



# DCF and SESP Program Collaboration on Summer ESY and Fall 2020

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# DCF Overview



- 29 Area Offices (AO) spread geographically throughout the state
- Each office has an Area Director (AD) and at least two Area Program Managers (APM's) who report directly to the Area Director
- Each office is broken down into units (intake, adolescent, ongoing, adoption etc..) with usually no more than 5 DCF caseworkers in a unit. Each unit has a supervisor who reports to an APM.
- Each AO office has a Lead Agency embedded which consists of a Family Networks Director, 2-3 Service Coordinators, and an Education Coordinator

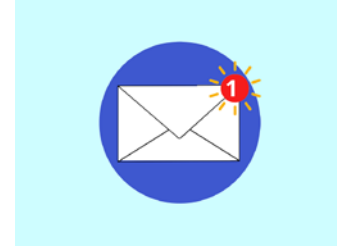


## Who does the SESP work with at DCF?

- The SESP should work with the student's DCF ongoing caseworker and with the office's Education Coordinator
- DCF Caseworkers and Education Coordinators should make every effort to keep SESP's updated on the status of their students cases
- SESP's should be included on all education related correspondence and be asked to participate in best interest discussions (BID's)
- School districts should be reminded by DCF/Education Coordinators to keep SESP's in the loop on education related matters

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# Communication



- Communication can be difficult given the intense caseload that each DCF worker and the complexities of the schedules of all interested parties
- Nevertheless it is expected that collaterals will respond to inquiries by SESP's in a timely manner.
- If the Education Coordinator does not respond after repeated efforts the LEAD Director
- If the DCF caseworker does not respond after repeated efforts contact the DCF worker's supervisor



# Covid 19 Challenges



From March 17th until present Massachusetts schools have been closed presenting numerous challenges for all who are connected with them.

For students in DCF custody these circumstances have been particularly daunting

On April 10th DESE's Educational Stability Team from issued a "Tip Sheet" that included guidance for those dealing with students in foster care during the Covid 19 crisis.



# TIP SHEET TOPICS

- Enrollment
- School of Origin
- Best Interest Determinations
- Connecting with Students in Foster Care

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# Congregate Care

There were many concerns about the ability of DCF students who were in Congregate to engage in remote learning. This triggered both :

SESP Survey

DCF Congregate Care Education Inquiry





# DCF Congregate Care Education Inquiry

ARC/LEAD teams in each of the 29 DCF Area Offices were tasked with accumulating information on their students in Congregate Care

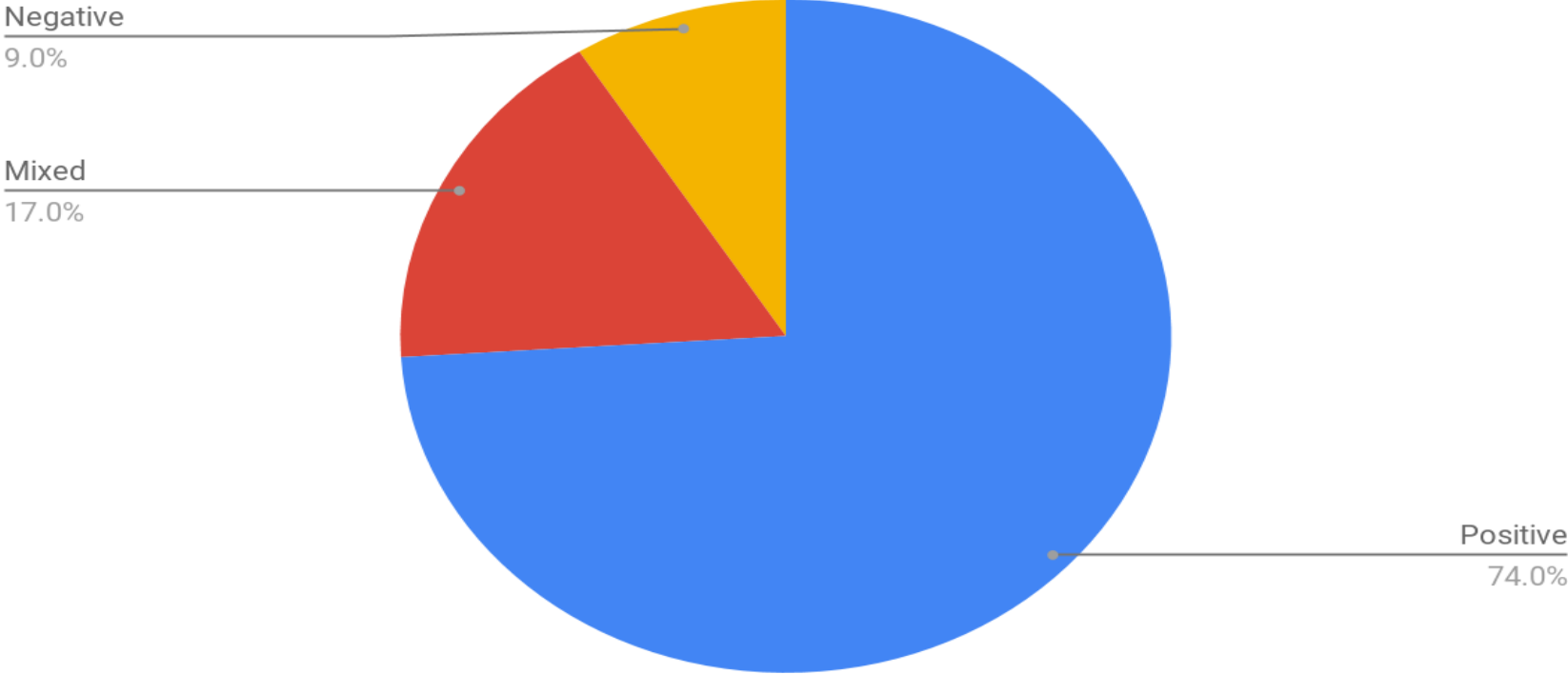
Each team was to utilize their contacts to get feedback on students level of engagement in remote learning

Each team then made an assessment on each student based on whether the feedback was “positive”, “mixed”, or “negative”



Remote Learning Survey Results .....26

out of 29 Area offices reported feedback on 703 students in Congregate Care





# Identified Remote Learning Problems & Issues

- Lack of Technology
- Lack of sufficient staff
- Poor communication with School Districts
- Lack of clarity in regards to assignments, expectations
- Technology Rules & Regulations at Congregate Care Placement
- Lack of motivation from students & school refusal
- Quarantines & Covid 19 outbreaks at placements
- Regression & Failure to make sufficient progress

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# Solutions?

No easy answers!

Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration are all key in trying to meet the needs of our students.

Tangible actions:

Compensatory Services





# DESE GUIDANCE “COMPENSATORY SERVICES”

The term “compensatory services” to mean any services that a student with an IEP requires to make up for the impact on a student of the interruptions caused by temporary school closures and suspension of in-person instruction related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Guidance includes includes key questions, clarification of the particular services that a student might need, information for students who turned 22 during Covid 19, and a step by step process for determining compensatory services

Scheduled to drop mid- July

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# ESY & SUMMER SCHOOL



- ESY services are being provided this summer by districts. Summer School is available on a district to district basis. The majority of ESY services & Summer School will be done remotely.
- DESE issued a guidance on Summer Special Education on June 4th, 2020. The guidance includes includes many safety and health protocols for in school education.
- In class learning for summer school/ESY will adhere to the guidelines of not more than 10 in a class, required facemasks, and students being six feet apart.
- Special Education students who are considered “high priority” will be eligible for in school ESY services



# Who is considered “high priority”?

- Students who receive multiple services during the summer – such as applied behavior analysis; speech, occupational, and/or physical therapies; and academic instruction – so that at least some of those services can be offered in person; and
  - Students who will need more time to learn new procedures and protocols to increase their successful reentry to school in the fall
- ESY & Summer school traditionally begin after July 4th. It is important that all Educational Decision Makers (EDM's) find out the extent to which districts will be offering services to their students.
  - SESP's, Education Coordinators, and DCF caseworkers should work cooperatively to ensure that their clients maximize the services they are entitled to this summer.



# FALL 2020



DESE guidance dropped July 25th and tasked districts to survey parents, conduct a self study and present plans for three options for fall of 2020:

- In person learning with safety requirements
- Hybrid Learning (In person & remote)
- Remote Learning

Districts will submit their 3 plans in August to DESE



# Additional Guidances Forthcoming from DESE

- Transportation
- Extra Curricular Activities
- Athletics
- Process for handling a COVID-19 positive case in the school community
- Remote Learning Resources
- Special Education

\*These DESE guidances are expected in July



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# COMMUNICATION INITIATIVE

“Develop and begin implementing this summer a plan for communicating more intensively with students, families, staff, and the community”.

**DCF & SESP’s need to be included as part of this plan in every district where we have students enrolled!!**





# Key Links

- DESE COVID 19 Information & Resources <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>
- Covid 19 Special Education Frequently Asked Questions <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/sped-faq.docx>
- DESE Educational Stability Team <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/foster/>
- DCF Area offices <https://search.mass.gov/?q=catchment+area&org=massachusetts-department-of-children--families>