SEAP

July 7, 2020

Dear Superintendent, Hoffman:

The Special Education Advisory Panel is tasked with advisement regarding students with disabilities to the Board of Education. The Panel appreciates and respects the effort made on behalf of all Arizona public school students to remain safe while still receiving educational services during this incredibly challenging time dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Panel has met to discuss the consideration and representation of students with disabilities in regard to the reopening of Arizona schools. The following input includes recommendations and requests from the members of SEAP.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

SEAP recommends opening the "Road Map for Reopening Schools" in order to consider revisions to better include students with disabilities. The Panel's suggestions for revisions include the following:

- Ensure more robust and appropriate provision of programming and delivery of online classes to all students with disabilities participating in hybrid and distance-learning platforms
  - o Offer all classes, not just electives
  - o Address all grade levels, not just high school
  - o Differentiation in online offerings must be available for students with disabilities
  - o While accommodations/modifications and services are determined by a student's IEP team, instructional programming must ensure the full implementation of the student's IEP (including but not limited to one-to-one supports, various related services, assistive technology, etc.)
  - o Considerations for additional, safe instructional options for students with disabilities according to his/her IEP and least restrictive environment.
    - Consider & Prioritize in-person resources for delivery of LRE
    - Clarify the difference between instructional time and service time
- Explore creative and innovative options to provide specially designed instruction for students with disabilities who are not well served in remote instruction, i.e. small group instruction, at home instruction (following PEA and CDC guidelines for safety)
  - o Encourage LEAs to create new roles (such as a Parent Liaison or Case Manager) to assist families of students with disabilities to help navigate instructional options, attend IEP meetings, provide training and support to families of SWD during this time
  - o Provide training related and supplemental services to support progress on IEP goals
- Consider increased and improved communication and outreach efforts to families regarding the various enrollment options and models offered by local education agencies
- Consider increased and improved parent training by our State's Parent raining and Information Center to assist families in acquiring a FAPE to address their child's individualized and unique needs
- Flexibility articulated to schools regarding requirements for hygiene and mask protocols

REQUESTS:

- SEAP respectfully requests the allocation of additional funding from the Governor for Special Education staffing necessary to adequately address the needs of students with disabilities during this time (e.g. reduce class sizes, reduce stress and work demand, additional counseling/mental health staff)
- SEAP respectfully requests categorization and inclusion of Teaching staff as essential workers and entitled to benefits under the CARES Act from the Governor
- SEAP respectfully asks that the Department of Education improve access to professional development and training offerings be made available virtually (i.e., Teaching Reading Effectively)
- SEAP respectfully requests that agencies, organizations, and decision-makers seek and include the advisement of SEAP on matters related to students with disabilities

It is our sincere hope and intent to better support all students with disabilities and their families during this challenging time. We respectfully invite the Superintendent to seek further discussion with SEAP regarding this advisement. Thank you for your consideration and willingness to support Arizona students with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Members of the Special Education Advisory Panel