



## **Joint Statement on Serving Students with Disabilities During School Closures Due to COVID-19**

**April 9, 2020**

The Montana Office of Public Instruction, the Montana PTI, and Disability Rights Montana are committed to the provisions and intent of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). We believe the rights of students with disabilities must be maintained, even as schools are closed to protect our communities from the spread of COVID-19.

The unprecedented challenges facing districts and families can best be met by working together. Serving students with disabilities will require partnership in decision making and flexibility as to how services may be provided. Ensuring the health and safety of school personnel and students while supporting meaningful progress on Individual Education Program (IEP) goals and educational standards are key priorities.

Districts, IEP teams, and families are encouraged to maintain open communication and work together to provide the most appropriate services in light of unique student, school, and community circumstances. The IEP team meetings may need to be held by phone or videoconference, special education services and supports may need to be provided online, virtually, or by instructional phone calls. IEP teams, which include district personnel and families, are encouraged to maintain open communication as we all move forward from this challenging situation. We are so thankful for the relationships we continue to foster here in Montana for the benefit of our students.

We will get through this challenging time; together.

Thank you,

Montana Office of Public Instruction  
Montana Parent Training and Information Center  
Disability Rights Montana