

The Impact of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) on the Delivery of Public Education in New Jersey

On March 16, 2020, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signed [Executive Order No. 104](#), which, among other things, ordered the closure of every public, private and parochial school in the State as of March 18, 2020. Many parents may have questions about whether missed time from school due to a public health-related closure will adversely impact their child's educational requirements.

As an initial matter, the New Jersey Department of Education issued a March 5, 2020 memo to local school officials making it clear that boards of education may utilize home instruction to provide instructional services to enrolled students. The provision of home instruction services must be guided by N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10.1 and may include direct services, online instruction, services provided through contract with another district board of education, or any other means developed by the district to meet the needs of its students. Thus, any day in which students impacted by a public health-related closure have access to such home instruction services will count as a day in which the board of education has provided public school facilities toward its compliance with the 180-day requirement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9.

Accordingly, school districts are implementing the following instructional strategies:

- A personal device for e-learning
- An email address to communicate with their teachers and related service providers
- Access to Google classroom and Google hangouts
- Access to video and/or audio conferencing via Zoom
- Access to educational websites used in class and aligned to lessons
- Credentials to log in to apps providing supplemental instruction

Parents of classified students also may have concerns about how special education services will be delivered to their child by their district during a public health-related closure. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act does not provide guidance to districts subject to long term closures (more than 10 consecutive school days) about the level of services that should be provided to disabled students. However, the U.S. Department of Education states that students with disabilities generally should be provided with the same level of services that the district is providing to non-disabled students. Read the memo [here](#). Parents of special education students who are uncertain about what services will be delivered to their child and how these services will be provided, should reach out to their child's case manager.

Finally, these are challenging and stressful times and everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. Here are some links to helpful resources to parents of both regular and special education students:

[Talking to Children about COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource](#)
[How to Explain a Global Health Crisis to Children with Autism](#)
[Taking Care of your Mental Health in the Face of Uncertainty](#)
[Manage Anxiety and Stress](#)