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## MONTANA PUBLIC EDUCATION CENTER GUIDANCE TO SCHOOLS FOLLOWING GOVERNOR BULLOCK'S REOPENING THE BIG SKY PHASED APPROACH

On Wednesday, Governor Bullock announced [a phased reopening in Montana](#) following about a month of school building closures and a Stay at Home directive. During his Wednesday briefing, the Governor announced the waiver of student instruction time will expire on May 7 and local school boards will have [the option to open school buildings should they so choose](#).

The partners at the Montana Public Education Center recommend your local Board of Trustees adopt the motion below to ensure your school district will continue to receive all state funding, including transportation funding, regardless of your district's decision to open schools, continue off-site learning or pursue a blended model.

*"I move that the board of trustees declare an unforeseen emergency within the meaning of that term as set forth in Title 20, Chapter 9, Part 8, to become immediately effective and to continue through June 30, 2020. This motion is based on COVID-19 risks; in recognition that the Governor's waiver of student instruction time will expire on May 7; and in recognition that the Governor's April 22, 2020 Directive implicating Executive Orders 2-2020 and 3-2020 specify that elected school boards and their districts that adopt their own declaration of emergency will continue to receive all state funding, including transportation funding."*

If your local school district chooses to reopen school buildings, we recommend the Board of Trustees adopt the following motion aligned with the Governor's reopening guidance:

*"I move that the board of trustees reopen the schools of the district consistent with Governor Bullock's April 22, 2020 Directive implementing Executive Orders 2-2020 and 3-2020 and guidance for the phased reopening of Montana."*

We also recommend that Boards of Trustees adopt the [MTSBA 1900 Model Policy Series](#). These policies specifically address issues related to Boards of Trustees' authority to reopen schools and then operate schools once reopened during this school

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fiscal year. The policies provide options for Boards to consider in collaboration with their administrative team, employees, parents, students, health officials, and community when making decisions about how instruction will be delivered to students; how gatherings and events will take place on school property; how the health and safety of staff and students will be protected and preserved while schools are open; and how financial and operational functions of the school district will continue during the period of public health emergency. Boards should carefully consider each option and adopt the option that reflects the circumstances in the community.

We recommend school districts follow the [Governor's directive and guidance](#) which outlines school reopening considerations, should school districts choose to reopen school buildings.

The partners of the Montana Public Education Center are proud to stand alongside our local public schools during this challenging time and will continue to support teachers, administrators, staff and trustees in serving and leading our schools and communities.

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