

**DATE: April 9, 2020**

**TO: District and County Superintendents**

**FROM: The Office of Public Instruction  
The Board of Public Education  
The Montana Public Education Center**

**RE: Graduation and School Year-End Recommendations**

Dear District and County Superintendents,

We are writing to offer guidance as you plan for school year-end activities including graduation ceremonies. At this time, the Governor is making public policy decisions in two-week timeframes based on the best available advice from public health officials. As school leaders, we know that you would like additional certainty in planning the rest of your academic year.

At this time, national health authorities are stating that social distancing recommendations will be in place at least through May and possibly into the summer. We can expect that even if the Governor's "Stay At Home" and "School Closure" directives are lifted after April 24<sup>th</sup>, that social distancing guidelines will still be recommended.

Therefore, we advise that you plan to continue your distance learning plans through the remainder of this school year and also plan to not hold large-scale in-person graduation ceremonies. We encourage you to postpone graduation ceremonies until later in the year or come up with alternative plans to honor your graduates, ensuring equity in recognition for all students, including special education students.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Darlene Schottle, Board of Public Education  
Kirk Miller, School Administrators of Montana  
Lance Melton, Montana School Boards Association  
Dennis Parman, Montana Rural Education Association  
Eric Feaver, Montana Federation of Public Employees  
Dianne Burke, Montana Quality Education Coalition  
Denise Williams, Montana Association of School Business Officials