



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 18, 2020

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

FROM: Michael F. Rice, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction 

SUBJECT: Partnership and Leadership in Unprecedented Times

Thank you for your partnership, leadership, resilience, and continued commitment to serve our children. Throughout this state of emergency, our work is more important than ever.

I sincerely appreciate everyone's efforts to be calm, steady, and resilient as we navigate through this storm. It seems inconceivable that, just eight days ago, Michiganders learned of the first two people who had tested positive for COVID-19 in the state. Two days later, on Thursday, March 12, with twelve individuals having tested positive in the state, Governor Whitmer announced the closing of our state's schools, effective, Monday, March 16. Today, the number of positive cases has exceeded 100. The world feels profoundly different than it did just a week ago. None of this is routine.

In the last few days, in this extraordinary moment, to help you address the attendant challenges, MDE has released guidance memoranda on the following topics:

- [MEMO #COVID-19-014 Guidance and Considerations for 31n/C4S Mental Health Providers](#)
- [MEMO #COVID-19-013 Guidance Provided to Our Educator Preparation Providers](#)
- [MEMO #COVID-19-012 Use of Federal Title Funds During Mandated COVID-19 Closure](#)
- [MEMO #COVID-19-011 Guidance on Transition to Online Learning: Considerations and Technical Readiness](#)
- [MEMO #COVID-19-010 Compliance Requirements for Great Start Collaboratives and Parent Coalitions funded programs and services during a Public Health Emergency](#)

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- [MEMO #COVID-19-009 Head Start Agency Requirements During COVID-19 Closures](#)
- [MEMO #COVID-19-008 21st Century Community Learning Centers \(CCLC\) Requirements During COVID-19 Closures](#)
- [MEMO #COVID-19-007 EMC Requirements During COVID-19 Closure](#)
- [MEMO #COVID-19-006 CTE Requirements During COVID-19 Closure](#)
- [MEMO #COVID-19-005 Feeding Children During School Closures](#)
- [MEMO #COVID-19-004 Update on Student Assessment and COVID-19](#)
- [MEMO #COVID-19-003 Compliance Requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\) Part C during a Public Health Emergency](#)
- [MEMO #COVID-19-002 GSRP Requirements During COVID-19 Closures](#)
- [MEMO #COVID-19-001 Compliance Requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\) and Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education \(MARSE\) during a Public Health Emergency](#)

All of the guidance documents and communications during this COVID-19 crisis can be found at www.michigan.gov/mde, with updates and new guidance shared daily. Please click on the "COVID-19 Updates" button at the top of the webpage. The guidance is a work in progress given the rapidly changing situation.

Below please find a few brief updates on discrete topics.

Food. Last Friday, approximately 12 hours after the governor announced school closures, MDE began to host conference calls to provide guidance on non-congregate meal provision. Eleven hundred (1100) superintendents and food service directors participated in these calls. USDA has approved MDE's initial waiver to permit you to provide and be reimbursed for non-congregate meals, and we have submitted—and anticipate approval for—three more waivers to permit provision and reimbursement for meals that require, on an emergency basis, some form of deviation from the typical meal composition given local food shortages. MDE has a map that plots the food sites across the state and is adding sites daily. Thanks for your great work in helping to feed our kids!

State Testing. Yesterday, State Board President Dr. Casandra Ulbrich and I wrote a letter to the U.S. Department of Education and urged a nationwide waiver of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirement for annual state testing of students. MDE staff have worked with the U.S. Department of Education and the Council of Chief State School Officers on this issue for the last several days. We anticipate more news on this issue in the near future.

Child Care. MDE staff have worked with the governor's office, several state departments, and MAISA on an executive order regarding child care. It is expected that the governor will soon sign this executive order, at which time MAISA will release broad guidance and MDE will release guidance associated with child care for younger children. Thanks to those of you who have begun to reflect upon how to provide or facilitate child care in local facilities at this extraordinary time of need.

Page 3
March 18, 2020

Thanks also to association leaders, including those who represent superintendents in MASA, MAISA, and Middle Cities. Finally, thanks to those of you who have reached out to share thoughts and ideas about how we can collectively better serve our children and families. I sincerely appreciate your partnership and leadership at this extraordinary time of need.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance