



JOY HOFMEISTER
STATE SUPERINTENDENT *of* PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

April 7, 2020

Joint Statement on Serving Students with Disabilities During the COVID-19 Outbreak

The Oklahoma State Department of Education, the Oklahoma Parents Center, the Oklahoma Directors of Special Services, and the IDEA Part B State Advisory Panel remain committed to the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). We believe the rights of all students with disabilities must be maintained, even during school closures and distance learning, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

It is our firm belief, despite the unprecedented challenge facing districts and families, that students with disabilities will be served by parties coming together to make decisions on how to provide services in a manner that ensures the health and safety of all parties and that allows for meaningful progress on IEP goals and educational standards.

By continuing to educate our students through distance learning they still have a chance to be prepared for future learning and they still have a chance to meet their postsecondary goals. Most importantly, both our students and staff have a much better chance of remaining safe during a time of crisis. Schools will do their best to ensure that equity and access are available to all of their students. There will also be a time to revisit the progress of our students and enhance their education in the future through additional services and supports. We have innovative teachers and schools who are able to meet the needs of their students in any context.

One of our best resources during a time of crisis are the relationships built between schools, students, parents, and other community members. During this time, we encourage all parties to keep communication lines open and work together. Parents should continue to share information regarding their child's needs and to partner with and support their schools. Educational leaders should continue to lead with equity and share messages of hope and ability to provide services to students with disabilities in new ways. Educators should continue to partner with parents and do what they do best – provide differentiated instruction using a variety of accessible tools and resources.

We should all operate from good faith and work together for the benefit of all students.

If you have questions during this time, please feel free to reach out to the Oklahoma State Department of Education, the Oklahoma Parents Center, the Oklahoma Directors of Special Services, or the IDEA Part B State Advisory Panel.

[Oklahoma State Department of Education – Office of Special Education Services](#)

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OKLAHOMA
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Oklahoma Parents Center

Statewide Parent Training and Information

Visit our Website @ www.OklahomaParentsCenter.org!!

Advocating for Children with Disabilities to Build a Better Future

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[IDEA Part B State Advisory Panel](#)

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IDEA
PART B | *State Advisory Panel*