

GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY EDUCATION RELIEF FUND
PART C: USES OF GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY EDUCATION FUNDS

Section 18002 of Division B of the CARES Act provides in relevant part that grants awarded under the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund be used to support the ability of local educational agencies (LEAs) and institutions of higher education (IHEs) to continue to provide educational services to their students. The Department is interested in learning how and to what extent each State intends to use the award, or a portion of the award, to establish, develop, improve, or expand the availability, accessibility, capacity, and use of remote learning techniques and technologies which includes both distance education as defined in section 103(7) of the HEA and distance learning as defined in ESEA section 8101(14). The Department requests the following information:

1. Does the State intend to use any of the awarded funds to support remote learning for all students?
 - a. Please describe whether the State considered conducting an assessment of the barriers to implementing effective remote learning for all students, or utilizing an existing assessment, to help target resources toward greatest needs.
 - b. With respect to LEAs, please describe how the State intends to use the funds to help students and teachers adopt or improve remote learning that serves all students, including students with disabilities, students from low-income families, charter school students, and non-public school students.
 - c. With respect to IHEs, please describe how the State intends to focus expenditures to ensure that all institutions – public and private – have the needed supports to continue executing their missions and educating their students.
 - a. It's crucial that during this crisis, our students can still get a quality education from a safe distance, including lessons in early literacy. In Michigan, the ability to transition to effective remote learning for the state's students varies widely across the state. As the COVID-19 crisis emerged, the Governor suspended in-class instruction and made each school district's remaining state school aid payments conditional on the district developing and adopting a Continuity of Learning Plan. These plans provide an outline for how school districts intend to provide alternative modes of instruction rather than in-person instruction. As part of this plan, districts were asked to identify efforts being taken to reduce potential barriers in terms of instructional practices, student needs, and device access.

To assess the statewide need for devices, the state Department of Education (MDE) worked collaboratively with Michigan Education Technology Leaders (METL) – a group consisting of senior technology leaders from across the state – to identify the number of students statewide who lack an Internet-capable device, Internet access, or both. This work found that up to 500,000 students statewide could lack resources to engage in effective remote learning due to lack of access to the necessary technology. Addressing the remote learning needs for these students will be more challenging. Innovative strategies need to be implemented to create equitable access to both

digital and non-digital resources and supports to ensure all students have the continued opportunities to learn.

The efforts identified above will greatly assist the state in targeting the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund dollars to areas of the state where there is the greatest need.

- b. Districts' ability to deliver remote learning varies across the state. Some districts are at full capacity, whereas others are in early planning stages. All districts, regardless of current remote learning capabilities, must continue to address ongoing technology/connectivity needs, identify innovative curriculum, provide professional development, and to craft innovative strategies to provide student support. No matter their community, every student in every district deserves a quality public education while learning from a distance, and every student deserves the resources they need to read by the end of third grade.

Many districts trying to overcome these barriers need sufficient funding to be successful. A paradigm shift in instructional practice comes with costs. Funding through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund will be used to provide supports for continued learning to students and educators. Funding will be distributed in such a way that it targets supports to those districts experiencing the greatest need, to help improve learning opportunities for their students.

- c. Michigan is home to world-class public and private institutions. These public universities have a level of constitutional autonomy that provide for self-governance. Similarly, the state's private universities are empowered to create and implement innovative educational strategies. The autonomy of the Michigan's institutions of higher education allows each entity to best determine the needs of the specific population they serve and execute their mission accordingly. In addition, the state has a vast network of public community colleges and private technical schools that fill local labor market needs.

The state recognizes there are diverse needs across the state and our IHEs are best equipped to identify and address those needs. Michigan is therefore taking a balanced approach to targeting this funding in ways that support broader statewide priorities while ensuring IHEs have the necessary flexibility to continue working toward their unique missions while addressing the challenges associated with COVID-19 response efforts.

- 2. Does the State intend to use any of the awarded funds to support technological capacity and access – including hardware and software, connectivity, and instructional expertise – to support remote learning for all students? If so, please describe how the State will achieve its goals for both LEAs and IHEs.

- a. Please describe the strategies used to serve disadvantaged populations listed in Sec. 18003(d)(4) of the CARES Act.

Every student, no matter where they live, deserves a high quality public education during this crisis, including lessons in early literacy. Our students' remote learning experiences are more successful when they can access high-quality digital content, and they cannot effectively learn if they do not have this access. In Michigan, an estimated 500,000 students lack an Internet-capable device, home Internet

access, or both. To increase access to remote learning, Michigan intends to use funding to address the device gap and improve access to digital resources.

a. The geographic areas of the state most impacted by COVID-19 are also areas with the highest numbers of low-income children, children with disabilities, English language learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth. These are districts that can least afford to invest in support for access to technology, due to competing demands and budgetary constraints. To augment district capacity to provide funding to these student populations, we will prioritize funding toward districts who disproportionately serve students with these risk factors. With this funding, districts can make the determination on how to best serve these disadvantaged populations and help their students access more tools for remote learning.

3. Does the State intend to use any of the awarded funds to support remote learning by developing new informational and academic resources and expanding awareness of, and access to, best practices and innovations in remote learning and support for students, families, and educators? If so, please identify, generally, the resources, best practices, and innovations that the State intends to develop and expand.

The governor is committed to expanding resources for remote learning for students across Michigan and ensuring that children across the state can read by the end of third grade. Developing a plan for remote learning and addressing device needs are only the first steps in implementing successful remote learning. Student engagement and learning is driven by quality informational and academic resources and through support for unique student needs.

Some innovative digital academic resources are already available. These include virtual collaboration platforms, many of which are provided at little or no costs. The Legislature has maintained ongoing state support for Michigan Virtual, which, in addition to making online coursework available, provides reports to the state on effective strategies to support and accelerate innovation in education through technology-based instructional strategies, virtual education delivery models, professional learning techniques for educators, and recommendations on strategies to monitor and evaluate online learning. Michigan Virtual maintains a large catalog of professional learning curriculum that could be utilized to assist teachers in understanding innovating strategies to provide remote learning and could be utilized by students to connect to other remote resources.

In response to the crisis, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has also coordinated research and ideas, and through a joint effort with education stakeholders, published a "Learning at a Distance" resource for school districts in March 2020. This document includes guiding principles for districts navigating the process of remote learning. It includes strategies to address barriers in planning, practice, student instruction, professional development, and student support. Also, the state has a robust network of organizations and think tanks dedicated to improving education in the state.

Governor Emergency Education Relief Fund dollars will be utilized to expand and enhance district use of these types of innovative platforms and provide and develop methods for additional supports. Funds will be targeted to areas of the state that are experiencing the greatest need, and will be utilized to address the digital divide across the state and provide additional supports to the students and educators who need them the most.