated throughout the school year and will consider guidance from the Maine Department of Education and Maine Center for Disease Control regarding the safety rating for Lincoln and Sagadahoc Counties. The rating will dictate how we proceed educationally and requires an ability to adapt with regard to our operational and programmatic procedures. The ratings are defined as follows:

**Red Status:** Suggests the county has a high risk of Covid-19 spread. In-person instruction should not be conducted.

**Yellow Status:** Suggests the county has an elevated risk of Covid-19 spread. Hybrid instructional models should be considered.

**Green Status:** Suggests the county has a relatively low Covid-19 risk. In person instruction can be adopted. Schools in AOS#98 may opt for hybrid instruction if buildings or readiness make adhering to the required Health & Safety Measures for a challenge.

### **2020-2021 SPECIAL EDUCATION RE-ENTRY PROTOCOLS & RUBRIC**

Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, we will offer both remote and in-person learning opportunities. Our remote learning programs will look and run differently than the Spring of 2020. Students participating remotely will engage in a schedule similar to their peers who are attending school in-person. This is often referred to as Synchronous Learning. Our teachers will instruct their students in both environments in order for all students to experience similar educational programming. Daily class attendance will be required and recorded. Grading will be reflective of the current grading structures of the District. IEP progress will continue to be reflected in student progress reports at the time of report cards. Parents /guardians will be afforded opportunities to transition their student(s) from one learning modality to another (example: Student attending remotely wishes to attend in person or vice versa). Due to the nature of student disabilities and the unpredictability of some academic or functional challenges, there may be circumstances that require ongoing monitoring or proposals of change for some of our

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students receiving special education services. The Special Education Department will work with families through the IEP process to ensure students are receiving instruction in their least restrictive environment. Our staff will continue to collaborate with families to effectively problem solve any programming challenges to ensure that student educational needs are appropriately addressed.

### **REMOTE LEARNING VS. HOME SCHOOL INSTRUCTION**

It is important to distinguish the difference between students who are receiving their instruction remotely from students who are formally identified as homeschooled students. There is a significant difference between remote learning practices and homeschooling practices especially with regard to federal obligations to provide special education services. The following descriptions below define the differences and hopefully will prevent any unnecessary misunderstanding as we move forward.

**Home School:** This is a formal process where parents/guardians send a letter of intent to homeschool to the Maine Department of Education (DOE). Once vetted and approved by the State, the DOE typically corresponds with schools to document the approval. Students receiving homeschool instruction will have the right to enroll in regular classes and participate in co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Students with disabilities have the right to receive accommodations necessary to access desired courses or activities. To address the accommodations, the educational team will develop/implement an Individual Service Plan (ISP) when a homeschooled student enrolls in courses/activities. Students no longer maintain IEPs when homeschooling. If your student(s) with a disability participates in homeschool instruction and you wish to pursue accommodations, please contact the Director of Special Services at 633-0599. AOS#98 will continue to maintain/implement all ISP plans currently in place.

**Remote Learning Instruction:** Remote learning instruction is different from homeschooling instruction because the students participating in Remote Learning remain enrolled in school. By maintaining enrollment in our district the same legal special service responsibilities and obligations apply (FAPE) as if students were in the traditional brick and mortar setting. Students learning remotely will maintain their IEP services and accommodations. The key distinction between the IEP and ISP is that the IEP provides for services and the ISP provides for accommodations (access). Should a student who participates in Homeschooling wish to return to school enrollment via remote learning or in person programming, parents/guardians of students with disabilities will need to contact the Special Services Administrative Assistant, Julie Lutkus at Central Office 633-0599. Once students are enrolled, the Special Services Office will schedule an IEP meeting to review the most currently available present levels and develop an appropriate Individualized Education Program.

### **Parent Resources**

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ME Department of Education Framework for Returning to Classroom Instruction  
<https://www.maine.gov/doe/framework>

**Anticipated Process & Procedures**

*(IEP team decisions will be determined on a case by case basis and may warrant deviations)*

	Remote	In-Person / Remote	In-Person / Remote
<b>Communications with Families*</b>  <i>*Mode and frequency will be a mutual agreement.</i>	Weekly Correspondence.	Weekly Correspondence for any student that does not attend in person that week.	Weekly Correspondence for any student that does not attend in person that week.
<b>Individual Education Plans (IEPs)*</b>  <i>*Individualized Remote Learning Plans will be developed for remote learners.</i>	Special Education services will be provided as prescribed by the IEP.	Special Education services will be provided as prescribed by the IEP. Any necessary changes will be informed and determined through the IEP process.	Special Education services will be provided as prescribed by the IEP. Any necessary changes will be informed and determined through the IEP process.
<b>Instruction</b>	All students will attend/participate in a fully remote platform.	Synchronous and Asynchronous Remote Learning options will be available to all students who are not in-person.  On an individual basis, student IEP teams may develop hybrid plans (some in-person, some remote).	Synchronous and Asynchronous Remote Learning options will be available to all students who are not in-person.  On an individual basis, student IEP teams may develop hybrid plans (some in-person, some remote).
<b>IEP Meetings</b>	Will occur remotely via zoom.	Will occur remotely via Zoom. Parents/Guardians who require a meeting in person can make a request. The Special Education Department will work with the IEP team members to accommodate the request.	Will occur remotely via Zoom. Parents/Guardians who require a meeting in person can make a request. The Special Education Department will work with the IEP team members to accommodate the request.
<b>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</b>	PPE not required	<b>Special services staff:</b> will wear masks/face coverings during designated times. Additional PPE may be required for certain staff based on their roles and responsibilities.  <b>Special services students:</b> will be wear masks/face covering during designated times.  Face shields or other alternatives will be	<b>Special services staff:</b> will wear masks/face coverings during designated times. Additional PPE may be required for certain staff based on their roles and responsibilities.  <b>Special services students:</b> will be wear masks/face covering during designated times.  Face shields or other alternatives will be

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		considered for those with medical, behavioral, or unique situations when a mask impacts the ability to meaningfully access the educational program.	considered for those with medical, behavioral, or unique situations when a mask impacts the ability to meaningfully access the educational program.
<b>Transportation</b>	No transportation needed	All families are encouraged to transport their own children to school if possible.  <b>Special Education Transportation:</b> TBD determined by the IEP team. Bus/Van route times may be modified to account for social distancing requirements.	All families are encouraged to transport their own children to school if possible.  <b>Special Education Transportation:</b> TBD determined by the IEP team. Bus/Van route times may be modified to account for social distancing requirements.
<b>Evaluations Referrals and Triennials</b>	Will be conducted remotely via Zoom. Parents/Guardians or representatives from the school may request evaluations to be completed in-person.	Will be conducted in-person. Parents/Guardians or representatives from the school may request evaluations to be completed remotely via Zoom.	Will be conducted in-person. Parents/Guardians or representatives from the school may request evaluations to be completed remotely via Zoom.
<b>Criteria used to support decisions of instructional setting</b>	<p>Level of Academic Skills appropriate to engage in a remote learning model.</p> <p>Level of Executive Functioning Skills appropriate to navigate a remote learning model.</p> <p>Cognition Needs/Level appropriate for a remote learning model.</p> <p>Communication Present Levels appropriate for a remote learning model.</p> <p>Behavior / Social / Emotional levels to meaningfully engage in a remote learning model.</p> <p>Changes in Needs.</p>	<p>Level of Academic Skills appropriate to engage in a hybrid learning model.</p> <p>Level of Executive Functioning Skills appropriate to navigate a hybrid learning model.</p> <p>Cognition Needs/Level appropriate for a hybrid learning model.</p> <p>Communication Present Levels appropriate for a hybrid learning model.</p> <p>Behavior / Social / Emotional levels to meaningfully engage in a hybrid learning model.</p> <p>Changes in Needs.</p> <p>Frequency of physical interventions.</p>	<p>Level of Academic Skills appropriate to engage in the learning model.</p> <p>Level of Executive Functioning Skills appropriate to navigate the learning model.</p> <p>Cognition Needs/Level appropriate for the learning model.</p> <p>Communication Present Levels appropriate for the learning model.</p> <p>Behavior / Social / Emotional levels to meaningfully engage in the learning model.</p> <p>Changes in Needs.</p> <p>Frequency of physical interventions.</p>

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		School environmental accommodations to assure other guidelines of safety.	School environmental accommodations to assure other guidelines of safety.
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