



NORTH EAST SCHOOL DISTRICT

50 EAST DIVISION STREET • NORTH EAST, PENNSYLVANIA 16428
TELEPHONE (814) 725-8671 • FAX (814) 725-9380

Mrs. Brianne Hodges, Special Education Supervisor

Mrs. Nancy Bifulco, Administrative Assistant

April 15, 2020

Re: Written Notice regarding implementation of your child's Gifted Individualized Education Program during the COVID-19 Closure

Dear Parent,

Your child has previously been identified as a child eligible to receive “gifted education services” pursuant to Chapter 16 of the Pennsylvania Department of Education regulations (“Chapter 16”). Under Chapter 16, gifted students are entitled to receive specially designed instruction and support services which are delivered to them through Gifted Individualized Education Plans (“GIEPs”).

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. 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 - 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 delivery of gifted education services to your child 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 GIEP. That GIEP remains in effect and the North East School District will resume the implementation of your child’s GIEP when schools re-open. Any interim changes to the delivery of your child’s GIEP 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 annual GIEP revision meeting. This would be a standard (non-COVID-19 related) GIEP meeting. The purpose of this annual GIEP 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 gifted education plan takes into consideration the specific type of programming that is offered in your child's current GIEP 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 gifted education team, along with their regular education teachers, will work collaboratively to implement the specially designed instruction outlined in your child's GIEP to the greatest extent possible and appropriate under these circumstances utilizing various types of technology platforms including Google Hangouts and Zoom to work with your child to implement your child's GIEP, when appropriate and available.
- Teachers will support and/or provide instruction via live or recorded mini lessons through Google Hangouts or Zoom as appropriate.
- Your child's teacher and/or counselor may have office hours available for students to communicate with and/or ask questions. These arrangements will be made available by the individual teachers/counselors and communicated to the students.

The gifted education services described above will be offered in addition to any virtual or distance regular education enrichment materials and/or course work in subjects in which your child participates in the general curriculum per his/her current GIEP.

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 delivery of gifted education services to your child during the implementation of the North East School District's Continuity of Education Plan, please communicate those questions or concerns to your child's gifted education teacher. 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 GIEP team will be convened to analyze the consequences the district-wide closure had on your child and to determine whether any additional education services are necessary to adequately address those consequences.

Sincerely,



Brianne Hodges
Supervisor of Special Education

2158349.v1