*****Massachusetts Department of***

***Elementary and Secondary Education***

### 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906 Telephone: (781) 338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Jeffrey C. Riley  *Commissioner* |  |

# MEMORANDUM

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **To:** | Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| **From:** | Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner |
| **Date:** | March 20, 2023 |
| **Subject:** | Improved IEP Guidance to Support Students with Disabilities |

This memorandum provides a brief progress report on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s initiative to improve special education services and outcomes for eligible students with disabilities across the Commonwealth through the [Individualized Education Program (IEP) Improvement Project](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/ImproveIEP/default.html). As I wrote in January, the IEP Improvement Project comprises a suite of resources and supports for schools and families, including the following: guidance on student referral, evaluation, and eligibility; updated IEP forms; technical assistance to support implementation of the updated IEP forms; a process guide with detailed instructions on the updated IEP forms; an updated parent’s guide to special education; and a playbook to support collaboration between general and special education teachers.

This month, the Department plans to release its updated IEP forms. These forms have not been updated comprehensively since 2001, and the updated forms reflect input received from various stakeholders during the past several years to make them more current and more responsive to the strengths and needs of students with disabilities.

To support implementation of the new IEP, the Department has developed a full rollout plan which includes providing technical assistance to schools, districts, and their partners in implementing the new form. A vendor has been hired to provide technical assistance for external stakeholders including synchronous and asynchronous training and professional development on the IEP process. It is expected that schools and districts will begin using the new IEP forms between fall 2023 and fall 2024.

Department staff, including Deputy Commissioner Russell Johnston and Director of Special Education Planning and Policy Jamie Camacho, will provide additional information on the IEP Improvement Project and respond to your questions at the March 28, 2023 Board meeting.