



BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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TO: School Committee

FROM: Julie Kirrane, Director of Finance
Marianne Vines, Director of Special Education

DATE: May 19, 2020

SUBJECT: Tuition payments to Residential OOD schools during the closure

This is an update about tuition payments to out-of-district private schools during the closure. School Business managers and Special Education Directors have been collaborating to raise concerns in an attempt to get additional guidance from the state. So far, DESE has expressed to local districts that they believe all contracted services should be paid in full because remote learning plans are in place. Further OSD, responsible for overseeing and setting rates for special education out-of-district schools, has issued guidance that the approved tuition rate must be paid (or a district is ineligible for circuit breaker).

The state's recommendation is in support of maintaining the integrity of our educational system during this crisis - we agree this is critical. However, there are details that require due diligence.

Marianne and I have spoken extensively about Bedford's local approach with our private school partners, and have consulted with our lawyers. With remote learning plans in place for all of our students, we believe the most significant issue for Bedford is the invoicing of tuition from residential placements. It is difficult to contemplate full payment as we are being directed to do by the state when residential students are in remote learning programs at their homes. Also, some students also have ancillary services attached to the residential placement (1:1 aides).

With guidance from Stoneman Chandler, we have sent letters to residential schools suggesting that we would pay the OSD approved day rate for these students. This is to open the conversation. We are also open to paying the residential rate with a discount (similar to how we handled the transportation contracted providers).

The attached letter has been drafted in collaboration with a number of metro west districts and other school districts across the state. Guidance is requested about whether the School Committee would like to formalize Bedford's request for additional guidance from the state and to sign the attached letter intended for joint signature by Superintendent, School Committee and Town Manager.

