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**Michigan Learning Channel Launches January 4, 2021**

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

WCMU Public Media joins Michigan's other public television stations in launching the Michigan Learning Channel (MLC) on Monday, January 4, available statewide on a series of new dedicated broadcast channels. Developed in partnership with leading educators and community leaders, the network delivers instructional content and programming to students, parents and teachers.

In the WCMU Public Media viewing area, MLC is broadcasted on channel 14.4 in Mount Pleasant, channel 6.4 in Alpena, channel 21.4 in Manistee, and channel 27.4 in Cadillac. (For people who receive WCMU with an antenna, rescanning of your television is required.) The Michigan Learning Channel is also available at [MichiganLearning.org](https://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.

"This pandemic highlighted the need for an alternative to our current educational delivery model," says WCMU Public Media General Manager, Jim Rademaker. "The Michigan Learning Channel is just the first step in the evolution of the relationship between education and public television. We'll continue to work with educators and parents to develop technologies to be inclusive of everyone across the state, as we know there is a gap that still needs to be addressed for students in rural areas."

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://michiganlearning.org/schedule).

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

Much of this programming is 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 Might:** Using a variety of strategies to make math fun and promote the understanding of math processes for K-3<sup>rd</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 **Pause, Own** their feelings and **Practice** 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

Future plans for the Michigan Learning Channel include adding more Michigan teachers providing content for 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 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).

“Developing a plan that meets the evolving needs of families and teachers along with a diverse cross-section of parents, concerned citizens, and leading people in the field of education has happened since day one,” shares Rademaker. “Developing educational content in partnership with communities we serve is something public television has a long history of.

“The Michigan Learning Channel takes this one step further. We’ll use a variety of our platforms – over the air and online – to increase access to these resources and educational programming, wherever students may be. During the pandemic and into the future, there will be a crucial need for this service.”

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, generally delivered as if the teacher is in a classroom setting.

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.

The Michigan Learning Channel does not seek to replace teachers. The service will work best for students and families if they are working with their teachers about the best way to use its content. In this way, the MLC can help engage parents more deeply in their children’s learning and encourage them to form strong partnerships with teachers and their local schools.

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.

The public television stations collaborating on this effort are Detroit Public Television, WKAR Public Media from Michigan State University, Delta College Public Media, WGVU Public Media from Grand Valley State University, WCMU Public Media from Central Michigan University and WNMU-TV from Northern Michigan University.

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.

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*WCMU Public Media has provided television and radio programming for more than 50 years. The NPR and PBS affiliates broadcast on eight radio and four television transmitters serving viewers and listeners in central and northern Michigan, including the Upper Peninsula and portions of Ontario, Canada. A public service of Central Michigan University, our mission is to educate, inform, entertain and engage. Learn more about WCMU Public Media at [WCMU.org](http://WCMU.org).*