

EAST ORANGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
**Division of Operations, Compliance &
Educational Support Services**
Department of Special Education Services
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September 2020

Greetings District Community Members,

To ensure the health and safety of our students and staff members, the East Orange School District will begin the 2020-2021 school year remotely.

It is our goal to provide instructional and related services to our special needs population to the best of our ability given the circumstances. The Department of Special Education Services has worked diligently to develop a plan that can be implemented in home environments with support provided virtually by teachers, instructional support staff members, school nurses and child study team members.

Below, please find an excerpt from the Restart and Recovery Plan for Education that has been submitted to the New Jersey Department of Education.

Child Study Team Services

Child Study Team (CST) Members will develop Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) remotely. Using the EasyIEP platform, team members will compose annual and reevaluation IEPs. With parental consent and participation, team members will conduct conferences virtually using the platform most comfortable for each parent (audio, teleconferences, etc.). Team members will also conduct weekly wellness checks with the students/parents on their caseloads. Each member will maintain a Communication/Activity Log that is submitted for review on weekly basis.

Speech-Language Services

Speech therapists will use a variety of strategies to remotely support students who require speech therapy services. The overarching goal is to decrease the probability of regression. The therapists have received training on the Google Meet platform. The resource will be used to provide direct services virtually on a scheduled basis. Speech therapists will also provide electronic resources, e-books and videos that address vocabulary, pragmatics, and receptive language development. Speech therapists will conduct wellness checks and maintain a Communication/Activity Log that will be submitted for review on a weekly basis.

A team of speech therapists developed Speech Language Home Activities. The list includes Vocabulary, Receptive Language, Pragmatic Language and Articulation best practices for all grade levels. The **Speech Language Home Activities** are posted in the At Home Instructional Access featured on the district's website.

Instructional Services

Under the guidance of the Division of Curriculum Services, Special Education Teachers have developed Google Classrooms for their programs. On a daily basis, teachers will provide lessons and accommodations remotely for all the core subjects: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science. Some teachers are also using work packets to support the remote learning platform. Learning Disability Teacher-Consultants (LDT-Cs) will partner with classroom teachers to reinforce instructional strategies and accommodations in Google Classrooms.

A team of LDT-Cs developed a list of accommodations that can be implemented by parents in the home. The best practices are for grades PreK-12. A list of websites and educational television channels are also included. The **Accommodations** are posted in the At Home Instructional Access featured on the district's website.

Counseling Services

CST Social Workers will use a variety of remote methods to support students who have counseling programs. Social workers will provide therapeutic services via Google Meet and via telephone conferences. The discussions and lessons will address emotional wellness for students, parents and families. All social workers will conduct weekly wellness checks with the students on their caseload. If necessary, social workers will provide crisis management support in collaboration with our local hospitals.

A team of social workers developed a list of social and emotional activities that can be implemented in the home. Topics include social skills development, positive self-esteem, self-regulation, problem solving and self-care. The **Social and Emotional Activities** are posted in the At Home Instructional Access featured on the district's website.

Health Services

School nurses will use a variety of remote methods to support the wellness of our students. Some will develop Google Classrooms, others share health services information via Classroom DoJo. Each will continue to promote universal precautions, good nutrition and a healthy life style on the virtual platforms.

School nurses will conduct wellness checks with students who have known health concerns. Each will maintain a Communication Log of their discussions with families. When necessary, school nurses will make referrals to family physicians to address symptoms of distress.

Special Education Administration will receive updates on the status of COVID-19 from the East Orange Health Officer. The updates will be shared with school nurses who in term share the same with their school communities.

Occupational and Physical Therapy Services

The district contracts occupational and physical therapy services from Pillar Care Continuum (formerly CPNJ). The agency will provide virtual services utilizing the Google and Zoom platforms. Students in need will receive virtual occupational and physical therapy as documented in their IEPs.

The agency has also provided a list of remote exercises that can be implemented in the home. The **Heavy Work List** and **The Motor Planning Activities** are posted in the At Home Instructional Access featured on the district's website.

Communication with the Community

The Department of Special Education Services strives to keep students, parents and families informed during the school closures. On a weekly basis SPED administrators, CST Members, Speech Therapists and School Nurses will disseminate information to parents regarding COVID-19 Updates, the City of East Orange Town Hall Forums, Testing opportunities and food drives.

The department will produce parent workshops customized to the unique needs of the parents of children with special needs. Some workshop topics will be mental health wellness, the classroom within the home, scheduling related services, etc.

Please be informed, the Department of Special Education Services will continue to revisit and revise the plan as necessary to ensure that our students are receiving services to the most appropriate extent possible.

Warm Regards,

Dr. Deborah M. Harvest, Assistant Superintendent of Operations
Ms. Tonya H. Santos, Director of Special Education Services
Ms. Patrice Coleman, Assistant Director of Special Education Services