



Hollins, Samantha <samantha.hollins@doe.virginia.gov>

graduation question

Hollins, Samantha <samantha.hollins@doe.virginia.gov>

Wed, May 13, 2020 at 3:30 PM

To: "Strong, Jane" <jestrong@fcps.edu>

Bcc: Patricia Haymes <patricia.haymes@doe.virginia.gov>, Jeffrey Phenicie <jeff.phenicie@doe.virginia.gov>, Marianne Moore <marianne.moore@doe.virginia.gov>, Samantha Hollins <samantha.hollins@doe.virginia.gov>, Sabrina Gross <sabrina.gross@doe.virginia.gov>

Jane,

Thanks for your email and your question. It seems that you guys are trying to navigate that students with disabilities who were not expected to graduate at the end of this year may, in fact, be eligible to earn a standard diploma due to various waivers put in place as a result of the statewide COVID-19 school closure. More specifically, you asked if it would be necessary to hold IEP meetings for these students to change their diploma status.

Like so many other things at this time, the federal and state special education regulations do not contemplate a situation such as this. However, VDOE believes that we should be guided by the concept of informed consent in this instance. In a normal situation, a student would be eligible to graduate or he or she would not. Other flexibility, such as locally awarded verified credit requires voluntary action on the part of the student. To be sure, the ability to graduate with a standard diploma will be positive for most students. However, there may be unintended consequences for some students that they need to understand and take into consideration. For example, if a student graduates without a CTE credential, he or she may have to complete the coursework and take the associated test at their own expense. Other families may not have made arrangements for additional supports for their students upon graduation.

As a result, the VDOE would recommend holding IEP meetings for these students (or alternatively, doing an amendment without a meeting) so that the parent and/or adult student may affirmatively elect whether or not to move forward with graduation. Of course, this would be accompanied by a prior written notice. I hope this information is helpful. Please let me know if you have any other questions or concerns.

-Sam

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