

South Orange Maplewood School District
Department of Special Services
March 26, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As outlined in Dr. Taylor's March 25, 2020 communication related to the COVID-19 virus, all schools will remain closed on Monday, March 29, 2020 through April 20, 2020, inclusive of the previously scheduled spring break; therefore, distance learning will continue to be offered to maintain continuity of instruction for students in Grades PreK-12.

Please be assured that our entire team of administrators, teachers, child study team members and related services providers continue to work together to develop plans that will address the diverse needs of our students during this time of interruption to the learning process within the confine of our classroom and school setting. I continue to be inspired by their professionalism and dedication to supporting our students and their families.

Parents and guardians play a key role in supporting their children and you are a critical player in advancing the success of the students we share. While we encourage our families to reach out to the their children's teachers and case managers with any questions or concerns, including K-12 technology related needs, please be assured that school and central office administrators will respond to your questions or inquiries in a timely manner.

The following offers guidance on the delivery of instruction and communication with our families and with our students alike. Staff members will use multiple platforms to engage students in meaningful learning. Dr. Taylor, Superintendent, outlines expectations for teaching and learning in a separate communication to be shared with all District families and staff.

To this end, effective Wednesday, March 29, 2020, the following plan will be instituted:

1. **All** students enrolled in our **PreK Program** across all sites will receive an Individualized Learning Packet (ILP) delivered to their homes by District staff. Manila envelopes are being used and these have the individual student's name and address.

Instructions are explicit and please do direct questions to teachers and administrators. Individualized Learning Packet (ILP), are available in Spanish and French-Creole and our teachers have identified families who will benefit from translated packets. Packets will be delivered on Friday, March 27, 2020 or Monday, March 30, 2020.

Teachers will be checking email a few times a day to answer any questions parents may have.

2. For students who receive instruction in an **Inclusion Grades K-2 setting**, Google Classrooms were created by grade level and you will see the name of the special education teacher assigned to your child. This means that resources and accommodations and/or modifications were created to support the learning while distance learning is in place to the greatest extent possible.

Parents of students in Grades K-2 received information regarding access to Google Classroom platform, where the grade level assignments are posted. If you have any questions, please reach out to your child's teachers immediately. Teachers will be checking their Google Classroom and email a few times a day to answer any questions you or your child may have.

3. Students who receive instruction in a **pull-out resource setting in Grades K-2** will continue to be supported through Google Classroom for which students have log-in information.

Parents of students in Grades K-2 received information regarding access to Google Classroom platform, where the grade level assignments are posted. This means that resources and accommodations and/or modifications were created to support the learning while distance learning is in place to the greatest extent possible. If you have any questions, please reach out to your child's teachers immediately. Teachers will be checking their Google Classroom and email a few times a day to answer any questions you or your child may have.

4. Students who receive instruction in a **self-contained setting in Grades PreK-2** will receive an Individualized Learning Packet (ILP) that can be placed in the folder or binder previously supplied.

On Monday, March 29, 2020, ILPs will be delivered to our students' homes by District staff. Manila envelopes are being used and these have the individual student's name and address.

If you have any questions, please reach out to your child's teachers immediately. Teachers will be checking their Google Classroom and email a few times a day to answer any questions you or your child may have.

5. For students who receive instruction in an **Inclusion Grades 3-12 setting**, Google Classrooms were created by grade level and you will see the name of the special education teacher assigned to your child. This means that resources and accommodations and/or modifications were created to support the learning while distance learning is in place to the greatest extent possible. Teachers will be checking their Google Classroom and email a few times a day to answer any questions students may have.

6. Students who receive instruction in a **self-contained setting in Grades 3-12** will receive an Individualized Learning Packet (ILP) that can be placed in the folder or binder previously supplied.

On Monday, March 29, 2020, ILPs will be delivered to our students' homes by District staff. Manila envelopes are being used and these have the individual student's name and address.

If you have any questions, please reach out to your child's teachers immediately. Teachers will be checking their Google Classroom and email a few times a day to answer any questions you or your child may have.

7. Students who receive instruction in a **pull-out resource setting in Grades 3-12** will continue to be supported through Google Classroom for which students have log-in information. Students have access to Google Classroom platform, where the grade level assignments are posted. This means that resources and accommodations and/or modifications were created to support the learning while distance learning is in place to the greatest extent possible. If you have any questions, please reach out to your child's teachers immediately. Teachers will be checking their Google Classroom and email a few times a day to answer any questions you or your child may have.
8. Students who participate in the **In-School Education Program (ISTEP)** at Maplewood or South Orange Middle School will have an opportunity to consult with program clinicians and academic teachers are available to answer any questions you or your child may have through the use of the telephone or videoconferencing platforms.
9. Students who participate in the **Effective Schools Solution (ESS)** Program at CHS, will continue to receive support through program clinicians and weekly check-in sessions with the student's parents/guardians through the use of telephone or video-conferencing platform. Additionally, therapeutic activities will be shared with students via email during the course of each week.
10. Students who participate in **out-of-district programs** will follow the protocol established by the individual school. Any questions or concerns that may arise must be communicated to your child's case manager. If your child needs a Chromebook to access some of the instruction, please reach out to your case manager or directly to lmorana@somsd.k12.nj.us as soon as possible.

Related Services:

As a result of NJDOE guidance and decisions by NJ Legislature regarding the work of child study team and related services providers under emergency circumstances, the delivery of related services and work by child study team members is being redefined.

As you may have heard, the New Jersey Legislature passed a Bill that allows for the delivery of speech and counseling services through the use of a “telepractice” approach; which is pending Governor Murphy’s signature. This practice of “telepractice” has previously been prohibited in NJ public schools. Occupational and physical therapy services were not explicitly included; therefore, a group of directors of special education composed a letter addressed to Dr. Repollet, Commissioner of NJ DOE, to advocate for the inclusion of these critical services.

Parents/guardians of students whose IEPs call for related services will continue to reach out to individual families to consult and provide support based on a schedule that allows for the use of the telephone or videoconferencing tools such as Google Hangout/Meet.

Upon students’ return to school, occupational, physical and speech-language therapists will determine the extent of compensatory services needed by individual students. Therapists will work with individual families to set up a schedule that is responsive to the needs of our students and their families.

Evidence-Based Reading Instruction:

For students who receive evidence-based reaching instruction in **Grades K-8 setting**, Google Classrooms were created by our teachers. Individual student’s needs will be addressed through a service delivery schedule to be established between the parents/guardians, students and teachers, and which uses Google Hangout/Meet as a communication platform. If you have any questions, please reach out to your child’s teachers immediately. Teachers will be checking their Google Classroom and email a few times a day to answer any questions you or your child may have.

Paraprofessional Services:

Dr. Taylor communicated with the entire school community *“that the safety and well-being of our students, staff and community members continues to be our main priority;”* therefore, paraprofessional services for students in need of a one-to-one paraprofessional are not available during the period of distance learning. If you have any questions about specific assignments, please use email to reach out to your child’s teacher or case manager.

Annual Review Meetings:

Annual reviews and standing IEP meetings are being scheduled via conferencing tools such as Google Hangout/Meet. As you can imagine, a great deal of planning and coordination will be required to engage all required participants to the best extent possible. Case managers will reach out to families to discuss the annual review process for each individual child.

Reevaluation Meetings:

While schools are closed, case managers will continue to engage in data gathering and preparing for the evaluations that will be scheduled to take place immediately upon schools resuming a regular schedule. Case managers will reach out to families to discuss the reevaluation process for each individual child.

Progress Reports – Middle and High School

Progress Reports for students in middle and high school students will be completed at the same time report cards are issued. The reports will reflect feedback on student progress through Mach 13, 2020. Teachers will complete them, case managers will review the reports, and you will receive an electronic version of the progress report. If you have any questions regarding the report, please reach out to your child's teacher and/or case manager.

Thank you for your continued support. If you have any questions, please use email to communicate with us. We will do our best to respond as quickly as possible. Please see attached contact list.

Sincerely,

Laura Morana,

Interim Assistant Superintendent for Special Services

Leroy Johnson

Pre-K Supervisor

Karen Thomany,

K-8 Supervisor

Susan Ellis

K-8 Supervisor

Gerri Colon,

9-12 Supervisor

Special Services Staff Members

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