

April 22, 2020

Re: Special Education and Related Service Remote Learning Opportunities During School Closures

Dear Families,

On April 21, 2020, the Governor announced that mandated public health closures for all in-person educational operations for public and private elementary and secondary schools would extend until the end of the school year. Unfortunately, this means that Keefe Technical School will not be able to provide any in-person educational services or evaluations during school closures. We understand that the extended public health closures present complex challenges for all families, particularly those families of students with disabilities. In response to the extended school closure and in line with updated state and federal guidance, Keefe Technical School has developed a remote learning model. The remote learning model aims to include, where appropriate and feasible, remote, educator-led, direct instruction and feedback focused on reinforcing and deepening content knowledge and skills already taught this school year. As part of this model, and to the extent appropriate, Keefe Technical School plans to provide remote, educator-led, specialized instruction in line with students' individualized special education goals and needs also focused on reinforcing previously learned skills.

We understand this is a monumental undertaking for the entire school community and that nothing can replace the in-person schooling experience. However, Keefe Technical School seeks to ensure students receive meaningful and engaging continuous learning opportunities during school closure and ensure students with disabilities are provided with meaningful opportunities to work on IEP goal areas consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of the school community. We appreciate your continued patience and understanding in this process.

Please be advised that in line with state recommendations, Keefe Technical School is not advancing the general education curriculum with overall remote learning opportunities; rather, Keefe Technical School is providing all students with opportunities for educator-led reinforcement and feedback on previously learned skills and knowledge from earlier in the school year. Although feedback will be provided to students to the extent practicable to enrich learning engagement, grading for the third trimester has been adjusted per Dr. Snow's

communication to families on April 4, 2020. During the remainder of the school closure, Keefe Technical School's special education supports and services will focus on providing equal opportunities for students with disabilities. These opportunities will allow all students to engage in reinforcement instruction and feedback. This will also provide opportunities for specialized instruction in current IEP goal areas in an effort to maintain present levels of performance.

Teachers and specialists have posted office hours which can be found on the Keefe Technical School website along with the details of the remote learning program. Special education staff is providing consultation and participating in virtual learning opportunities across the curriculum and running small group virtual learning experiences for enrichment. This is an additional opportunity to demonstrate progress toward IEP goals.

If you have additional questions on accessing resources, please contact your student's liaison or Michael Dolan, Director of Special Education. Liaison contact information can be found on the cover page of all IEP's. Your student's liaison can review your child's specific distance learning plan.

Student's special education and related service providers are determining how to meet each child's individualized needs and will reach out directly to families on how each provider plans to provide remote learning opportunities. In line with state guidance, Keefe Technical School is not required to hold IEP meetings prior to implementing remote special education and related services opportunities. Please be advised that there will be collaboration regarding making individualized changes, as needed, if students require more or less to have the opportunity to maintain skills in individualized areas of need and to access reinforcement curriculum and instruction.

We understand these are not ideal circumstances and hope to continue to collaborate with families in a positive and productive manner with families regarding the provision of remote learning opportunities. Special education staff is happy to connect with you on ideas about ensuring accessible instruction and to ensure materials are available to all students. Teachers and providers are also available for check-ins, trouble-shooting technological problems and answering questions about educational learning opportunity materials and reinforcement assignments.

Additionally, please note the following with regard to IEP meetings and evaluations:

IEP Meetings:

Given the extended closures, Keefe Technical School plans to provide opportunities for IEP Teams to engage in remote IEP meetings when appropriate. Keefe Technical School will reach out to families that the district plans to hold IEP Team meetings with additional details once district processes and procedures have been finalized.

Keefe Technical School will be prioritizing IEP meetings with mandated timelines (e.g. annual reviews). There are no mandated timelines for reconvenes for rejected IEPs or parent-requested

IEP meetings. While Keefe Technical School normally schedules as soon as practicable, these meetings will likely not be scheduled until after school re-opens.

Evaluations:

The vast majority of evaluations require standardized assessments with in-person protocol requirements, or, by their very nature, require an in-person component. Due to the extended school closures, students are unavailable for in-person evaluations. In line with federal guidance, evaluation timelines will not continue to run if students are unavailable and are in-effect paused. The timelines will begin to run again when in-person educational operation restrictions are lifted. As practicable, Teams may reach out to complete some non-in person components of evaluations during school closures (e.g. rating scales, phone interviews).

Thank you for your continued patience, understanding and collaboration during this unprecedented time for our school community.

Sincerely,

Michael Dolan
Director of Special Education