

March 31, 2020

Afton families,

I hope this letter finds you and your family well and safe during this time of uncertainty. It certainly is a difficult time for all. My purpose in writing to you is to provide a few updates regarding **Special Education** services and requirements during the COVID-19 outbreak.

- School districts must provide a **free and appropriate public education (FAPE)** consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students.
 - FAPE may include, as appropriate, special education and related services provided through distance instruction (virtually, online, telephonically, or through hard copies of materials). Although federal law requires distance instruction to be accessible to students with disabilities, it does not mandate specific methodologies.
 - Where technology itself imposes a barrier to access or where educational materials simply are not available in an accessible format, educators may still meet their legal obligations by providing or offering children with disabilities equally effective alternate access to the curriculum or services provided to other students. Our special education teachers are working diligently to establish plans to maintain consistency in our programs and services.
- **Committees on Special Education (CSE) and Preschool Special Education (CPSE) are not required to meet in person, while schools are closed.** If the Afton Central School District is closed beyond April 15th, annual and reevaluation meetings will take place **via Zoom phone conference**. There will be a toll-free number or meeting ID sent to parents/guardians wanting to participate this way.
- **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.** However, upon the discretion of the CSE, a reevaluation may be conducted by reviewing existing evaluation data. This is called a summary review or record review.
- Special education teachers and service providers at the Afton Central School District **will complete quarterly progress notes by the expected due dates.** You will be informed of your child's progress in a timely fashion.

If you have questions, please contact the office of special education via the following emails:

Kellie Pope: kpope@aftoncsd.org (secretary)

Pamela Haynes: phaynes@aftoncsd.org (clerk)

Jen Karnyski: jkarnyski@aftoncsd.org (School Psychologist)

Tracy Caezza: tcaezza@aftoncsd.org (Director of Special Education)

Thank you,

Tracy Caezza