

April 8, 2020

Rockville Centre UFSD Special Education and Related Service Update #4

Dear Parents,

Warm wishes to you and your families. We are most grateful for your help in implementing remote special education and related services over the last few weeks. Our families have truly risen to the occasion to help our students through this unique period of remote learning. Our gratitude and pride for the work our teachers and providers are doing under these circumstances cannot be overstated! Their professionalism, your support, and everyone's singular focus on helping our students through this challenging period has been awe-inspiring.

By now you all know that our previously scheduled Spring break has been canceled. Please see the information below related to the provision of Special Education services in Rockville Centre during the next ten days as well as updates on State and Federal guidance.

Distance Learning

We understand that many families will be pausing to celebrate religious observances and focus on each other and these traditions over the next ten days.

However, as school districts in New York State will remain open, I am sharing with you the directives provided to special education teachers and related service providers in Rockville Centre regarding remote learning between April 9 and April 17.

- Between April 9 and April 17, special education and related services should be provided as we have done so since the closing of schools. In our weekly meetings, we have discussed the importance of and requirement for scheduled online services which replicate to the extent possible those mandates of our students IEPs. Special education teacher support, and related services must continue without interruption. This includes, academic support, counseling, OT/PT, speech and specialized reading services. It also includes parent training, and consultation, including those provided by outside providers.
- On Thursday and Friday, April 9 and 10, there will be no expectation of face to face interactions or scheduled sessions while families and staff may be participating in religious observances.
- Starting Monday, April 13 through Friday, April 17, please ensure that all services are offered according to schedule, IEP mandates and student needs. Special education teachers should take note of the assignments that have been provided for this week only by general education and content teachers and provide support accordingly. Specialized reading, counseling, speech, OT and PT services should be offered according to the schedule you have established.

CSE Meetings

The previously published information is included for your reference; however, no annual reviews are scheduled during the April 9-April 17.

- As previously announced, in Rockville Centre, all CSE meetings will take place as scheduled. Staff attending the CSE will be utilizing the Google Hangouts Meet App. Parents and anyone attending the CSE that is not a Rockville Centre staff member will have the opportunity to participate in the meeting via telephone, desktop or iPad. Please contact Dr. Noreen Leahy, nleahy@rvcschools.org, Dr. Orly Gadon, ogadon@rvcschools.org or Ms. Elaine Jung, ejung@rvcschools.org if you have any concerns about the conduct of your annual review.
- For those who have not yet had their annual review meeting, an invitation to the meeting will be sent to you, via email, from your building level or Central CSE Chairperson prior to the start of the meeting. This email invitation will offer both an on-line and telephone connection option.
- All documents must be made available, so please contact the psychologist conducting your meeting to ensure you have access to all necessary documentation.

UPDATE: The New York State Board of Regents acted on series of emergency regulations to ease the burdens on educators, students and professionals in the wake of the covid-19 pandemic. Relevant special education updates follows:

- Section 200.20(b)(6) requires preschool providers to make-up missed services within 30 days of the missed session. The proposed amendment will not include days that the school is closed pursuant to an Executive Order of the Governor issued pursuant to a State of emergency for the COVID-19 crisis (Attachment A #30).
- Sections 200.4(d) and 200.4(e)(1) are amended to extend the time period to arrange for special education programs and services to be provided to a student with a disability from 60 school days of receipt of consent to evaluate so that the 60 days will not include any days(s) that such school is closed pursuant to an Executive order issued by the Governor pursuant to a State of emergency for COVID-19.

New York State Assessments

As previously reported, New York State Education Department has suspended the administration of the following state assessments for the 2019-2020 school year:

3-8 State Testing (ELA and Math)
New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)

IMPORTANT UPDATE: As many of you may be aware, since our last correspondence, the New York State Education Department has also suspended the Regents assessments. Please see, below, the information disseminated by Dr. Johnson in his April 8 update regarding this important development.

From District Parent Letter, April 8, 2020:

Students who would have taken one or more Regents examinations during the June 2020 examination period, will be exempted from taking those Regents exams in order to be issued a diploma. To qualify for the exemption, students must meet one of the following eligibility requirements:

- The student is currently enrolled in a course of study culminating in a Regents examination and will have earned credit in such course of study by the end of the 2019-20 school year;*
- The student is currently enrolled in a course of study culminating in a Regents examination and has failed to earn credit by the end of the school year. Such student returns for summer instruction to make up the failed course and earn the course credit and is subsequently granted diploma credit in August 2020; or*
- The student was previously enrolled in the course of study leading to an applicable Regents examination, has achieved course credit, and has not yet passed the associated Regents examination but intended to take the test in June 2020 to achieve a passing score.*

There are a number of graduation credentials for which students in New York State Education Department are eligible. You are encouraged to read the guidance from NYSED which provides that information on their website at:

<http://www.nysed.gov/news/2020/state-education-department-issues-guidance-graduation-and-course-requirement-changes-due>

Please reinforce with your sons and daughters the importance of submitting all required assignments, participate fully in remote learning and work closely with their special education and general education teachers in order to maximize their ability to earn regents course credit for courses which would normally have culminated in a regents exam. The following link to the FAQ document posted on the NYSED website is provided for your information.

<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/coronavirus/nysed-covid-19-regents-grad-req-faq.pdf>

Assistive Technology and Other Tech Support

If you are experiencing any difficulty with student devices provided by the District, which require the attention of our tech department (broken screens, required apps, malfunctioning devices, etc), please contact your special education teacher and he or she will submit a tech help request to address the issue.

As previously stated, we have reached out to our Assistive Technology consultants, Erin Sheehan (Assistive Technology) and Christina Boudin (Communication devices) to ensure continuity in assistive technology support. Dr. Gadon is coordinating the remote AT support, so please reach out to her, ogadon@rvcschools.org if you need tech support from Erin or communication device support from Christina. Erin is also supporting our special education

teachers and related service providers in accessing remote learning platforms and programs to provide face to face online learning support.

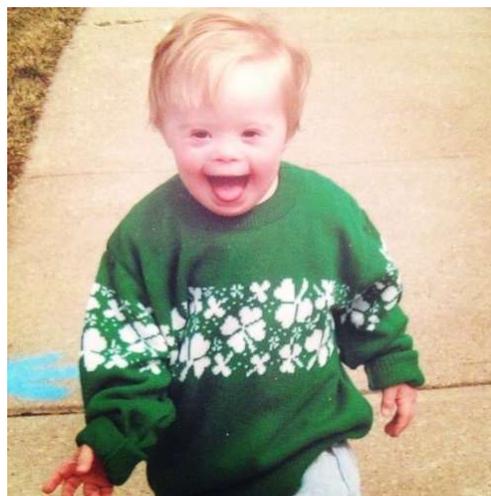
Remotely Celebrating World Down Syndrome Day and Autism Awareness Month

Although we have been closed we cannot forget that March 21 was World Down Syndrome Day and April 2 was Autism Awareness Day.

I was given permission by Liz Campbell to share the photo and beautiful reflection below. Luke is now a student at South Side High School! This sweet picture of Luke as a toddler serves to remind of us the gift our children are to us all! Thank you Liz for providing such beautiful reminders on World Down Syndrome Day!

The Four –Leaf Clover 

Who knows why Down syndrome occurs? It can be compared to what happens in nature to a field of clover. Usually, we see 3 leaves on each clover. Once in a while, however, we find a clover that has an extra leaf– making it a four-leaf clover. There is no obvious explanation– all of the cover plants few in the same soil, were exposed to the same sun and rain, etc. Mother Nature just decided to add an extra leaf to one of the clover in the clover patch. This doesn't make it better or not as good as the other clover. It just makes it different. Mother nature decided to add another chromosome to that baby's cells. It doesn't make the baby better or not as good as the other babies– it just makes him or her different. And if you find one of those babies, you are truly lucky for they are very special babies – who grow in to very special people.



During the month of April, particularly during the week including Autism Awareness Day, we normally celebrate in a variety of ways our inclusive school philosophy and our students. SEP, our teachers and Administrators plan and implement programs, projects, and decorations to

educate and raise awareness. Although we will not be able to do so in the building this year, we should all break out our BOWS and hang them proudly as a demonstration of strength and pride!

Remote learning has not stopped one of our high school special education teachers, Mariann Vogel, who continues to spread the word from home! Her message is more important than ever! We ARE all in this together!



We continue to carefully monitor the impact of this closure on all students, and in particular those with unique learning, behavioral and emotional needs. Please reach out to central office, building administration, teachers and providers if you need to talk, have questions or want to express any concerns. Please see the District website for information on Mental Health and Social Emotional support for your children during this most unique time.

Most importantly, we thank you for all that you are doing to support your children's needs. I have asked our staff to stay in close contact with students and their families and we ask you to stay in close contact with your child's special education teacher. Together we will provide the academic and emotional support our children deserve.

Happy Passover and Happy Easter!

Warm Regards,

Dr. Noreen Leahy

Assistant Superintendent

Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education