



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

TO: Nonpublic Special Education Schools
FROM: Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D. *ks*
DATE: March 27, 2020
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Pandemic

The State of Maryland supports a full continuum of special education services for students with disabilities. This continuum is offered through our local public school systems (LSSs) and our nonpublic special education school (NPSS) partners. To support continuity of learning during the COVID-19 State of Emergency, Dr. Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools, in collaboration with LSSs and nonpublic special education schools, has determined that funding for the Nonpublic Tuition Assistance Program (NTAP) will continue through the process outlined below.

Subject to any federal or State action amending these provisions, a commitment to funding nonpublic placements will continue.

- I. The initial school closure period of ten school days: March 16, 2020, through March 27, 2020
 - a. Nonpublic special education schools will be paid 100% of their per diem rate.
 - b. This applies to students approved for the Nonpublic Tuition Assistance Program (NTAP).

- II. The extended school closure period: March 30, 2020, through April 24, 2020.
 - a. Nonpublic special education schools will collaborate with each public-school student's Local School System to amend the Individual Education Program (IEP) in order to provide continuity of learning (specially designed instruction), to the maximum extent possible, in an alternate manner. The MSDE, Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services (DEI/SES) will issue additional guidance to LSSs and nonpublic schools regarding cost sheet and billing practices during this period.
 - b. Nonpublic special education schools will receive a minimum of 85% of their current, approved per diem rate. Nonpublic special education schools shall, to the greatest extent practicable, continue to pay its employees and contractors during the period of any disruptions or closures related to COVID-19.
 - c. In addition, fees for services delivered (other than teacher salaries and fringe benefits) to implement amended IEPs during COVID-19 may be billed, not to exceed 100% of the current, approved per diem rate. Nonpublic special education schools will be asked to certify that they are able to provide services.

- III. Nonpublic special education schools that are not able to serve students, or are only nominally able to serve students, should take advantage of State and federal COVID-19 relief opportunities to offset State/local funding. These opportunities include the Maryland Small Business COVID-19 Emergency Relief Grant Fund and Small Business Administration COVID-19 Disaster Assistance Loans.

IV. This approved billing exception for all nonpublic special education schools is specific and unique to the MSDE COVID-19 response. Standard billing practices will be reinstated when schools return to normal operations under the direction of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

We extend our appreciation to all our educators across Maryland for their commitment and tireless dedication to Maryland's students with disabilities. Questions related to this memo should be directed to Marcella E. Franczkowski, Assistant State Superintendent at marcella.franczkowski@maryland.gov or (410) 767-0238.