

South Orange Maplewood School District
Department of Special Services
Emergency Distance Learning Plan Implementation Update
April 15, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope this communication finds you and your family well. The District's Distance Learning Plan has been in place for 17 school days and adjustment to the plan are being made by individual teachers as they plan to meet the individual needs of our students to the greatest extent possible. Clearly, this represents a change for our teachers, students and their families as you make every effort to "fill the irreplaceable role of the classroom teacher students admire or the paraprofessional who is there to lend support for some students."

During this unprecedented time, I thank you for your flexibility and I thank our staff members for their continued commitment to meeting the needs of our students. This is so relevant now more than ever before, particularly around the collective responsibility we share for our students with special needs. Below you will find an outline of the Distance Learning Plan that will continue to be in place until further guidance is provided by Dr. Ronald Taylor, Superintendent:

- ❖ **Technology as an Instructional Tool** - Our students have been using technology tools for instruction and we also recognize that "practice makes perfect." Our students and teachers did not have the opportunity to use the tools in this new distance learning environment, yet our staff continues to be focused on advancing the academic, cognitive and social needs of our students.
- ❖ **Chromebooks** - The District has done an excellent job in ensuring that students have access to technology tools for successful distance learning. If you are aware of a family that is in need of a Chromebook, please communicate this need with your child's case manager or school principal.
- ❖ **Instructional Planning** - Lessons or activities are being presented through Google Classroom and instructional packets are delivered to our students' homes, as requested by individual classroom teachers. Distance learning may look very different for some of our students. Teachers are making use of multiple online platforms, including video-recorded lessons your child may view on the day the video is scheduled or at any time or as frequently as your child may want to review the video, along with follow-up activities and opportunities to communicate with individual teachers.
- ❖ **Sensitivity, Flexibility and Communication** – Ongoing communication must be at the core of the teacher - student – family interaction. Our staff's creativity and knowledge of our student's individual strengths and areas in need of attention will allow for clear expectations for distance learning, timely feedback, virtual check-in times, one-to-one or small group interaction.

❖ **Related Services** - To provide meaningful and relevant services to students in Grades PreK-12, the Department of Special Services will implement a plan that is responsive to the needs of approximately 600 students who receive an array of related services through the implementation of an eclectic approach, as illustrated here:

- **Compensatory Education:**

- Upon students' return to school an IEP meeting will be scheduled. Occupational, physical and speech-language therapists will determine the extent of compensatory services needed by individual students. Regression/Recuperation criteria will be in place to respond to this emerging and unprecedented need.

- **Extended School Year (ESY)**

- The District will consider planning **extended** ESY to provide compensatory education services for students in need of these services. As you can imagine a decision regarding ESY will be made as soon as it is feasible.

- **Counseling as a Related Service**

- Social workers have e-mailed each student's parents (as well as each high school student) offering weekly counseling check-in sessions.
- Social workers have offered telephone or google hangout check-in sessions to their students and consultation check-ins for parents during office hours'.
- Social workers have emailed a list of resources to all parents on their caseload.
- Social workers will use google classroom to offer additional resources and instructional material for students.

- **Occupational, Physical and Speech Language Services**

MODEL 1 - All students eligible for related services will benefit from this model.

- Each therapist has created a Google Classroom per school, which is managed by that school's therapist or behavior specialist. Therapists eagerly they await the opportunity to implement a plan that had been undergoing a comprehensive internal review.
- Each week, a weekly assignment will be posted to address grade level needs:
PreK K-2 3-5 6-8, 9-12
- The assignment includes a link to a Google Site (or possibly Seesaw) where specific therapists collaborate to create a tic-tac-toe board of three columns of categories including 3 rows of activity. See example in chart below.

- Each activity or column may include a video of our therapists performing or demonstrating an activity. Please see SAMPLES on pages 4-5.
- Students will choose their activities from the menu while still covering relevant, discipline specific topics.
- Therapists will respond to questions or comments in their google classroom and make themselves available via appointment during specified office hours.
- Pre-school Program students will have weekly menus and instructions printed and mailed home and will have the opportunity to make appointments during specified office hours for teleconferences. Google accounts have been created and this information is delivered or mailed to all families.

MODEL 2 – Individual Related Services for Students Eligible for Extended School Year (ESY)

- Students whose IEP call for Extended School Year (ESY) services will be contacted directly by therapists to schedule sessions beginning the week of April 20, 2020. Sessions will be scheduled through Google/Hangouts Meet and the sessions may include the student and therapist or student/parent/guardian, or therapist and parent/guardian training.
- Sessions will last 20 minutes and these may include an introduction to resources and follow-up activities at the conclusion of each session.

Thank you for your understanding and flexibility as we launch a program that is responsive to the needs of our students during this time of online learning. Adjustments will be made along the way and your feedback is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Laura

Laura Morana
Interim Assistant Superintendent for Special Services

Cc: Dr. Ronald Taylor, Superintendent
Administrators
Staff

Prior Communication: [March 15 Emergency School Closing \(Special Education\).pdf](#)
[March 26, 2020 Emergency School Closing \(Special Education\).pdf](#)

SAMPLE Distance Learning Physical Therapy Week 1 – K-2 Grade

Choose 1 activity from each column. Due Date: Friday 4/25/2020

Strength/Balance	Coordination/Motor Plan	Visual Motor/Ball skills
<p>Pillow Stand: Have your child stand with their feet shoulder-width apart. Have them keep one foot flat on the ground, the other foot in the center of a pillow. The pillow should be fluffy enough that they are not able to totally compress it. You might also use a rolled up towel. Hold for _____ seconds, then switch feet.</p>	<p>Wall Squats: Have your child stand with their back flat against a wall, their feet shoulder-width apart and 6-12" away from the wall. Help your child to slide their back down the wall and pretend they are sitting in a chair, keeping their shoulders, back and hips in contact with the wall. Ensure your child's knees remain over their toes with their feet flat on the floor. Hold the sitting position for 2-3 seconds, then slowly slide back up to standing. Perform _____ times.</p>	<p>Color Toss: Label laundry baskets with construction paper to match the colors of your balls. Then toss the balls into the matching basket!</p>
<p>High Steps: Lay out objects 1-6" high around the room, possibly toys or stacks of books. Have your child step over these hurdles, exaggerating lifting the leg high into the air to clear the object.</p>	<p>Can Taps: Place a small piece of tape on the floor to be "home base," and a small object just beyond the reach of the child's leg while standing. A can of food works great for a small object. Have your child stand on home base and instruct them to slowly bend one leg while reaching out with the opposite leg to tap the can with their foot, then slowly return to standing. Perform _____ times. a) Progression 1: Have your child stand on a surface approximately 6" high, such as a step stool, phone book, etc. while performing. The extra height will require extra strength and balance to not fall forward. b) Progression 2: Have your child stand on a pillow while performing. The soft surface will further challenge their balance.</p>	<p>Put together a puzzle. There's nothing like a classic puzzle to occupy kids on a rainy day. Take one out from your game stash or encourage them to create their own by coloring an image on paper and cutting it up into tiny pieces.</p>
<p>Bridge: Instruct your child to lift one foot a few inches off the ground, enough for a toy car or stuffed animal to pass under their foot. Tell them they must make a bridge for the toy and not squish it, as you pass the toy under their foot. Gradually pass the toy slower, so they are encouraged to keep their foot off the ground longer. Perform on both feet.</p>	<p>Step Overs: Place 3-5 objects, 6-10" in height each, in a line with approximately 8" between each object. Boxes of cereal, rice, etc. work great for this. Have your child slowly step over each object, taking only one step between each. Taking larger steps while stepping over a tall object encourages the child to practice a single limb stance in a dynamic situation, like the motions required on the stairs. Perform _____ times.</p>	<p>Painter's Tape Car Track: Make a car track using painter's tape on the floor. Pull out your Lego Duplo or wood blocks to make houses and create your own town. Push a toy car on track through the town.</p>

SAMPLE Distance Learning Occupational Therapy Week 1 – K-2 Grade
Choose 1 activity from each column. Due Date: Friday 4/25/2020

Fine Motor	Written Communication	Self-Care
<p>Pencil Grasp Development:</p> <p>Materials: Scissors, Cereal boxes</p> <p>Directions: Hold scissors with thumb in big opening and index/middle finger in smaller opening. Open box fully open, on blank side, draw straight lines and have your child cut on the lines.</p> <p>Arch and Dexterity Development:</p> <p>Materials: Playdough, if you do not have playdough on hand see recipe below.</p> <p>Ingredients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 cups plain flour • 1 cup salt • 1 tbs oil • 1 cup cold water • 2 drops liquid food coloring <p>Directions: Cut small pieces and make snakes or spaghetti by rolling it on a table with your palm of hand. Make meatballs or food for the snake by rolling small balls within the thumb and index/middle finger. If you have eyebrow tweezers you can have a child use them to pick up items with it also promoting grasp or have the child cut playdough with scissors.</p>	<p>Letter Formation: See video to practice group of letters.</p> <p>Letter Sizing: See Instructional Video.</p>	<p>Donning and Zipping Jacket: See Video for Story and demonstration</p> <p>Color Toss: Label laundry baskets with construction paper to match the colors of your balls. Then toss the balls into the matching basket!</p> <p>Put together a puzzle. There's nothing like a classic puzzle to occupy kids on a rainy day. Take one out from your game stash or encourage them to create their own by coloring an image on paper and cutting it up into tiny pieces.</p> <p>Shoe Tying: See video</p>
<p>Fine Motor Strength:</p> <p>-Playing with Legos</p> <p>-</p>	<p>Step Overs: Place 3-5 objects, 6-10" in height each, in a line with approximately 8" between each object. Boxes of cereal, rice, etc. work great for this. Have your child slowly step over each object, taking only one step between each. Taking larger steps while stepping over a tall object encourages the child to practice a single limb stance in a dynamic situation, like the motions required on the stairs. Perform _____ times.</p>	<p>Painter's Tape Car Track: Make a car track using painter's tape on the floor. Pull out your Lego Duplo or wood blocks to make houses and create your own town. Push a toy car on track through the town.</p>