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,
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 at
(www.altshift.education) or visit Michigan Low Incidence Outreach at (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 champant2@michigan.gov.

cc. Michigan Education Alliance