



**GLOUCESTER CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL SERVICES**

May 12th, 2020

Dear Families,

The purpose of this letter is to provide the most current information as we continue to navigate COVID-19 school closures in regards to Special Education and related services. As stated previously, our goal through this extraordinary event is to act in accordance with the guidance established by the U.S. Department of Education which states; "To the greatest extent possible students with disabilities will be provided the special education and related services in their IEP." Our dedicated building administrators, teachers, therapists, case managers and paraprofessionals continue to provide accessible and equitable opportunities within our remote learning platforms.

Since mid-March, the CST has successfully conducted over 300 virtual meetings. However, our CST team continues to face challenges of conducting evaluations during this time period and we will continue to delay necessary evaluations until Governor Murphy relaxes social distance requirements that are preventing us from administering in-person evaluations. The Special Services department is giving full effort to ensure we are able to complete evaluations in the most efficient and timely manner once restrictions are lifted.

For the past several weeks, the Department of Special Services has been providing speech & language therapy, behavioral consultation and counseling services through a virtual platform, as it pertains to your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan. We are expanding this platform to provide Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy. Please note, when deciding to give consent to allow your child to participate in these services, you are acknowledging that these services will be provided remotely and that no Gloucester City School District staff member will be physically present with your child. Moreover, the frequency and duration of services may be modified based on this delivery of service and potential limitations of a virtual platform. The providers will continue to support maintenance of IEP goals and objectives with online materials and provide consultation. Upon return to school, compensatory services, if required, will be in accordance with the USDOE and NJDOE evolving guidance.

Parents and guardians please complete the [Speech & Language/Counseling Consent Form](#) and/or [OT/PT Related Services Consent Form](#) .Once we receive your consent our Case Managers and/or therapist will reach out to you with detailed information. For the more information please visit the [COVID-19 GCSD website tab](#).

Stay Safe and as always GO Lions!

Eliza A. Rawley M.A., LDT-C

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