

Important Reminders/General Information Concerning COVID-19

March 18, 2020

Good evening,

While it seems like much longer, we are now through day three of Governor Cooper's Executive Order that closed all schools. I am sure for those of you out in the field it has seemed much, much longer. I hope you are pacing yourself, eating and monitoring nutrition, and making some time for self. Even a quick walk while you're on a call can help recharge your battery. We all need to take good care, so we can continue to provide support and guidance to schools, teachers and parents. We may be in our new normal for some time.

This link was shared with me today; I wanted to pass it on to you to share as needed:

<https://www.yourlifeyourvoice.org/pages/tip-99-coping-skills.aspx>

Take good care,

Sherry

Information and Tips:

1. Please close out the window in your browser when not actively in Padlet; many online platforms are being stretched to the max and we have received notifications that at times the platform is not available. By closing the browser, it will reduce the ongoing connection and "free up access".
2. Just a reminder: Supplemental materials are not special education services; but it is an equity issue-if provide for some, must be provided for all. However, compensatory services are not required for supplemental materials because the content should not be instructional material.
3. Please remember, as your LEA is developing plans for instruction, IDEA requirements are still in place. In particular, services being delivered cannot be at a cost to parents. This may include costs for overages of phone data, transportation, etc.
4. The EC Division has received several emails asking for approval of SDI plans for individual districts. We are unable to provide this approval, due to local control and planning determined at the local level. What we have done and will continue to do is provide guidance on policy and procedures that we believe are within the requirements of IDEA, and ways to navigate this most unprecedented situation for delivering special education through our daily update of the FAQ. As a reminder, at the top of the FAQ you will find the date and page number of where the new responses begin. As information has changed, such as the Executive Order on Saturday, we have tried to adjust and provide guidance, based on current status.

Helpful Information and Links:

Today, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced, effective immediately, that it will exercise its enforcement discretion and will waive potential penalties for HIPAA violations against health care providers that serve patients through everyday communications technologies during the COVID-19 nationwide public health emergency.

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This exercise of discretion applies to widely available communications apps, such as FaceTime or Skype, when used in good faith for any telehealth treatment or diagnostic purpose, regardless of whether the telehealth service is directly related to COVID-19. Additional guidance will be forthcoming.

<https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/03/17/ocr-announces-notification-of-enforcement-discretion-for-telehealth-remote-communications-during-the-covid-19.html>