




**To:** Parents and Guardians of Students with Disabilities, St. Croix School District

**From:** Sheryl Serano-Griffith, District Director of Special Education 

**Date:** April 14, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Special Education Updates Amid COVID-19 School Closure

Post Easter Greetings! I would like to express my gratitude for your hard work and diligence on the front lines along with VIDE Personnel since schools' closure on March 18, 2020. Your resilience and dedication is to be honored.

Last week we were informed that school buildings are closed for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year. However, the Virgin Islands Department of Education continues to work remotely. This memo includes information that you will need going forward. Some of it you may have already received from our District Office, your child's school and/or your service providers. Some information will be new.

### Self-Care

- Please make sure that you and your family are practicing the universal safety precautions of handwashing, social distancing, and staying home; going out only when necessary
- Take care of yourself. Take care of your family.
- Engage in activities that bring you joy within your home.
- Connect with family and friends via the various platforms (FaceTime, social media, phone call, etc.). Encourage your children to do the same with their friends.
- This is a stressful time, if you need someone outside of family and friends to talk with to process your emotions (feelings), for government employees, CIGNA insurance provides an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that gives access to mental health wellness services. Contact CIGNA via [www.mycigna.com](http://www.mycigna.com) OR CIGNA Local STX 340-719-8081; STT 340-714-7386 OR EAP 1-888-371-1125. Also included is an attachment with additional national help lines.

### Student Engagement

- Always have a plan. Routine and normalcy are very important for all children.
- Most teachers and service providers have already established a method of communication for services with you for your child.
- Please keep the lines of communication open with teachers and other service providers.
- Let us know if something is not working so that adjustments can be made.
- Please keep your contact information current. If contacts change, contact Ms. Frampton via phone at 340-626-8615.

### Teleteaching/Teletherapy: What does that look like?

The style and model of service delivery will vary according to the needs of your child. As such, services may not be minute for minute like normal. That is okay. **The most important thing is for us to keep consistent contact with your child and you.**

This is where the IEP statement comes into play: **Services may be direct, indirect, consultative, and/or collaborative. Services may be provided in individual or group sessions.** Service providers will do the following for students:

1. Prep for the student (indirect)—includes packets and/or online platform,
2. Interact with student (direct), and
3. Consult with the parent and/or the general ed teacher(s), related service providers (consultative/collaborative)

4. Service providers can work as a group with families; co-teach/co-treat (eg. Teachers, OT, SLP). This approach may be easier for families with multiple service providers.
5. Paraprofessionals will be following up during the week to reinforce teacher taught lessons.
6. Teachers are being asked to **be mindful of the amount of work that is assigned**. Our goal is to educate and not to overwhelm students and their families. They are to allow enough time for work completion.

Families, we are asking that you maintain **Healthy Boundaries** with teachers and service providers. They are not expected to meet with families after contract hours. It is not healthy for your child or our employees. Remember Self-Care is essential for all of us.

### **IEPs**

- Our federal programs have not granted us special conditions surrounding IEPs, so they will continue to be scheduled for completion.
- Your respective Special Educator will reach out to you with Meeting Notification and support for completion.
- Based on the amount of information that EDC has, some eligibility determination meetings/Staffings may be held as well.

Please be prepared and ready to participate. Unfortunately, we will not be able to complete a large number of evaluations at this time, as direct contact is needed for this process.

### **Districtwide Reminders**

- Student packets are due on **Friday, April 24, 2020**. You can submit pictures, scan and email completed assignments to teachers.
- Look out for information about distribution of student devices, based in the first technology survey.
- A second technology survey will be coming soon. Make sure to inform your child's teacher and school administrator if you child needs tablets and/or internet access.
- Report Cards will be posted in Power School. Contact your child's teacher and school administrator if you do not have access.
- Edmentum is being provided as an online location where parents can access academic information and link up with teachers – Check with your child's teacher or school administrator for more information.

Finally, this global pandemic is a new experience for EVERYONE. We are all in a constant state of change and adjustment. We are here in support of each other. **WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS TOGETHER**. It is the only way.

Please contact your Special Education Teacher or Service Provider via email for immediate assistance. You can also reach me via email at [sheryl.serano@vide.vi](mailto:sheryl.serano@vide.vi). You can also contact the Division of Special Education via cell phone at 340-626-8615. A listing of our District Service Personnel with their emails is attached to this document.

Infinite blessings to each of you and the loved ones you hold dear near and far. Take care of yourselves and each other. Keep hope alive so fear can stay at bay. Thank you for your continued support. Be well.

**CC:** Carlos McGregor, Superintendent, STX  
Carla Bastian, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent, STX  
Renee Charleswell, Ph.D., State Director of Special Education  
Principals and Assistant Principals, STX