

**POUGHKEEPSIE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Office of Family and Student Support Services**  
55 College Avenue, Poughkeepsie, N.Y. 12603 (845) 437-3473 FAX (845) 437-3477

*We are champions of children who inspire and nurture the whole child by providing innovative, high-quality educational opportunities that prepare all students to embark on individual paths of success in a globally diverse community.*

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April, 2020

Dear Families:

I hope this letter finds you and your family well during this challenging time. Below, please see excerpts from a NYS Education Department Memo regarding Provision of Services to Students with Disabilities during Statewide School Closures Due to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak in New York State dated March 27, 2020 and information about Special Services.

“The NYS Education Department (NYSED) recognizes the exceptional and unprecedented challenges that students, their families, and school communities are facing right now. School districts across the State are working tirelessly to provide continuity and support to address the special needs of students with disabilities including English Language Learners with disabilities.”

**Program and Services:**

“School districts must ensure that, *to the greatest extent possible*, each student with a disability can be provided the special education and related services identified in the student’s individualized education program (IEP). However, FAPE (free and appropriate public education) may be provided consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing special education and related services to students. ***During this emergency, schools may not be able to provide all services in the same manner they are typically provided.***”

“The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) encourages schools and parents to collaborate creatively to continue to meet the needs of students with disabilities and consider practices such as distance instruction, teletherapy and tele-intervention, meetings held on digital platforms, secure online options for data tracking, and documentation. Additionally, that guidance indicated the provision of FAPE may include, as appropriate, special education and related services provided through distance instruction provided virtually, online, or telephonically.”

The Poughkeepsie City School District is developing distance learning resources to assist students and parents in anticipation of moving into an online distance learning environment as a way to strengthen PCSD instructional delivery to children.

Please be mindful of confidentiality and remind your child to be respectful of other student’s privacy rights when logging in to their online accounts. By virtue of allowing your child to log in to a Google Classroom or virtual session, you are providing consent and granting permission for your child to participate in tele-practice. If you do not want your child to participate in virtual / online or tele-practice, please contact your child’s teacher or provider.

**CSE/CPSE and 504 Committee Meetings:**

According to the NYS Education Department, ***The Committee on Special Education (CSE), Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) and the 504 Committees are not required to meet in person*** while schools are closed. The Poughkeepsie City School District will be holding their CSE, CPSE and 504 meetings virtually. A school staff member will contact you with your conference call phone number and PIN number to join the meeting. Staff will call from a secured number so please answer unknown/blocked numbers.

**Individual Education Plans (IEPs):**

“During the time period the school district is closed pursuant to NYS Governor Executive Order, ***school districts are not required to amend students’ IEPs*** if continuing the provision of related services via telepractice is part of a school closure recommendation.”

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**Evaluations and Reevaluations:**

“Evaluations and reevaluations, including bilingual evaluations that do not require face-to-face assessments or observations may take place while schools are closed, if the parent consents. *If an evaluation of a student with a disability requires a face-to-face meeting or observation, the evaluation would need to be delayed until school reopens.* A reevaluation may be conducted by reviewing existing evaluation data. This review may occur without a meeting and without obtaining parental consent, unless it is determined that additional assessments are needed.”

**Support and Services for All Students & Families:**

The Poughkeepsie City School District recognizes this is an incredibly challenging time for all students and families. Please visit our Coronavirus resource Web Page for information to include tips and activities to manage stress and stay healthy. The site includes talking points on how to speak with your child about this pandemic and the importance of social distancing as well as other health information.

The Poughkeepsie City School District’s website also provides information about the Free breakfast and lunch food pick up sites. There are currently ten (10) locations throughout the city of Poughkeepsie. You can also access At-Home Learning Resources through the district website. These are provided to support student learning during the school closure period.

Sincerely,

*Charlotte Mennona*

Charlotte Mennona  
Assistant Superintendent for Family & Student Support Services