



# HINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Manual for the Provision of Virtual Special Education Services  
During the COVID-19 Outbreak  
*Volume 1***



# HINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Manual for the Provision of Virtual Special Education Services During the COVID-19 Outbreak

### Volume 1



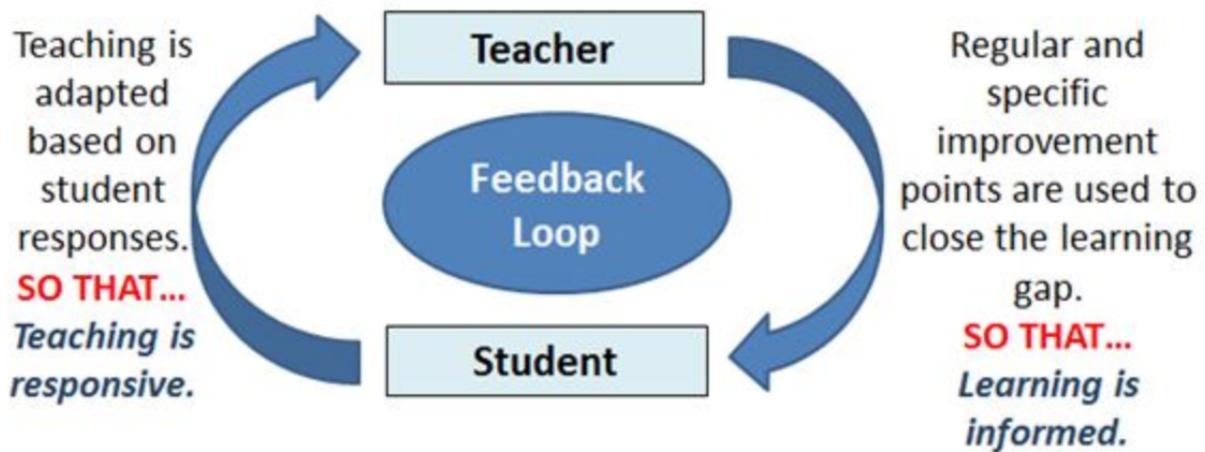
## INTRODUCTION

Due to the unprecedented and lengthy COVID-19 school closing, Hingham Public Schools remain committed to supporting students and families as we navigate this challenging time. The district's first priority remains the health, safety, and well-being of our students, staff, and faculty. In conjunction with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, we are aligning our practices during this time to several guiding principles that will assist us as we plan for remote teaching and learning in the coming weeks. As Commissioner of Education for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Jeffrey Riley, has stated, *“Remote learning cannot replace students’ experiences in school communities with their teachers, administrators, and support staff. We must all pull together--parents and caregivers, students, the community, and our educators and staff--to help students continue their learning over this extended period.”* This Manual for the Provision of Virtual Special Education Services During the COVID-19 Outbreak is intended to be used in conjunction with the Hingham Public Schools Remote Learning Plan.

## CONCEPTUALIZATION OF REMOTE SPECIAL EDUCATION PEDAGOGY

A time of crisis offers an opportunity to work together to find new ways to accomplish something. There are no better problem solvers than those who choose to educate individuals with disabilities. At this time in our lives, whether we want to believe it or not, we have a problem that requires our collective attention. Our task is to find new and creative ways to ensure that our students with disabilities continue to be educated during this global pandemic.

It is quite possible that one of the factors causing us stress in trying to conceptualize how to deliver individualized instruction remotely, is due, largely in part, to our understanding of the learning feedback loop. The learning feedback loop is an essential component of special education pedagogy in that we rely heavily on what we receive from students (e.g. behavioral, verbal, written) in the moment, in order to assess our instruction, modify outcome expectations, and ultimately adjust our practices. When providing asynchronous, remote learning, we need to reconsider our traditional methods of responding to students and offering feedback. Therefore, we must adapt and shift from assessment OF learning to the assessment FOR learning.



According to Vonderwell, Liang, & Alderman (2007), assessment (feedback) is an important aspect of any teaching and learning system. Assessment includes all activities that teachers and students undertake to get information that can be used to alter teaching and learning in order to ensure a positive feedback loop. As such, both the teacher and the student share the ownership and responsibility for assessing their own performance and learning outcomes. This constant evaluation of instructional design, implementation, and the specificity of individualized, accessible learning objectives “can be used to make the feedback loop between instruction and assessment more meaningful” (Mandinach, 2005). For example, when providing remote learning opportunities, asynchronous discussion tools can be used to integrate assessment activities that can help facilitate meaningful learning (Vonderwell, Liang, & Alderman, 2007).

In asynchronous remote teaching and learning activities, authentic teaching and learning moves beyond the transmission model of instruction and endorses the student-as-thinker who engages in learning that extends beyond the textbook and is ‘connected to the world that exists beyond the classroom’ allowing more space to consider student's self-determination, self-monitoring, metacognition, and independent skills (Abrams & Gerber, 2013). In this context, the teacher is often seen as a facilitator, a mentor, or a coach who is tasked with offering clear instruction, while providing feedback and scaffolding. These feedback mechanisms should offer students opportunities to assess their own learning and growth (Vonderwell et al., 2007).

*During this unprecedented school closure, remote learning opportunities will not be able to replicate in-class, in-person instruction.* However, utilizing the feedback loop framework will offer structure and control in our efforts to redesign instruction so that our students can continue to access an education. Consider implementing a modified version of Passerini & Granger’s (2000) conceptual model:

- Phase 1: Analysis: The Teacher analyzes their students’ learning profiles by identifying learning characteristics, specific skills requiring instruction and practice, and any barriers that exist to accessing remote instruction.

- Phase 2: Design: The Teacher determines appropriate learning objectives, medium for delivery of instruction, and methods to engage in a positive feedback loop.
- Phase 3: Evaluation: Teachers respond to students, evaluate the effectiveness of the lesson, and make adjustments as necessary.

### FAPE DURING A TIME OF GLOBAL CRISIS

The United States Department of Education (USED) has stated that during this national emergency school districts must provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students. Providing FAPE during the COVID-19 Outbreak and subsequent school closures means that services will be provided differently, in fact, it is going to require a lot of modifications and will be provided asynchronously.

Schools may not be able to provide all services in the manner they are typically provided pursuant to students' IEPs, nor should teachers attempt to replicate in-person therapy. The provision of FAPE may include, as appropriate, special education and related services provided remotely through resources and supports (such as strategies, projects and packets provided to students matched with regular and ongoing communication from special education team members) and services and instruction (such as asynchronous instruction).

Once school resumes, individual teams will review how the closure impacted the delivery of special education and related services to individual students and convene IEP Team meetings as necessary in order to make an individualized determination as to what compensatory services may be necessary, and to ensure the student receives FAPE prospectively. The Office of Student Services will issue guidelines for this process when the date of return is known.

### PRIVACY RELATED ISSUES INCLUDING DISCLAIMERS

Maintaining the privacy of our students and their families is extremely important and will remain one of our top priorities. Remote instruction can take many forms and does not need to include synchronous, live video to accomplish. At this stage, teachers and related services providers may choose to offer instruction that is pre-recorded for a group of students. We are asking that families avoid sharing or comparing and/or posting teachers' work on social media. Finally, in this unprecedented time, consent is not a requirement to offer remote learning opportunities and any changes to instructional methodology at this time, does not change the active IEP. See Appendix A for a copy of the notification and guidance for remote learning opportunities.

## PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

### COMMUNICATION

School districts should ensure that an IEP Team member (e.g., classroom teacher, special educator or other service provider) communicates regularly with parents and guardians during the period of school closure. The frequency and type of communication will vary depending on the child's individual needs, the availability of the team member, and the mode of communication utilized. This ongoing communication will help educators and parents/guardians develop a plan for students to receive as much individualized instruction and related services as is feasible through distance learning or other remote learning opportunities. Communication will also promote and sustain important connections between students and their teachers, a source of vital support and stability for students.

### PROVISION OF SERVICE

During this national emergency, schools may not be able to provide all services in the same manner they are typically provided. Many disability-related modifications and services may be effectively provided remotely. These may include, for instance, extensions of time for assignments, videos with accurate captioning, accessible reading materials, and services through asynchronous video modeling.

As stated in the District Remote Learning Plan, remote learning will be our instructional model; nothing can replace the in-person schooling experience and we are not replicating the school day. However, we are obligated to provide students with an appropriately structured educational program. Remote learning is not synonymous with online learning. Remote learning can occur in a multitude of ways, and we must seek a balance between the use of technology and promoting offline learning opportunities for students. Remote learning should occur via a combination of educator-guided learning and student self-directed learning.

Whether a student is entitled to receive compensatory services because of the school's closure is an individualized determination to be made by the IEP team upon returning to school. Doing everything possible *now* to provide required special education instruction and services in order to prevent substantial regression will be the most effective way for school districts to mitigate the need to provide compensatory services in the future.

## VIRTUAL MEETINGS: TEAM CONSULTS AND IEP PLANNING

According to the DESE, in circumstances where an IEP Team meeting may need to be convened during this time, when IEP teams are not able to meet in person due to health and safety considerations while schools are closed, districts should convene IEP Team meetings telephonically or virtually. You are encouraged to hold meetings that are initiated by families or staff, however, the development of a new IEP does not need to be the outcome. If you choose to engage in a virtual meeting of any kind, please ask parents to complete our Virtual Team Meeting Consent and Release Form (Appendix D). Not all meetings requested need to be IEP meetings. Below, please find some examples of different types of meetings that may meet the needs of teams during this closure. This list is not exhaustive and is not intended to limit meeting requests. It is intended to serve as a means to support effective communication. Parents have been informed that they can request a team meeting through your Team Chair and they will determine meeting type, necessary participants, and organization. Refer to Appendix B for meeting etiquette and Appendix C for meeting norms.

<b>MEETING TYPE 1: Teacher/Parent Conference</b>	
Possible Purpose	Parents and one or two teachers conference regarding a student's engagement in the remote learning process. This meeting can be scheduled by contacting either your child's general education teacher or special education liaison.
Possible Goal	To understand parent concerns and offer some feedback or further direction as necessary.
Possible Outcome	Parents and teachers develop a common understanding of student expectations and access to instruction.
Possible Follow Up	Teachers and parents may not need to meet again until requested; they may agree to meet again at a specified time; they may decide to schedule a Team meeting.
Possible Documentation	Document the communication through an N1 if the student is on an IEP AND document on the District Special Education Documentation Form.

**MEETING TYPE 2: Consultation**

Possible Purpose	Parents and a related service provider (working with the student) conference regarding the student's engagement in the remote learning process. This meeting can be scheduled by directly contacting the direct service provider (e.g. Speech and Language Pathologist).
Possible Goal	To understand parent concerns and offer some feedback or further direction as necessary.
Possible Outcome	Parents and the service provider develop a common understanding of student expectations and access to instruction. The service provider may adjust remote learning objectives following this consultation.
Possible Follow Up	Service providers and parents may not need to meet again until requested; or they may agree to meet again at a specified time; or they may decide to schedule a Team meeting.
Possible Documentation	Document the communication through an N1 AND document on the District Special Education Documentation Form.

**MEETING TYPE 3: Team Planning and Discussion**

Possible Purpose	Parents who would like to start initial discussions regarding transitions and services for next school year can have preliminary discussions. IEPs will not be adjusted, but teams can still plan and make note of any changes that may need to be considered upon our return.
Possible Goal	To begin developing plans for transitions between schools: Pre-K to K, 5-6, 8-9, and from out of district into district.
Possible Outcome	Teams will document these recommendations so that when IEPs can be amended, there will be a foundation of information to refer to.
Possible Follow Up	Teams may not need to meet again until we return to school; they may agree to meet again at a specified time; they may decide to schedule a Team meeting.
Possible Documentation	Team liaison will document potential IEP amendments, an N1 will be written to summarize the meeting, and the liaison will add documentation to the District Special Education Documentation Form.

#### MEETING TYPE 4: Virtual Annual Review Meeting

Possible Purpose	If a previously scheduled annual review meeting was missed due to the school closure, the special education liaison or Team Chair Liaison will initiate communication with parents to see if they would like to proceed with a virtual annual review meeting. All initial and re-evaluation meetings are paused during the closure.
Possible Goal	To follow and maintain IEP timelines.
Possible Outcome	While the current services will not change, the team may discuss potential service changes when we return to school.
Possible Follow Up	The team chairperson (e.g., special education liaison or school psychologist) will follow up with the parents upon the return to school. Another team meeting may or may not be necessary.
Possible Documentation	The team chairperson (e.g., special education teacher or school psychologist) will write an N1 letter documenting the team's discussion. The meeting will also be logged in the District Special Education Documentation Form.

#### WRITING IEPS DURING THIS PROLONGED SCHOOL CLOSURE

During this time of remote learning, IEPs do not need to be amended to reflect the changes in service delivery or methodology for instruction. Teams will need to determine, on an individual basis, if a new IEP should be generated. These decisions should be made thoughtfully as you are not advised to alter services or due dates during this temporary closure. Should you decide to write an IEP, consider the following guidance:

- Current Performance: These are annual statements and must include data from this school year. Please use the most recent data that you have. When writing present levels, collaboration and creativity will be of utmost importance. For example, case managers may need to call upon all IEP Team members for work samples. The Present Level statement may include a statement such as “Current Present Levels as of March 13, 2020 are..”
- Service Delivery: We are not altering services OR service dates due to the COVID-19 closure on students' IEPs. However, the provision of services during this time of closure

will be significantly modified and will not mirror services provided during times of standard operation.

- Determining Extended School Year Services: Students who currently have ESY services on their IEP will continue to be eligible for services due to “stay put” provisions. For those students who have not been made eligible for ESY services, it is too early to determine the nature and scope of regression caused by this extended closure. Please document the team’s discussion regarding any concerns about potential regression in the N1 as well as any parent concerns.
- N1 and Procedural Safeguards: Document all decisions and summary of discussions in an N1 as well as any parent concerns. (All “Forms” generated during this time should be attached to the “Active” IEP in X2). This document should be generated regardless if a new IEP is generated. Also, be sure to document the attendees, discussion, decisions made, and those decisions that were postponed due to school closure (See Appendix -). When you send the IEP invitation page to parents, please include the following link to Procedural Safeguards: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/prb/>

## EVALUATIONS

In person evaluations will not be completed during this time of school closure. All timelines for initial and reevaluation evaluations are suspended and will resume when school is back in session. If a referral for evaluation is received during school closure, please reach out to your school psychologist so that they can track and organize any referrals, however, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, timelines stating ‘*school days*’ will be suspended and resume upon resumption of school. As a result, the Office of Student Services, as well as building teams, will track referral and send a communication to the families identifying the current situation and next steps.

## PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress Reports will not be completed during this school closure, unless otherwise directed by the DESE.

## DOCUMENTATION

Documenting the ways we are ensuring that students with disabilities are provided an opportunity to engage in remote learning is essential for accountability purposes. Documentation should include copies of lesson plans, student work, communication, consultation, and of course N1s. N1s should be used to document any team discussions that include parents.

## PROVISION OF SERVICES

As stated in the District Remote Learning Plan, remote learning will be our instructional model; nothing can replace the in-person schooling experience and we are not replicating the school day,

nor are we replicating service delivery. However, we are obligated to provide students with an appropriately structured educational program. Remote learning is not synonymous with online learning. Remote learning can occur in a multitude of ways, and we must seek a balance between the use of technology and promoting offline learning opportunities for students. Remote learning should occur via a combination of educator-guided learning and student self-directed learning.

<b>LEVEL 1: SUPPORTS AND RESOURCES</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	Establish systematic special education resources, supports, and services to promote continuity of learning.
<b>Service</b>	Provision of strategies, assignments, projects, and packets to students. General education materials with recommended modifications and accommodations. Materials can be offered directly from special educators and related service providers. Consider making choices available to students. Consent is not required and privacy issues are not triggered.
<b>Resources</b>	Lesson Plans, Activity Plans, Active Links, YouTube, Streaming Content, WGBH Partnership, Applications
<b>Communication</b>	Use check-ins with families to discuss special education supports and services, prioritize learning needs, problem solve learning and behavioral issues at home, and customize the daily schedule for students. Faculty (liaisons) should consider holding office hours.
<b>Document</b>	Communication logs, email records, social media records.

<b>LEVEL 2: INSTRUCTION AND SERVICES</b>	
<b>Goals</b>	1) Provide more direct services to students in whole class, small group, or individualized formats. (2) Providing services now is the most effective way to mitigate the need for compensatory services in the future.
<b>Service</b>	Provide as many remote, asynchronous services as possible given the current circumstances. We will make continual improvements to our plan over time.
<b>Resources</b>	You are encouraged to create a Google Classroom with groupings for the students you are servicing. Refer to the examples outlined below and in the District's Remote Learning Plan.

<b>Communication</b>	Offer feedback to students in order to preserve the learning feedback loop.
<b>Documentation</b>	Clinical notes, service logs, communication logs, email archives, archived Google Classroom lessons.

### EXAMPLES OF ASYNCHRONOUS, SPECIALLY DESIGNED INSTRUCTION

*The following examples are to help you conceptualize different ways of delivering asynchronous instruction in conjunction with the HPS Remote Learning Plan. These examples are not intended to limit your creativity.*

<b>Skill Area</b>	<b>Examples of Asynchronous Instruction</b>	<b>Examples of Documentation</b>
Decoding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher records a series of OG/Wilson lesson and posts to Google Classroom</li> <li>- Video modeling</li> <li>- Decoding websites/applications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Google Classroom</li> <li>- Individual Student Log</li> <li>- Emailed lessons/activities</li> <li>- Uploaded recordings of student orally reading passages</li> <li>- Google Forms</li> </ul>
Reading Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre-recorded read aloud</li> <li>- Posted comprehension questions</li> <li>- Reading websites/applications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Google Classroom</li> <li>- Individual Student Log</li> <li>- Emailed lessons/activities</li> <li>- Uploaded student work</li> </ul>
Math Calculation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre-recorded lesson</li> <li>- Video modeling</li> <li>- Post videos from YouTube</li> <li>- Online practice (e.g. Iknowit.com)</li> <li>- Google Form for Practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Google Classroom</li> <li>- Individual Student Log</li> <li>- Emailed lessons/activities</li> <li>- Uploaded student work</li> </ul>
Written Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre-recorded lesson modelling how to write sentences, paragraphs etc...</li> <li>- Video modeling</li> <li>- Post videos from YouTube</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Google Classroom</li> <li>- Individual Student Log</li> <li>- Emailed lessons/activities</li> <li>- Uploaded student work</li> </ul>
Life Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Video Modeling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Catalogue of videos</li> </ul>

### EXAMPLES OF ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

<b>Skill Area</b>	<b>Accommodations</b>	<b>Modifications</b>
-------------------	-----------------------	----------------------

Decoding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Subtitles on videos</li> <li>- Video story read by teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leveled readers</li> </ul>
Reading Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reference sheets with strategies</li> <li>- Picture cues for higher level vocabulary terms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Answer concrete questions</li> <li>- Focus on specific skills targeted in IEP</li> </ul>
Math Calculation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Math reference sheets</li> <li>- Multiplication charts</li> <li>- Manipulatives (pennies, pasta)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Calculators</li> <li>- Customized problems reflective of student ability</li> </ul>
Written Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Graphic organizers</li> <li>- Sentence frames</li> <li>- Word banks</li> <li>- Sentence starters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Text to speech</li> <li>- Word prediction</li> <li>- Reduction in amount of written output</li> <li>- Focus on specific skill targeted in IEP</li> </ul>

APPENDIX A: COPY OF LETTER PROVIDED TO FAMILIES RE: PRIVACY CONCERNS

Dear Special Education Community,

During this period of school closure and the provision of remote, asynchronous learning opportunities, students are expected to participate in these services if possible. Please reach out to us as soon as possible if you anticipate or become aware of any issues with your child accessing the remote opportunities provided by the District.

In accordance with state and federal laws, including the Massachusetts Wiretapping Act and FERPA, parents and students must refrain from recording any and all remote lessons. Exceptions may be made on an individual basis due to special circumstances, and only with the consent of everyone involved. In addition, while parents/ guardians are permitted to observe online instruction in a non-disruptive manner, to the extent that remote learning opportunities provide access to confidential student information, all participants agree, by participating in this remote learning opportunity, to refrain from disseminating any confidential student information about other student participants with any and all third parties. *By participating in the remote learning opportunities, consent to this request is hereby provided.* Similarly, we ask everyone in our school community to recognize that video conferences and other online services will be taking place in the homes of the educators and students who participate in the calls (i.e., Team Meetings), and to be mindful of everyone's right to privacy. Parents/ guardians should take all precautions to safeguard personal or private information that they do not wish to be disclosed.

Cyber-bullying, harassment, discrimination, and abuse of the remote learning process will not be tolerated and may result in suspension from remote learning, as well as additional consequences when school resumes. *By accessing these services, the District recognizes that you and your child consent to access online instruction and agree to fully comply with the requirements herein.* We appreciate your time and attention to this notice.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Suzanne Vinnes  
Director of Student Services

## APPENDIX B: VIRTUAL MEETING ETIQUETTE



- Leave the keyboard alone
- Dress appropriately
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Mute your microphone when you're not talking
- Speak up
- Avoid eating while on video
- Stay seated and stay present
- Avoid looking at your phone
- Be aware of confidentiality
- Do not record the meeting

## APPENDIX C: SUGGESTED MEETING NORMS FOR VIRTUAL MEETINGS

- Agree to and adhere to confidentiality norms
- Refrain from recording or sharing contents of the meeting
- Agree to and adhere to the agenda
- Raise your hand to speak and wait to be called on by the chair of the meeting
- One person speaks at a time
- Listen to and respect all opinions
- Allow for all participants to be heard
- Work toward consensus
- Be respectful of the time allocated for the meeting, and for each person
- Assume good will/best intentions

**APPENDIX D: VIRTUAL TEAM MEETING CONSENT AND RELEASE FORM**

**Virtual Team Meeting Consent and Release Form**

I, the undersigned parent or legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ a minor (hereinafter “the Student”) with an IEP or 504 Plan, do hereby consent to participate in a virtual IEP or 504 Team Meeting using (insert platform to be used here: e.g., Google hangouts, Skype, Zoom, telephone call), during a period of school closure, and thereby waive any and all claims that I may have for procedural violations related to such a meeting. I understand that I have a right to wait for a Team meeting to occur in due course once my child’s school reopens, but am choosing to proceed with a virtual Team Meeting before school reopens instead.

I acknowledge that, due to the school closure, all members of my child’s Team will participate remotely from their homes. Further, some members of my child’s IEP or 504 Team may not be able to participate in the Meeting, including the following Team members:

I understand that, as schools are presently closed and staff members do not have access to the resources of the school building, typical timelines implicated by the IEP and 504 processes will be suspended.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that the IEP/ 504 Plan, as developed, will not be fully implemented until school is back in session. The Team will discuss specifics regarding how to modify the services on the IEP/ 504 Plan during the closure and will agree on an appropriate plan during the Meeting.

I affirm that I have read this Consent and Release Form and that I understand the contents of this Form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX E: EXAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR N1s

*Prior Written Notices must be individualized to document the decision of the IEP or Evaluation Team. However, here are some SAMPLE statements that you can use as appropriate or rewritten to fit each student's unique situation:*

*The IEP/504 meeting was held 100% remotely using Zoom Meeting due to COVID-19 school closure and resulting inability to gather staff and parents in person. Participants included Mrs. Apple Tree (Principal), . . . .*

*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has recommended social distancing to help prevent the potential spread of COVID-19. School buildings are closed to school staff, students, and community. The Hingham Public School District is implementing social distancing procedures per the Governor's office in the best interests of public health and safety which includes holding IEP meetings in a virtual format.*

*The IEP Team has discussed the need for Extended School Year. This decision is being delayed because the length of the closure and its effects on the student's regression/recoupment are not known at this time. An IEP Team meeting will be set with the school reopening to make the ESY determination.*

## REFERENCES

Abrams, S.S. & Gerber, H.R. (2013). Achieving through the Feedback Loop: Videogames, Authentic Assessment, and Meaningful Learning, *English Journal* 103(1), 95–103.

Passerini, K. & Granger, M.J. (2000). A Developmental Model for Distance Learning Using the Internet, *Computers & Education* 34, 1-15.

Vonderwell, S., Liang, X., & Alderman, K. (2007). Asynchronous Discussions and Assessment in Online Learning. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education* 39(3), 309-328.