

## Dear Friends and Family of Woodsmall Law Group,

As we reopen the office officially, I am struck by a tremendous sense of admiration for the families we serve. Our families are strong, resilient, and persevere in the face of adversity. Never have we as a community had to face so much uncertainty. Yet each and every day we remain certain of a few things. That all children are created equal and that they have a right to be educated and to be given tools to help them thrive and become the best person they can be. This is our responsibility and a fundamental principle of meaningful education.

The COVID pandemic has presented tremendous uncertainty for students and their families. Will schools open in the fall? Will our children have the opportunity to return to physical learning? How can we, as a community, work together to make learning for our children meaningful? All of these questions create an overwhelming sense of uncertainty and powerlessness.

It is important for families to understand that there are several ways to remain empowered and to further your child's progress during this time. The first step forward toward a return to accountable learning for our kids starts with parents, caregivers, and families.

You've had some time to observe your child at home, and while the information is still fresh in your mind, we suggest preparing for the new school year by taking one or more of the following practical and actionable steps forward:

- Check that your student has been receiving his or her offer of FAPE as detailed in the IEP documents. If the IEP team has deviated from the child's FAPE, document when and how.
- Analyze IEP goals and determine present levels of performance during in-home learning. Keep a log of your observations with appropriate detail.
- If you have observed breakout skills or areas of growth, also note these findings for the IEP team to consider.
- Reflect on your child's education prior to the pandemic and remote learning. Identify what was not working and plan for alternative approaches when physical school resumes.
- Schedule an IEP meeting. On that future date, you'll share what you've observed and documented. Use this meeting as an opportunity to regroup the data and accordingly adjust your child's strategies and supports.
- Identify areas of social emotional or counseling based services needed to help your child understand and cope with the current state of matters.

At Woodsmall Law Group, we know that the students we serve demonstrate incredible resilience. Whether schools will resume remote learning or transition into on-campus attendance or a mix of both, our children continue to need support as they grow. Their incredible potential is what motivates us to push for educational outcomes that are meaningful, measurable, and sustainable.

Our offices officially reopened on June 15, 2020. The courts have continued their essential work via distance platforms. Parents, educators, and team members now have the opportunity to participate in meetings online from work or home. The work goes on. Your child has a right to an appropriate education. Let us know how we can support your family!

*Sincerely,*

*Mark Woodsmall, Esq.*