

Director of Pupil Personnel Services Update April 16, 2020

Dear Parents and Community Members,

As we continue forward with remote learning during this time of school closure there are some important announcements that have recently been made regarding Special Education and English as a New Language (ENL)/Bilingual Education. In addition, I would like to communicate to you information and opportunities for learning that are noteworthy regarding our current remote instructional practices for all students.

On April 6, 2020, The Board of Regents adopted emergency regulations to ease the burdens and provide important flexibility for educators, students, professionals and others to address interruptions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. These include provisions for Special Education and English as a New Language (ENL)/Bilingual education and may be found at the following web address:

- <http://www.nysed.gov/news/2020/board-regents-acts-series-emergency-regulations-ease-burdens-educators-students-and>

Regarding Special Education, important provisions refer to the time period to arrange for special education programs and services to be provided to a student with a disability and for arranging an approved non-public school placement. The regulations extend the time period to arrange for special education programs and services to be provided where a school is closed pursuant to an Executive Order issued by the Governor. This is important because in cases where evaluations or triennial reviews are occurring, the evaluative process may (or may not) need to resume when school reopens. At present time, the Committee on Special Education (CSE) may convene remotely via teleconference and also convene again when school reopens for the purpose of addressing the completed evaluations. In addition, screenings for out-of-district placements are ongoing. These screenings, to the greatest extent possible, are being conducted remotely. Schools will be contacting parents regarding their child's screening process.

Regarding English as a New Language (ENL) services, the Emergency Regulations address the ENL identification process. Though they state that days when a school is closed will not count toward the ENL identification process, this process will resume promptly when school reopens. This will include assessment, identification, and parent notification.

As previously announced, support services are continuing in the form of virtual instruction and telepractice as defined and directed by the State Education Department. As appropriate, providers will be using modes of communication that include but are not limited to email, audio/telephone conferencing, and video conferencing.

At this point in time, teachers have posted a number of strategies and tools to support digital learning. They include the following:

- Using "Digital Hand Raise," whereby parent and students can email the teacher questions regarding the content they are studying.

- Tools and supports for learning in Nearpod lessons and ThinkCentral (reteach materials); MyON access for digital books; iReady, which includes MyPath as well as teacher assigned activities; and Khan Academy for modeling skills and strategies such as analyzing text passages.
- Teacher-created templates such as graphic organizers for note-taking and independent reading.
- Reading response choice boards which include creating puzzles, sentence writing, practicing vowels and consonants, visualizing, sequencing, identifying genre, and rainbow writing.

As well, teachers have also suggested resources for exploration, enrichment, and reinforcement. Some examples include:

- Math Playground.com
- Factmonster.com
- Scholastic Story Starters: <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/story-starters/>
- Live author shows by Moe Willems: <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/story-starters/>
- Live Cams for Zoos and Aquariums:
 - San Diego Zoo <https://zoo.sandiegozoo.org/live-cams>
 - Monterey Bay Aquarium <https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/live-cams>
 - Georgia Aquarium <https://www.georgiaaquarium.org/webcam/ocean-voyager/>

As always, be sure to check your child's teacher webpage(s) and the district website daily for updates and important messages. If you have questions about assignments or content, please do not hesitate to email the teacher or provider. Also, I may be contacted at 516-434-2620. This number is checked daily. Thank you, and take care during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Jacob Russum

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