



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 23, 2020

**TO:** Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents  
Public School Academy Directors

**FROM:** Dr. Scott M. Koenigsknecht, Deputy Superintendent  
P-20 System and Student Transitions

**SUBJECT:** Clarification on Distance Learning for Special Education Students

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) would like to provide clarification regarding the provision of educational activities under Governor Whitmer's March 12, 2020, Executive Order 2020-11 and the March 23, 2020, Executive Order 2020-21 (COVID-19) that declare a state of emergency and subsequently order the temporary closure of all K-12 schools.

If a district chooses to provide educational support (online learning, instructional packets, enrichment/enhancement activities, among other approaches) to all students, districts must consider the additional needs of students with disabilities, including accessibility. Educational supports provided through distance learning approaches are designed to assist students in maintaining skills, and in some cases, make progress in the general education curriculum. Districts must address the unique and individual needs of students with disabilities when utilizing these approaches. If technology is needed for a student with a disability to access an educational activity, the needed technology and support must be provided by the district at no charge to the student.

For additional resource support and more information about creating an accessible learning environment for students with disabilities, please visit [Alt\\*Shift](http://www.altshift.education) at ([www.altshift.education](http://www.altshift.education)) or visit [Michigan Low Incidence Outreach](http://www.mdelio.org) at ([www.mdelio.org](http://www.mdelio.org)).

In addition to this state level guidance, on March 21, 2020, the United States Department of Education provided guidance entitled "[Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Schools While Serving Children with Disabilities.](#)" Please refer to this guidance for additional information.

The MDE Office of Special Education is available for virtual meetings and discussion. Please contact Teri Chapman, Director at [chapmant2@michigan.gov](mailto:chapmant2@michigan.gov).

cc. Michigan Education Alliance

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