



## NORTH EAST SCHOOL DISTRICT

50 EAST DIVISION STREET • NORTH EAST, PENNSYLVANIA 16428  
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Mrs. Brianne Hodges, Special Education Supervisor

Mrs. Nancy Bifulco, Administrative Assistant

April 15, 2020

### **Re: Written Notice regarding implementation of your child's Section 504/Chapter 15 Service Agreement during the COVID-19 Closure**

Dear Parent,

Your child has previously been identified as a “protected handicapped student” within the meaning of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974 (“Section 504”) and Chapter 15 of the Pennsylvania Department of Education regulations (“Chapter 15”). Under Section 504 and Chapter 15, protected handicapped students receive related aids, services and accommodations as outlined in a Section 504/Chapter 15 Services Agreement (“504 Plan”) to allow your child equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefit of the North East School District’s programs without discrimination and to the maximum extent appropriate to your child’s abilities.

As you know, Governor Wolf has closed all school districts in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the period of closure, school districts are required to make good faith efforts to offer a “continuity of education” to students using alternative means. You can review more detailed information about North East School District’s Continuity of Education Plan on the North East School District’s website, at [www.nesd1.org](http://www.nesd1.org). The North East School District initially provided a continuity of education to its students through offering informal enrichment and review activities that reinforced your child’s prior learning. The North East School District has now transitioned to offering planned instruction of new concepts and skills aligned to standards – although that instruction necessarily will be offered through a variety of modalities such as online/digital learning opportunities offered through Google Classroom and/or paper materials sent home to students if previously arranged with the family - that are different than the traditional classroom setting.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with written notice of why and how the North East School District’s implementation of your child’s 504 Plan will necessarily be changing in the temporary period of time the North East School District remains closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please understand, the North East School District is not proposing to revise your child’s current Section 504 Plan. That Section 504 Plan remains in effect and the North East School District will resume the implementation of your child’s 504 Plan when schools re-open. Any interim changes to the delivery of your child’s Section 504 Plan shall remain in effect only during the period of emergency school closure.

You may be contacted during the closure period to participate in a virtual or telephonic Section 504 Plan revision meeting. This would be a standard (non-COVID-19 related) Section 504 Plan meeting. The purpose of this Section 504 Plan meeting is not to discuss this interim gifted services implementation plan but will focus on what programming will be in place for your child during normal operations when school reopens.

The below education plan takes into consideration the specific type of aides and accommodations that are offered in your child’s current 504 Plan in conjunction with the current limitations on normal school operations resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, pending government orders and mandates as of the date of this notice and health and safety concerns.

- Your child's teacher/s will have access to your child's Section 504 plan during the closure period and will incorporate the relevant accommodations into the distance learning resources to the greatest extent possible and appropriate under these circumstances.
- Your child's teachers may utilize various types of technology platforms such as Google Hangouts and Zoom to work with your child to implement accommodations outlined in your child's Section 504 Plan, when appropriate and available.
- Teachers will support and/or may provide instruction via live or recorded mini lessons through Google Classroom or Hangouts or Zoom in accordance with your child's 504 plan. Students without access to technology will be provided technology by the district or can make special arrangements with their building principals for alternative assignments.
- Your child's teachers may have (email, telephone or video) office hours available for students to access at specific times. You will be notified how to access your child's teacher/s for office hour support if available.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's ability to access the educational enrichment resources and instruction being made available to him/her and/or the North East School District's implementation of the relevant components of your child's Section 504 Plan during the execution of the North East School District's Continuity of Education Plan, please communicate those questions or concerns to your child's Section 504 case manager. The North East School District will make all reasonable efforts to work with you to address your issues or concerns during this challenging time.

Once school resumes, your child's Section 504 team will be convened if necessary to analyze the consequences, if any, the district-wide closure had on your child's ability to access the education services offered throughout the closure period and to determine whether any additional education services are necessary to adequately address those consequences.

Sincerely,



Brianne Hodges

Supervisor of Special Education

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"The Mission of the North East School District is to challenge, empower, and engage all students to develop and achieve personal and career aspirations, to pursue lifelong learning, and to be responsible and accountable citizens in a dynamic world."