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**Michigan Learning Channel to Launch January 4, 2021**

***Public Television Station learning service will provide
 instructional content to support the work of teachers and parents
 through universally available platforms***

DETROIT – (December 14, 2020) – Michigan’s public television stations, in partnership with leading educators and community leaders, are launching the Michigan Learning Channel (MLC) beginning Monday, January 4, and will be available statewide on a series of new dedicated broadcast channels. Organized by Detroit Public Television (DPTV), the network will deliver instructional content and programming to students, parents and teachers.

In addition to the broadcast networks, the content will be available at [**MichiganLearning.org**](https://www.michiganlearning.org/) as a livestream as well as posted for on-demand viewing on a variety of digital and social media platforms, including cell phones and other mobile devices. The Michigan Learning Channel seeks to ensure accessibility to all students, educators and families in the state. January’s programming schedule has been made available to teachers and school administrators to explore possible integration with lesson plans and can be viewed at [**MichiganLearning.org/schedule**](https://www.michiganlearning.org/schedule#page=schedule)**.**

The Michigan Learning Channel will provide curriculum-aligned instructional resources for students and teachers, beginning Monday through Friday with Pre-K to 3rd grade programming, focused on literacy, math and social-emotional learning, and quickly expanding to include grades 4 to 12.

Much of this programming will be produced specifically for the MLC, with the guidance of Michigan education experts and delivered by Michigan educators, though some will come from nationally respected producers of instructional content.

Initial content available to Michigan families and educators beginning in January will include:

* **Math Mights:** Using a variety of strategies to make math fun and promote the understanding of math processes for K-3rd graders from SIS4Teachers, a Michigan-based company
* **Read with Me at Home:** Literacy lessons produced by the Colorado Department of Education in collaboration with Rocky Mountain PBS, developed in response to school closures
* **Let’s Learn:** Reading, math and science lessons for pre-K to 6th grade from WNET in New York
* **INPact at Home:** Exercise breaks designed to motivate kids to get up from their keyboards and get moving, produced by Detroit Public TV and the University of Michigan School of Kinesiology
* **POPChecks:** Short messages encouraging students to **P**ause, **O**wn their feelings and **P**ractice centering themselves, produced for the MLC by Mindful Learning, under the direction of social-emotional learning expert Carla Philibert

In addition to the initial Pre-K to 3rd grade schedule, supplemental content will be available at launch for grades 4-12. Evening and overnight programming also will be available for older students in grades 6-12. Weekends will feature a variety of programming from Michigan sources in social studies and science, as well as documentaries with educational resources.

Besides Detroit Public Television, the MLC network includes WKAR Public Media from Michigan State University, Delta College Public Media (WDCQ), WGVU Public Media from Grand Valley State University, WCMU Public Media from Central Michigan University and WNMU-TV from Northern Michigan University.

**The Support and Guidance of the Educational Community**

The MLC was developed with the cooperation and support of leading educators and educational organizations in the state.

“From day one, we have worked with leading people in the field of education and with a diverse cross-section of parents and concerned citizens to develop a plan that meets the evolving needs of families and teachers,” said Rich Homberg, president and CEO of DPTV. “Public television has a long history of developing age-appropriate educational content in partnership with those closest to the communities we serve.”

The Michigan Learning Channel concept has been endorsed by the Michigan Department of Education, the Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association (MEMSPA), the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA), the Michigan Association of Superintendents and Administrators (MASA) and the Business Leaders for Michigan (BLM).

“We are indebted to Paul Liabenow from MEMSPA and the Literacy Essentials Team at MAISA for helping to pull together the K-3 content for the Michigan Learning Channel,” said Homberg. “Their expertise and guidance are assuring that Michigan teachers have a prominent voice in the channel programming at launch and in coming weeks.”

“I wholeheartedly support and endorse the Michigan Learning Channel,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Michael Rice. “The ability for educational programming to reach nearly every household with a television and fill internet connectivity gaps is outstanding. I commend the public television stations of Michigan for adjusting to the unexpected changes brought on by the pandemic and moving quickly to provide enrichment opportunities to the children of Michigan. I look forward to serving our children in partnership with you.”

**Delivering Instructional Content Accessibly**

The MLC’s instructional content is aligned with Michigan’s educational standards and follows widely accepted sequences for mastering skills throughout the school year, to make it as useful as possible for schools and students. Designed to support and enrich school learning, the lessons are presented by a diverse group of educators, delivered as if the teacher is in a classroom setting.

The broadcast channel will deliver lessons in scheduled 30- and 60-minute blocks for each grade level throughout the day, repeated during the evenings and weekends. All content is offered at no cost to schools, families and caregivers. As new content is developed, it will be added to the Michigan Learning Channel platforms.

“This content does not replace teachers,” said Georgeann Herbert, DPTV’s senior vice president of strategy. “The Michigan Learning Channel will work best for students and families if they are working with guidance from their teachers. The Michigan Learning Channel can help engage parents more deeply in their children’s learning and encourage them to form strong partnerships with teachers and their local schools.”

Future plans for the Michigan Learning Channel include adding more Michigan teachers providing content to primary and secondary education and eventually adding adult educational content, developed in collaboration with unions, community colleges and universities. These programs would support the completion of college and career certification programs to help fill high-need positions in the workforce.

The Michigan Learning Channel offers programming that is separate and distinct from PBS’s highly successful 24/7 KIDS Channel, which specializes in educating young children with animated content and familiar characters like Elmo and Daniel Tiger. The MLC complements the PBS KIDS Channel, its existing online content and PBS KIDS apps to give children and families a rich trove of educational resources.

**Meeting Education Needs Through Trusted Providers**

The Michigan Learning Channel has emerged quickly as a result of the disruption of traditional classroom procedures caused by the pandemic. However, the initiative is rooted in years of study and experience by DPTV and its many partners in the field of education. The health crisis merely demonstrated the need to apply communication technology to fill disparities and gaps that already existed.

A report by The Education Trust – Midwest on the digital divide revealed that 35% of Michigan public school students have limited or no access to the internet from home. In some districts, the lack of internet access rises to as high as 55%, disproportionately borne by children of color and children in rural areas. In contrast, broadcast television reaches nearly every home in Michigan.

Even homes with good internet access may lack sufficient devices and/or bandwidth to accommodate parents working from home and multiple children seeking online instruction. Such instruction delivered via television provides a nearly universal alternative.

Public television is uniquely positioned to bridge the digital divide. For the past 17 years, public television has been named the most trusted public institution in America, and DPTV has been nationally recognized for its work in early childhood education programs, both on air and in the community. Last year it was the recipient of the Michigan Governor’s Service Award as an Education Service Leader.

“The Michigan Learning Channel provides educators, teachers and all the other caregivers who surround children with immediate support as our educational system evolves to navigate the pandemic and plan for the future,” said DPTV’s Homberg. “But it is also a work in progress. We will continue to enrich and refine the content with the feedback and input we receive from parents and educators.

“There is nothing more important for the well-being of Michigan than the education of our youth. The Michigan Learning Channel is one step in ensuring that all children in the state receive the education and, ultimately, the future they deserve.”

Initial funding for the Michigan Learning Channel is provided by awards totaling $3.5 million; 43% or $1.5 million of the budget is through a grant from the Michigan Department of Education supported by the Governors Education Emergency Relief (GEER) Fund Grant, part of the CARES Act. The remainder is through funding from the Michigan State Legislature.

**About Detroit Public TV (dptv.org)**

Detroit Public TV (DPTV) is Michigan’s only community-licensed public television station and, during the COVID-19 crisis, has significantly adjusted its broadcast schedules and digital platforms to support parents and children engaged in learning at home. With more than 2 million weekly viewers across its four channels, DPTV is the state’s largest and most watched public television station, as well as having the most diverse public television audience in America. DPTV is licensed to the Detroit Educational Television Foundation and governed by a volunteer board of trustees from the local business, civic and cultural communities. For more information, visit [dptv.org.](http://www.dptv.org)