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## Template Communication to Families Regarding Special Education and Related Services During Continuity of Learning due to COVID-19

The template below is intended to assist supervisory unions/supervisory districts and independent schools to communicate with families of students with disabilities about the period of Continuity of Learning, which begins on April 13, 2020.

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Dear Families and Guardians of Students with Disabilities,

Vermont schools have been in a Maintenance of Learning phase during the period of school closure from March 18 through April 10, 2020. The maintenance phase was a transitional period in which regular education services did not continue. Students were not expected to make academic progress during the maintenance phase, but they were provided with supplemental activities and/or materials to prevent a loss of academic skills. Those supplemental materials were optional for families and students to use.

During the maintenance phase, your child's special educators communicated with you to develop a Distance Learning Plan (DLP). That plan serves as an amendment to your child's current Individualized Education Program (IEP). An IEP revision form (Form 5b), a copy of the DLP, and a copy of your rights as the parent of a child with disabilities are included with this letter.

Beginning April 13, 2020, all Vermont schools will move into a phase of continuity of learning. During this phase (which is expected to last until the end of this academic year), schools are responsible for designing learning experiences and supports so that students can make progress.

Each supervisory union/supervisory district (SU/SD) has submitted a Continuity of Learning plan to the Vermont Agency of Education. Our SU/SD's plan describes how we will conduct remote learning for ALL students. The DLP outlines how our SU/SD, to the greatest extent possible, will provide special education and related services unique to your child's needs. Your child's case manager will be in regular contact with you and with all members of your child's team to monitor progress and adjust as necessary. We want to assure you that we will be acting with good faith to provide your child with special education and related services that are reasonable and appropriate for all involved, given the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Your input is highly valued and needed during this time. To help you to support your child's remote learning, the Agency of Education has posted resources for parents on their [Continuity of Learning Information for Parents website](#). At your request, your child's team is also available to provide you with training to better understand your child's educational needs and to acquire skills that will allow you to support the implementation of their DLP.

Prior to and throughout this continuity of learning phase, your child's special educators and related service providers will collect data on your child's levels of performance. They will enter your child's progress toward their goals and objectives onto the IEP in June. When school resumes, your child's IEP team will meet to review that progress and to determine what additional steps (if any) should be taken.

In closing, we want to acknowledge that remote learning cannot replace the in-person school instruction for ALL children. It is our intention, however, to pull together in order to support not just your child's learning, but their wellbeing. We understand that this global health crisis continues to evolve, and we must be flexible in terms of the stressors with which you and your family are coping. Our SU/SD wants to do everything we can to support the health, safety and wellbeing of your child and their family. We want to maintain the connections and relationships you and your child have developed with our school community. All of these things are as important to us as your child's remote learning.

Thank you for partnering with us on your child's DLP and for working with us continuously so that we can provide the best education possible during these unprecedented times. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have.