



March 20, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian of our Students with special needs:

During this time of responding to COVID-19/Coronavirus, we want you to know that taking care of our students and families is our primary concern. Our district administrators have met numerous times this week to plan for instruction. Special education lead teachers and related service providers also met to create plans for our students in special education. Teachers have been working diligently to create online learning experiences. We know that your focus is on the immediate health, emotional well-being and health of your children, and we support that focus. We also want to ensure we provide enriching learning suggestions and opportunities during this time. We know our Gators want to continue learning!

All of our phone lines and emails are being monitored daily - even if the employee is working remotely – as our superintendent says, *we are not on vacation!* We want to reassure you that we are focused on seeking innovative solutions to the many instructional, personal and emotional health issues of our students and families. We will strive to make you aware of assistance and communicate our plans.

Current plans:

Weeks 1 and 2 (March 16-27):

- Academic focus is on *enrichment/enhancement activities*. Check campus and teacher webpages. Check the district webpage under "[Announcements](#)". You can also [email](#) your child's teacher(s) or service provider directly.
- **ALL Teachers and Special Programs service providers** are expected to contact their students; this may be via telephone, class dojo, Remind or another messaging app. Please update your phone number and email on Skyward or by calling/emailing your child's campus. Occupational Therapist and Physical Therapist are contacting your student's teachers to ensure they have necessary resources as well as determine how to support the students in their learning.

o If you have not been contacted by Friday at 3pm, please call the Special Programs main office line (281-229-6020) to leave a message. Be sure to leave your child's name, campus, teacher's name and the best number to reach you.

- For students who receive counseling as a direct special education service: Omar Cabo, LPC-I has already begun doing therapy sessions on the phone.
- Social work and Homeless services: Please call Jamie Harbuck (281-229-6643) or JoEllen Allen (281-229-7421) and leave a message. Updated resources will be added under the announcements on the district webpage.
- ARD committee meetings for initial special education placements will occur using either the free ZOOM app, Google Hangout or via conference call. You can find all ARD committee facilitators contact information here: <http://www.dickinsonisd.org/page/sp.programs.team>
- OT/PT service providers will be contacting teachers and some parents. All face-to-face therapy is prohibited.
- Speech focus is on *enrichment/enhancement activities*. All face-to-face therapy is prohibited.
- Dyslexia focus is on *enrichment/enhance activities*. All face-to-face therapy is prohibited.
- Behavior coaches and ABCD teachers are creating enhancement activities and behavior strategies.
- Evaluations that require face-to-face testing, both initials and reevaluations, will not happen while we are not physically in school. Testing will resume when we return to our physical school setting.

Future Plans:

Week 3 and beyond (March 30- end of closure)

- Academic focus: Online instructional resources will be provided by your child's teacher. If a paper instructional packet is needed, please let your teacher know. Special Education teachers who provide inclusion support will assist the teachers by providing accommodations or modifications as needed for individual students.
- Special Education Teachers for students in ECSE (PPCD), SAILS, WAVE, ABCD, SEALS, RISE and TIDES teachers will be sending academic resources and materials electronically or with paper packets (teachers will follow campus guidelines for packet deadlines and distribution).
- Dyslexia - our goal is to offer online instructional sessions as well as assisting with modifications and accommodations.

- ARD committee meetings will be held remotely. Phone calls may come from an unknown or blocked number - please answer.
- Related Services (OT/PT, In Home Training, Counseling) will continue to contact parents and provide packets and/or remote services. Counseling will be provided via phone conference (it is imperative that you answer your phone). All face-to-face therapy is prohibited.
- Behavior coaches and ABCD teachers will be providing social skills activities and videos. They will also be providing additional behavioral strategies that can be used in the home and community setting. Your student's teacher or coach will be contacting you to make sure the students understand the activities and are available to help problem solve any behavior issues you may be having.
- Speech Therapy - Speech therapists are working on ways to provide teletherapy for students that would benefit from this type of service. They are also providing packets with activities that students can do in the home setting. The campus speech therapist will be contacting all parents of students who receive speech therapy to discuss how services or supports will be provided as well as to ensure the students understand the activities. Speech therapists will have office hours and monitor their emails to help problem solve or provide support to you.
- Evaluations that require face-to-face testing, both initials and reevaluations, will not happen while we are not physically in school. Testing will resume when we return to our physical school setting.

Teachers are making contact with their students to check in and determine if there are any needs as well as if you have internet access and a device to access online tools and resources. If you do not have online access, it is important for you to call our main number: 281-229-6020 and let us know.

As we continue to closely monitor COVID-19/Coronavirus developments, please know that we understand how important clear, consistent communication is for our parents and community. Please be sure to update your email and phone numbers in our Skyward system, check our website and Facebook regularly, and please call or email – we are monitoring our phone lines and emails daily.

Thank you for being part of Gator Nation, and we appreciate your patience as we navigate these unique times. We remain committed to our motto, "Whatever the student needs IS our job description."

Sincerely,

Laurie

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Executive Director of Special Programs

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