

Hoosac Valley Regional School District

Office of Special Services

Joshua Dickson, M.S.Ed.
Director of Special Services



Lisa Fortin
Assistant to the Director of Special Services

April 15, 2020

Dear Families,

In light of the extended closure, the Massachusetts Department of Education has issued guidance to all school districts regarding the provision of special education and related services to support and maintain students' current levels of progress as best as possible.

The state discussed two models. Model 1 ensures that student accommodations and modifications are present in enrichment-based learning activities and lessons as designed by the general educator or special education teacher. Model 2 speaks to the provision of specialized instruction and related services remotely.

The Hoosac Valley Regional school district has been implementing enrichment-based learning activities and providing resources (Model 1) since shortly after the closure began. As described in the letter that was mailed home on Monday, April 6th, our special education teachers and related service providers have been collaborating with our general education staff to support students in implementing the district's Digital Learning Plan.

As we work to implement both Model 1 and Model 2 of our digital learning, we will continue to follow guidance by the state, to "make every effort to use creative strategies to provide special education instruction and services to the extent feasible" (DESE, Coronavirus FAQs), focusing on the annual goals and objectives that are outlined in your child's IEP. In order to accomplish this, we have developed a Student Remote Learning Plan (SRLP) for your child to communicate how educational opportunities and services will be delivered to your student during the COVID-19 emergency. Please note the following about the SRLP and the provision of services:

1. Delivery of special education services will look different during this unprecedented period of national and state public health emergency. We may not be able to provide all services in the way they were typically provided when school was on session (i.e. one-to-one service delivery; hands-on physical therapy, hands-on occupational therapy, etc.) and based on various circumstances, your child may not receive the same frequency that is outlined on your child's Service Delivery Grid.
2. The Student Remote Learning Plan is **not** an IEP amendment.

3. As the district continues to develop and improve remote learning systems and opportunities, this learning plan may be modified.
4. When schools reopen, the district will work with families to “make an individualized determination as to whether [compensatory] services are needed for individual students” (DESE, Coronavirus FAQs).

The enclosed SRLP includes the following important information:

- Contact information for your child’s special education team,
- A summary of the accommodations and modifications being addressed in enrichment-based learning activities designed by general or special education teachers, including any supplementary materials or resources for your family to utilize at home,
- A summary of proposed special education services to be provided to your child during the closure, including:
 - How often the service will take place,
 - The school personnel who will be providing the service,
 - What the service will “look like,” and
 - The IEP goal(s) that the service correlates to.

Please know that the needs of your children are very important to us. If you would like to discuss any requested changes to the plan, please contact the Office of Special Services at 413-743-2939. If you would like to opt out of these services please notify us in writing via mail at 191 Church Street, Cheshire, MA 01225 or via email to jdickson@hoosacvalley.org. If we do not receive a response from you by April 17, 2020 we will move forward with implementing the plan.

Additionally, I wanted to provide an update regarding **IEP meetings**. If your child was to have an annual, initial, or re-evaluation meeting schedule to occur during the period of the school closure our Special Education Coordinators will be reaching out over the next two weeks to determine whether you would like to schedule a team meeting for your child or if you would like to waive the meeting requirement for your child given the unique circumstances. Districts are being instructed to write IEPs starting at the date of the Team meeting, written to include services that would be in place if school was fully in session. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office.

Sincerely,

Joshua Dickson, M.S.Ed.
Director of Special Services