

PHILIPSBURG-OSCEOLA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Casey B. Marsh
Director of Special Education and Student Services

Dear Parent and/or Guardian,

I certainly hope that this letter finds you and your family well. The past few weeks have been filled with many changes for families, schools, and our community. Most of you have had to alter your family schedules, routines, and daily practices to conform to the mandated closure of schools and businesses and to engage in social distancing recommendations.

As a District, we wanted to take this opportunity to communicate personally with our families who have a child with a disability, as you may have additional questions and be facing unique challenges related to your child's specific needs. These last weeks have been difficult for schools to navigate the many aspects of this mandated closure while continuing to support our families. While the possibility exists that the closure of schools may be extended, please know that teachers and administrators have been working diligently to plan for ways to engage your child in meaningful educational opportunities.

As you may know, based on recent communication from the District, your child's teachers, including special education teachers and related service providers, have been developing activities and resources to share with you and the student. These activities and resources have been developed with the intent of re-establishing connections and extending the learning that has occurred throughout this school year. The information being shared may include both online and offline activities.

We recognize that students with disabilities have unique learning and social-emotional needs, which may prevent them from participating in some activities at home. Special education teachers and related service providers will be available to support you and your child during the closure, providing answers to questions about your child's daily activities. Your child's teacher(s) will be reaching out to you over the next few days to share the best way to contact them for support. We are encouraging all students to participate to the greatest extent possible.

The District is committed to working collaboratively with parents during the COVID-19 global Pandemic to continue to engage our students with disabilities in the educational process. As the District continues to work closely with local, state, and federal officials, adjustments to our plan may be necessary, particularly should the state-mandated school closure be extended. Rest assured that we will maintain an open line of communication with you and alert you to any changes should they arise. If you would like to speak to one of us, do not hesitate to reach out via email. We do appreciate your understanding and flexibility during this unprecedented time in public education and are confident that, working together, we will successfully engage our students while doing our part to keep all students, families, staff, and the community healthy.

The Mission of the Philipsburg-Osceola Area School District is to provide opportunities, resources and support for students to become lifelong learners.

Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) & Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP): Deadlines are in place and require annual review. If your child has an IEP or GIEP, your child's teacher will be contacting you to seek your preference on meeting via email, telephone, or Zoom in place of a face-to-face meeting. We will be glad to schedule a follow up meeting with you when face-to-face meetings are allowed, if you prefer.

Evaluations and Re-evaluations: Re-evaluations for students who already receive special education services are also still required. We plan to maintain timelines to the extent possible in situations in which additional testing and/or observations are not required. For those that require additional testing or observation, we will communicate with you directly about our current inability to complete the evaluation due to the governor's order to not be in school, the need for social distancing, the allowance for only essential employees to report to work, and the inability to complete observations or in-person testing. We will also provide you with a NOREP requesting a temporary suspension of the timeline until we are able to conduct assessments and/or observations. It is our priority to ensure that all students with exceptionalities are educated based on their individual needs and we recognize that procedural timelines and practices enable this to occur. We will keep thorough and accurate records to ensure that all face-to-face meetings that are requested and all testing and observations that are needed occur when we are able. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions you have about this information or any concerns you might have. Please maintain regular and ongoing communication with your child's special education teacher about their support.

Sincerely,



Casey Marsh