



# *Southmoreland School District*

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*“High Quality Learning for All”*

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On Friday, March 13, 2020 Governor Tom Wolf ordered the shutdown of all Pennsylvania schools for a two week period. On Monday, March 23, Governor Wolf extended that shutdown for an additional week, requiring the Southmoreland School District to cease traditional school functioning until at least April 6. In response to this action, the District has initiated plans to provide distance learning opportunities to its nearly 2,000 K-12 students. Distance learning encompasses any district sponsored activities that replace conventional instruction, including but not limited to: electronic learning portals, video/telephone conferencing, recorded lessons, paper packets, and alternative learning activities.

These actions are unprecedented, upending traditional learning and requiring school personnel to reinvent delivery models, create new schedules, and find solutions to complex problems presented by the shutdown. Work that would require months of planning is being done in a matter of days. While our community faces these challenges, we must also communicate that the implementation of distance learning does not relieve the District from its responsibility to provide a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities.

In order to make this reality possible, special education teachers will be reviewing student Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to ensure that appropriate accommodations and modifications are made to allow for FAPE. This could include, but is not limited to: scheduled teleconferencing, modifications to assignments, adapted grading, alternate assessments, extended time, etc. Furthermore, arrangements are being made to provide related services remotely, this includes: speech, occupational, physical and other therapies.

We believe that through the hard work and dedication of our special education teachers, we can meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. With that said, some services cannot be achieved through distance learning. The District is committed to working closely with families to ensure that compensatory educational opportunities are offered when specific services are unable to be completed remotely.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding special education services, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly.

Sincerely,

Alexander A. Novickoff, M.Ed