

NESHANNOCK TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL EDUCATION CLOSURE PLAN

As educators and students move forward with on-line instruction due to COVID-19, the Neshannock Township School District is making every effort to protect the privacy of personally identifiable information in student's education records, as mandated by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Also, of grave importance is the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, (HIPAA) and maintaining the confidentiality of all. Neshannock Township School District will continue to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services.

The following on-line educational plan has been developed for our students qualifying under IDEA. We will strive to do our best to meet the IEP goals of each individual student.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Neshannock Township School District's regular education teachers will continue to work in collaboration with our special education teachers. Our regular education teachers will have online access to review all students IEP Specially Designed Instruction. Our paraprofessionals will also be supplied with the availability to review IEP Specially Designed Instruction information. The special education teachers have access to all the Google Classrooms and will be monitoring student work completion and providing assistance that meets the Specially Designed Instruction through Google Doc updates. When areas of concern are identified, our paraprofessionals will be contacted by the special education teachers and the student will be contacted via email to gather additional information so course work can be completed with necessary support. Our paraprofessionals will be contacted by the special education teacher and/or the regular education teacher.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ONLINE LEARNING

Our special education staff members will continue to develop schedules and online lessons for each of the students assigned to their special education classroom for coursework as identified on their IEP. The special education teacher created an individual Google Classroom for each one of their students. The teachers will follow the IEP goals, to the best of their ability, through online instruction. They will follow the curriculum and connect websites to reinforce the instruction provided.

The special education teachers have posted a letter/email to provide parents with specific instructions on how to use the Google Platform, Zoom, etc. and other websites. Students were provided a password/code in order to access the Google Classroom and email. The Special Education teacher provided his/her email to the students and parents. They are also in communication with their special education students who are mainstreamed in regular education classes in order to provide academic support, if needed. Parents were also contacted regarding this matter. Also, the special education teacher, regular education teacher, and the paraprofessional are in direct communication with each other in order to support their students. Lessons are continuously posted in the Google Classroom. Attendance is a requirement from the Neshannock Township School and will be taken daily using the Google Forms format. The IEP team will work collaboratively to monitor progress through practices of remote observation. In addition, progress monitoring of IEP goals may not be collected in the same manner they are typically provided. Through online documentation, observation of student work, and student participation, our staff will gather as much student data as possible for progress monitoring.

ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES FOR SPECIALLY DESIGNED INSTRUCTION

To implement the on-line educational platform for our special education students, we have assigned paraprofessional staff members to work within Google Classrooms. In order to maintain consistency, paraprofessionals have been assigned to the same students they were with prior to the closure. The regular education and special education teacher have invited their assigned paraprofessional to join in their Google Classroom. This will serve as additional support for the student when the regular education teacher posts instruction/assignments on their Google Classroom site.

It is imperative ALL students (regular and special education) receive the same assignment. If the regular education teacher has a student(s) in their class in need of a modified instruction/assignment, the regular education teacher will send an individualized email to the student and explain the modifications and/or accommodations as identified in the student IEP, Specially Designed Instruction section. A copy of the email will also be sent to the assigned paraprofessional and special education teacher. If a regular teacher has more than one student in their class receiving the same or similar Specially Designed Instruction, the regular education teacher must send an individual email to each individual student. Neshannock Township School District staff members are aware of the importance of maintaining confidentiality throughout this process. Regular Education and Special Education teachers must log into IEP Writer to review the Specially Designed Instructions for students on their roster.

Any paraprofessional in need of clarification to any instruction/assignment will contact the regular or special education teacher. As previously stated, the IEP collaboratively to monitor progress through practices of remote observation. Progress monitoring of IEP goals may not be collected in the same manner they are typically provided.

CERTIFIED SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

Due to the social distancing restrictions put in place at the state and federal levels, educators/certified school psychologists are unable to have face to face contact with students. Because of this, necessary pieces of the evaluation process, i.e., testing/observations, cannot be completed at this time. For the students whose evaluations/reevaluations were not able to be completed due to the close of school, a letter was mailed to inform the parents. As soon as we receive notice to return to school, parents will be contacted to schedule a date and time to complete testing with their child. Please understand, this extends timelines to which evaluations are completed and ready for review. As much as possible, our staff will continue to gather information from educational records and communication with parents and staff.

SPEECH/LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST

Neshannock Township School Districts speech and language teachers set up Google Classrooms and will be holding educational instruction exercises for the students online. Weekly emails are being sent to each parent and attached are lessons for the student to complete that week. Also, recorded videos on Google Meet will be sent to parents, as well as if the student is in need of a video to view the pathologist demonstrate the skill.

504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT

504 Plans are not a part of special education; so, they are different than IEP's. Students with 504 Plans will continue to have accommodations and services available in the digital platform regarding their academic needs as identified in their individual 504 plan.

MIDWESTERN INTERMEDIATE UNIT IV

Services provided by Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV will be conducted via internet instruction. The occupational and physical therapy staff are working to support the students on their caseload in the best possible way. The therapists have contacted the parents and plan to support the district's method of delivery for instruction; online. The therapists have been trained in Google Classroom to deliver their services for the online component.

The itinerant adaptive physical education teacher will be conducting taped online instructional videos. The Assistive Technology, Hearing Support, and Vision Support professionals have been in contact with our students' parents and have set up online instruction as well.

NESHANNOCK TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICTS STUDENT'S ATTENDING SCHOOL OUTSIDE OF THE DISTRICT

At the Neshannock Township School District, we have twenty-one students who attend alternative schools (6), Life Skills local school (2), residential facilities (3), Vocational and Technical School (6), local schools for behavioral needs (2), Transition Schooling Programs (1) and one receiving Home Instruction(1). These facilities are all either providing online instruction to our students and/or educational packets or tele-instruction.

TRANSITION

Students turning fourteen and older completing the transition survey will complete it online through a Google Document. A transition Google Classroom has been set up to provide activities that cover Post-Secondary Education, Pre-Employment Skills, and Independent Living. The transition coordinator and case managers will work closely with our graduating seniors to ensure they have the documents needed for after graduation regarding post-secondary education or employment. Information needed for agency contacts will also be shared with parents and transition age students. This will be shared through a mailing identifying the summary of performance and as stated in the student transition section of their IEP.

ENRICHMENT

The main approaches to gifted education are enrichment and acceleration. Since all activities, competitions, and programs have been cancelled due to the school closure, Neshannock Township School District will now serve our students online to reach the goals as identified on each student's Gifted Individual Education Program.

Enrichment and acceleration will be reached through Google Classroom and online sites our teachers have identified. Programs for related material in whatever areas our students need, i.e., music, language, logical reasoning, mathematics, additional and more in-depth studies on given subjects, etc. will be done through different approaches online.

The Neshannock Township School District is making every effort to teach online with the highest standards of instruction. It is our goal to provide our students with quality online instruction so they will learn effectively and to the greatest degree during this temporary transition. The educational world is very fortunate that technology has developed to the point it has. It is also very fortunate Neshannock Township School District has the capability to provide this online learning experience. Our students will now have the ability to share in these resources beyond the limits of our physical classrooms. We want equity for all our students; they will now have access to the same tools online; this respectfully, makes for an even playing field for all.