



March 25, 2020

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

(Pierre, SD) - The South Dakota Department of Education Special Education Programs, South Dakota Parent Connection, and Disability Rights South Dakota 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, 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.

During this time, we encourage all parties to keep communication lines open and work together. Meetings may need to be held by phone or video conferencing, but time and effort should be on ensuring continued provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education for students with disabilities to meet the IEP goals and services. At the conclusion of this outbreak, IEP teams can assess if services provided allowed the student to make sufficient progress on goals and educational standards, and then determine if any additional or compensatory services should be made available due to any limitations in the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education.

Thank you for your attention to the health and safety of students and educational providers during this time. We will get through this by working together. If you have questions during this time, please feel free to reach out to the [Special Education Program representative for your region](#), [South Dakota Parent Connection](#), or [Disability Rights South Dakota](#).