

Sept. 4, 2020

Dear Integrated Services parents and guardians,

With our students being back in school for the past two weeks, it has been great for our staff to re-connect after the summer break. Stories of student successes relayed from staff have been heart-warming and positive as we continue in our remote learning phase. You as parents are partners in this journey, and we appreciate all families are doing to support their children. Thank you for working with us as we move forward to provide the best general and special education possible during this remote learning phase in PSD.

Know that our Integrated Services staff spent hundreds of hours this summer, June through August, participating in professional development opportunities, planning and preparing for the start to the 2020-2021 school year. Teams developed plans for each phase of learning so that staff are prepared as we move forward throughout the year and respond to the changes that will inevitably come our way. Their excitement and dedication has been evident in the lessons prepared and time spent planning and learning. At the same time, parents have been fantastic partners providing insight and information to help us continue to find solutions for unique situations to increase learning opportunities. Please continue to share feedback with your student's school-based team, as well as myself; we're keeping a close eye on how things are going and responding as we go along.

We recognize that for some parents, Poudre School District is providing enough communication and for others, more would be helpful. We have created a webpage for parents of students with disabilities that is specific to COVID 19 and special education as a resource for families. It can be found at:

<https://www.psdschools.org/psd2020-21/supportingstudentswithdisabilities>

In addition, here are other things you might find helpful:

- If you have questions about your child's general or special education, the school-based team is the best avenue because they know and work with your student – they can share insights, listen to concerns and help support your student and their unique needs. If more information is needed or you wish to speak to someone other than the school team, the names and phone number of Integrated Services administrators are included on the webpage noted above.
- Integrated Services worked closely with the Information and Technology Department this summer to purchase some alternate hardware for students who have challenges accessing a laptop. Different types of educational software were also purchased to support student learning.
- I want to be transparent and communicative throughout the year. Please know that we are planning to bring a few identified, eligible students into schools once a week for two-hour sessions to problem solve any access challenges with a student's technology or to receive a boost with instruction. I want to be clear about a couple important things about this work. The Integrated Services team is using rigorous criteria to identify students with disabilities who were challenged to access remote education due to their disability. Personal protective equipment will be worn at all times, and other state and local public health guidelines will be followed. The Larimer County Department of Health and Environment has given PSD approval to move forward with this important support work. Our team is reaching out directly to families with

students who are eligible for this support. Other school districts in the region are taking a similar approach.

- For some students, services to address goals and objectives in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) look different when in a remote setting rather than a brick-and-mortar building. In these cases, the IEP team will meet with parents to create what the Colorado Department of Education calls a “contingency plan.” This plan will describe services for a student, to address progress on goals and objectives, during remote or partially remote times. Again, this will be written for some students when it is needed.
- For those families who have enrolled their child in PSD Virtual, school-based teams will maintain case management responsibilities; although for some students, the four special education teachers at PSD Virtual may be delivering services. As you are meeting as an IEP team to discuss services in the virtual environment versus a brick-and-mortar school, this will be part of the discussion. If you need any support with this, please reach out to Aaron Vogt, Assistant Director of Integrated Services, supporting PSD Virtual at 970-490-3213.

I know nothing these days is easy for anyone and that each of our families is experiencing unique challenges. I want to sincerely thank you for your support as we continue working together during this time. We are experiencing this unique time in our history together and, as we work to find solutions for our children and students, we can also find successes. As we move forward this month, let’s keep working together and finding the positives every day.

Sincerely,

Sarah

***Sarah Belleau***  
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