



SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Special Services Department

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Director

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August 14, 2020

Dear Families,

I hope this letter finds you and your family doing well and staying healthy. As we are approaching the beginning of the school year, I know you have many questions in regards to the implementation of special education services and 504 accommodations. During the school closure in the Spring 2020 the District relied on guidance and direction from the CT State Department of Education (CSDE) and the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) to ensure we were meeting our legal obligations under the IDEA and Section 504.

Similarly, in recent weeks the CSDE has provided requirements and guidance to Districts through the ***Adapt, Advance, Achieve*** document which was used to develop the District's Reopening Plan presented at the Board of Education meeting held on July 20th. We recently received additional information and guidance from CSDE and the BSE specific to special education and related services. In anticipation of this information please be assured our staff has been engaging in a number of activities to plan for our students' arrival.

- Reviewing students' IEP services and Section 504 plans for the purposes of planning cohorts and instructional groupings.
- Meetings with EASTConn to discuss transition activities and opportunities for students who receive services through the current Achieve program
- Purchasing PPE for students and staff
- Developing protocols for those students who require explicit instruction in mask wearing and social distancing
- Developing crisis intervention protocols while prioritizing health and safety for students and staff
- Creating a schedule to conduct initial and re-evaluations that were not able to be completed due to the school closure in the spring
- Developing training and professional development for staff on health and safety protocols and service delivery in various models of instruction

Planning students' service delivery has been and will be a priority. We recognize that distance learning presented unique challenges for some students with disabilities and we are committed to working closely with families to discuss both successes and challenges when creating your child's learning plans for either a hybrid or full distance learning model. Each of you will be important partners in planning for your child. For those families who decide to opt into temporary remote learning, we will follow the anticipated guidance from the CSDE regarding the provision of services.

If you had the opportunity to review the District's Reopening Plan or participate in one or both of the parent evenings held on July 22nd or July 23rd, you will see that health and safety remains the priority for all decisions that are made when planning our reopening. For the time being, we will continue to hold PPT and 504 meetings through a virtual format for meeting participants' health and safety. If you have any concerns regarding participating in meetings through a virtual format, please let us know.

I'm hopeful this communication has answered some of your questions, however, I'm sure you have many more. **For that reason, Superintendent Van Tassel and I will be hosting a *parent meeting on Wednesday, August 19th from 6:30 to 7:30 pm for families of students with IEPs or 504 plans. The Zoom link will be shared in a separate communication.*** Please keep in mind that the focus of this parent evening will be to answer general questions. Specific questions relating to your child's program should be directed to Dr. Sharon Goulet (sgoulet@suffield.org), Secondary Special Education Supervisor, Mrs. Helen Donaher (hdonaher@suffield.org), Interim Elementary Special Education Supervisor, or myself (dkelley@suffield.org) individually and outside of this meeting. In the meantime, don't hesitate to reach out to us should you have any questions. In this time of uncertainty, it's more important than ever to maintain open lines of communication and rely on our partnership to get through this difficult time.

I hope you and your family remain healthy and enjoy the remaining weeks of summer vacation.

Sincerely,

Diana Kelley
Director of Special Services
Suffield Public Schools