



Griswold Public Schools

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Sean P. McKenna, Superintendent
Alisha Stripling, Business Manager

Christopher C. Champlin, Director, Special Education & Pupil Services

August 19, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians of students **eligible for Special Education and Related Services:**

It is my sincere hope that this correspondence finds all of you doing well and that you've been able to enjoy the summer months despite the unprecedented times we continue to navigate through in response to COVID-19.

We have been busy preparing for the reopening of school, working collaboratively throughout the summer with state and local agencies to assist with the development of Griswold's reopening plan which will continue to be updated regularly in accordance with guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Uncas Health District, and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) via the "Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together" document with its accompanying addenda.

As previously stated by Superintendent McKenna, Griswold Public Schools will open to students on Wednesday September 2, 2020, under the hybrid model as outlined in the district reopening plan. This means that Griswold students will attend school following the hybrid plan as developed by each building. For specific questions regarding your students' school schedule please contact the school that they attend directly.

How will IEP's be implemented?

Teachers report to work on Monday August 24, 2020. Following our district special education meeting teachers will begin to review the IEP of every special education student. Due to the public health mandates, schools may not be able to provide all services in the same manner as they would under normal health conditions. School districts are allowed flexibility in determining how these services can be provided including but not limited to the use of technology, tele-therapy, or remote instruction.

Since the implementation of special education services will be different under the hybrid model we must document how FAPE will be delivered to each student, and then provide that information to you along with written notification. The CSDE has developed **The Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan** for districts to document the delivery of special education and related services that may be affected by the school district's response to the pandemic. The Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan must be used to **describe any differences in the delivery of IEP services and will serve as the required notice to parents. A Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan will be needed only for those students whose IEP services will be delivered differently than the current IEP indicates.** This will be explained and reviewed with you when you are contacted by your students case manager.

As case managers and special education teams review the IEPs for each student upon their return to school next week, families will be contacted to review the individual plan for each student. Families will be contacted by phone and the Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan will be provided through email, or postal mail at parent request. The Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan will serve as the students individual special education plan for as long as the district is operating under the hybrid model. Should the district shift to full remote learning revisions to these plans will be necessary. **It is important to note that the development of the Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan is not a PPT, this is simply notification to you, the parent, about how IEP services will be provided to your student under our current operating conditions.**

Planning and Placement Team Meetings

As PPTs convene throughout the school year, teams will develop IEPs that provide FAPE as though the student will be attending school full time, in-person under normal health conditions. That being said, conditions may change throughout the school year, so PPTs will attempt to develop annual goals and short-term objectives in such a manner that the goals and objectives can be addressed in each of the three instructional delivery models. PPT meetings will be held virtually, through video conference (google meet) or conference call. In the event the school district cannot secure the participation of the family after multiple documented attempts, PPT meetings may be held without the parents in attendance.

Temporarily Opting Into Voluntary Remote Learning

The CSDE's framework for reopening schools during the 2020–21 school year requires school districts to provide ongoing support to families and students who temporarily opt into voluntary remote learning while other students attend either Full In-School or Hybrid Learning. In order for a school district to provide a student with FAPE and implement the student's IEP as designed, special education and related services are **typically programmed for in-person access**. This method of instructional delivery generally affords the student with the most equitable educational experience in the LRE, and families are strongly encouraged to consider the importance of sending their children to school to receive special education and related services when feasible and supported by public health data. State and federal laws do not address the provision of special education services via remote learning as a matter of choice, which constitutes a different circumstance than a state or local public health mandate, individual medical necessity, a determination made by a PPT, or homeschooling.

School districts will make every effort to provide a comprehensive remote learning experience, while also making sure parents are aware of any limitations that apply. If you have opted into voluntary remote learning you will receive a separate letter from me that notes the limitations of this instructional approach. During voluntary remote learning the IEP will be developed as if the student is participating in full time in-school learning and if needed a Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan will be created to appropriately illustrate the special education and related services the school district is prepared to deliver under the hybrid model. The IEP and the corresponding Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan represent and fulfill the school district's obligation to offer FAPE to the student if the family has made this choice despite the school district's intention to offer in-school education to that student.

Important Takeaways

- Griswold is opening under a hybrid model -- refer to our district plan, located on our website.
- Case Managers will be in touch with families between August 24 and September 1 to discuss individual plans and the provision of special education services under the hybrid model

- Families will receive a copy of the Learning Model IEP Implementation Plan to document the districts offering of FAPE during this time
- IEPs will continue to be written as if school were in session
- PPTs will be conducted virtually at this time
- Students who participate in voluntary remote learning will receive services to the best of our ability

The Special Education team greatly appreciates your cooperation, teamwork, and understanding during this time. We appreciate your advocacy and concern for a smooth start to the school year - we are confident that we accomplish our goals together. If you have any questions regarding the opening of the school year please do not hesitate to contact me directly but please understand that a response may not be possible until the school teams have returned to campus next week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris Champlin". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Chris Champlin
Director of Special Education and Pupil Services
Griswold Public Schools