



CONTACT
Anne Craft
Executive Director of Outreach
517-324-5373
acraft@michiganvirtual.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 18, 2020

Free online educational content for students, educators released in response to COVID-19 school closures

Michigan Virtual releases free quality enrichment material to support parents, educators at home

LANSING, Mich. – To keep students learning during the extended school closures, Michigan families now have access to free digital content from [over 70 high-quality online learning courses](#) youth can access from home. In addition, educators also have access to a host of online professional development resources to strengthen their skill sets and best support their students and schools during the closures.

“Within the past week, parents and educators across the state have begun to actively search for solutions to keep their children engaged and learning during the Coronavirus-related school closures,” said Jamey Fitzpatrick, president and CEO of Michigan Virtual. “After ensuring our families are healthy and safe at home, many families will be able to benefit from this newly free digital content designed to keep Michigan youth learning even while not at school.”

To help students engage in quality learning from home, the only statewide non-profit online education provider in Michigan is sharing its content from more than 70 of their online courses for free. Michigan Virtual provides [over 200 online courses for students](#) in grades 6-12. For students currently enrolled in a Michigan Virtual course, those courses have not been disrupted by the closures. The newly free enrichment content was pulled from courses about English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, visual and performing arts, world languages, and more, and includes course content that aligns with the Michigan Merit Curriculum. Example content includes Algebra, Earth Science, U.S. History and Geography, and Entrepreneurship. While most of the content is geared toward high school students, some is appropriate for middle school-aged students.

Additionally, school closures provide an opportunity for educators to focus on their professional development. With more than [250 online courses](#) for educators on topics ranging from literacy essentials for elementary teachers, instructional coaching techniques, educators can return to their classes armed with a strengthened skill set, including [courses](#) focused on training teachers on how to teach in online and blended learning environments. Many courses are free, and teachers can earn State Continuing Education Clock Hours required to keep their certifications current.

– MORE –

While the school closures protect the health of educators and students, they could create unintentional mental stress. To combat this, teachers are encouraged to access a series of [five social-emotional learning courses](#) developed jointly by the Michigan Department of Education and Michigan Virtual. These courses were developed to support the social, emotional and behavioral needs of youth with the goal of preparing students for overall life success now and in the future.

“Since the closures began, it is evident that parents and districts are actively looking for resources to help students and educators. To meet that need, Michigan Virtual is releasing this content to do its part in supporting learning continuity plans and overall student academic success,” added Fitzpatrick.

Michigan education professionals are also encouraged to access additional [online learning resources](#), such as a rubric for evaluating a school’s online learning preparedness, a webinar series featuring best practices for online learning, and a newly launched [Facebook Group](#) specifically designed for sharing resources and best practices during the closures. Within the first week, the group has already grown to more than 1,600 educators and parents looking for quality educational content.

School districts are encouraged to stay up to date about the latest regarding COVID-19 at michigan.gov/coronavirus.

###

About Michigan Virtual

Michigan Virtual™ (formally known as *Michigan Virtual University®*) provides online courses for Michigan students, professional development for educators, and is the parent organization of the *Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute®*. Visit us at michiganvirtual.org.