MICHIGAN
Department of
Education

Supporting
SUMMER LEARNING
PANDEMIC OR NOT

May 2020

CONTENTS

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Thank you to the following who helped to develop and provide critical feedback on this document.

Document Collaborators/Authors

Dr. Brandy Bugni – Literacy Manager, Office of Educational Supports, MDE

Megan Coonan – Mathematics Consultant, Saginaw Intermediate School District

Trisha Dunn – Mathematics Consultant, Macomb Intermediate School District

Kim Fox – Mathematics Consultant, Calhoun Intermediate School District

Leisa Gallagher – School District Consultant, Office of Health and Nutrition Services, MDE

Kristi Hineman – Mathematics Consultant, Macomb Intermediate School District

Lauren Kazee – Mental Health Consultant, MDE

Kathy Lester – Library Media Specialist, Michigan Association for Media in Education

Cara Lougheed – 2019-20 Michigan Teacher of the Year, Rochester Community Schools

Richard Lower – Director, Office of Preschool and Out-of-School Time Learning, MDE

Lea McAllister – Mathematics Consultant, Macomb Intermediate School District

Katy Piotrowski – Literacy Consultant, Office of Educational Supports, MDE

Dr. Brian Pyles – Director, Office of Career and Technical Education, MDE

Michelle Renna – Literacy Coach, Muskegon Area Intermediate School District

Randy Riley, MILS – State Librarian, Library of Michigan

Danielle Seabold – Mathematics Consultant, Bold Educational Consulting LLC

Sara Shriver – Executive Director, Michigan Association of State and Federal Program Specialists

Andrew Smith – Mathematics Specialist, Kent Intermediate School District

Susan Townsend – Literacy Project Director, Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators

Jenelle Williams – Literacy Consultant, Oakland Schools

Critical Feedback Team

Jennifer Bustard – Principal, Mona Shores High School

Steve Carlson – Principal, Sandusky Junior/Senior High School

Dr. Brian Davis – Superintendent, Holland Public Schools

Dr. Nell Duke – Professor, University of Michigan

Rane Garcia – Superintendent, Muskegon Heights Public School Academy System

Verle Gilbert – Principal, Hahn Intermediate School in Davison

Paul Liabenow – Executive Director, Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association

Dr. Glenn Maleyko – Superintendent, Dearborn Public Schools

Kristen Pennington – Principal, Roosevelt Elementary in Stevensville

Wendy Zdeb – Executive Director, Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals

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MDE Team

Sheila A. Alles – Chief Deputy Superintendent

Venessa A. Keesler, Ph.D. – Deputy Superintendent, Division of Education, Student, and School Supports

Kelly Siciliano Carter – Director, Office of Strategic Planning and Implementation

Linda Dancer – Business Analyst, Office of Strategic Planning and Implementation

Mike Flaminio – Department Specialist, Office of Systems, Evaluation, and Technology

Mark Howe – Chief of Staff to the Chief Deputy Superintendent

Chelsey M.B. Martinez – Communications and Marketing Analyst, Office of Educator Excellence

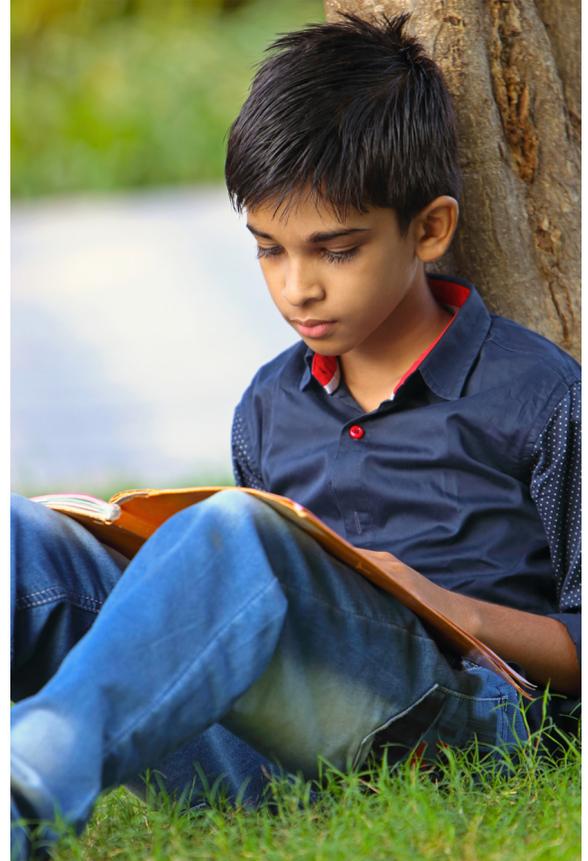Kristi Peña – Executive Assistant to the Chief Deputy Superintendent

Introduction

During a typical summer, a break from school is associated with a sense of freedom, relaxation, play, and leisure. Learning often pauses for students, with studies showing that many students experience summer slide, and that summer slide is more pronounced among working class and poor children than among middle class children. Many educators have advocated for additional learning opportunities to mitigate summer slide and to increase summer learning. This year, more than ever before, summer learning opportunities will be essential for students.

The summer of 2020 will not be typical. It will not look like, or feel like, or include activities and events of summers past. It will come after a time of learning at a distance, in which student learning could not have the same depth and breadth during the final third of the 2019-2020 school year as it did during the first two-thirds. In addition, the summer of 2020 precedes an uncertain autumn where public health considerations in a pandemic will legitimately require conditions far from ideal for public education. Districts are strongly encouraged to continue student learning this summer and to use learning at a distance to bridge the gap between two very atypical school years.

The term *learning at a distance* is used to describe students engaged in learning that happens outside the traditional school building. Learning at a distance provides students with continued learning opportunities while they are at home during an extended period of school closure. Students continue to be at the center of all learning while educators and parents balance alternative methods to bring instruction to students with changing demands on the time of all. In this new and evolving educational environment, we are thinking more about "school" as a process for learning rather than a place. Because we know that students are more successful learners when they have meaningful relationships with their teachers, it is critical that student-teacher relationships continue during the summer.

Supporting Summer Learning, Pandemic or Not provides a framework for local leaders and teachers to plan and implement summer learning programs and opportunities for all students and their families. It is designed to be a companion document to the Learning at a Distance Guidance document released by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) in April. The content reflects research-based best practices for summer learning aimed at mitigating potential learning loss. The document includes one major academic section to address literacy and mathematics at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and multiple ancillary sections to support other aspects of summer learning and programming.

We appreciate and respect the caring, creative, and compassionate district and school leaders, educators, and support staff across our state. We recognize the amazing job that you do to provide for the needs of our students. We know that your commitment does not end with the school year and that your dedication and ingenuity will continue to benefit children through the summer in myriad ways. We also acknowledge our students' families who are trying their best to assist in their children's learning and to deal with all the complexities of the pandemic at the same time. It is a deeply troubling period, but we will endure and continue to protect and to educate our children in spite of the attendant challenges. We are forever appreciative of your extraordinary efforts on behalf of Michigan's students at this time.

Summer Learning Plan Development Considerations

- Summer learning will continue at a distance after an extended period of distance learning that began this spring and continued through the end of the school year.

- Student learning progressed more slowly and less comprehensively this spring due to the impact of COVID-19. Many students will not end the school year having learned all the grade level or course content standards, skills, knowledge, and competencies and will start the next year with unfinished learning.

- Most students would benefit from academic engagement this summer. That support will be different depending on the needs of the student. For some students, the support will be informal enrichment opportunities that can be integrated into daily summer routines and can include activities that engage parents and families in order to continue the learning that took place in the spring. For other students, a more formal approach requiring specialized learning opportunities for individual and/or small groups of students will be needed to continue learning during the summer. Some students will need both.

- Plans should connect to the learning that occurred during the school year through both face-to-face instruction and learning at a distance. Informal learning opportunities will help maintain the learning that occurred during the school year. Unfinished and new learning can be addressed through formal learning opportunities.

- District and school leaders are encouraged to use a collaborative process that involves teachers and support staff in the development of summer learning plans. Considerations should be given to each district's communities, parents and caregivers, students, staff, and resources.

- Summer learning programs will be different for each district based on available staff, funding, resources, and technology. These elements will affect the opportunities available to students.

- Teacher and support staff involvement in informal learning opportunities during the summer months is voluntary and should be encouraged, but cannot be required. Formal summer program offerings should be based on teacher and support staff interest and availability, as well as available funds.

- Suggestions on how parents and caregivers can support student learning this summer during social distancing and the absence of face-to-face summer programs should be communicated before the end of the school year.

Resources

A wide variety of resources are available for both informal and formal summer learning opportunities. Many resources are geared toward teachers. Additional resources are also available for sharing with families.

Research

An extensive list of research tied to evidence-based best practices was reviewed and used in the development of this document.

Elementary & Middle School

The goal this summer should be to continue learning for all students. Local educators should plan and implement summer learning programs and opportunities for students that extend the learning that took place during the school year. This section offers two different approaches, informal and formal, to summer learning in order to reach all students in the community. Informal approaches are applicable for all students and can be integrated into daily summer routines and engage parents and families in their child's learning. Formal approaches are specialized learning opportunities for individual and/or small groups of students who need additional, targeted intervention.

The guidance in this section is provided at the elementary and middle school levels for literacy and mathematics. The information offered provides a starting point for district and school leaders in the design and implementation of district-wide or school-wide summer learning opportunities and programs.

ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL LITERACY

When addressing summer learning opportunities to support literacy, educators should consider approaches that are informal, such as outreach to students and families with encouragement and resources to continue learning during the summer months. In these cases, educators can lean on literacy lessons from earlier in the school year that supported comprehension and provide families with ideas for everyday enrichment activities that support literacy learning. In addition, educators should implement approaches that are formal and carefully planned to meet selected learning targets. Formal approaches include teacher-directed activities with modes of support that range from one-on-one or small group learning sessions to weekly activities that can be completed independently or with a family member. Some children will benefit from both approaches.

Take a Break Outside

When you take a break outside it provides energy, brings families together, and creates learning opportunities that can supplement in-home activities. Visit local or state parks, find local trails, or explore the backyard. Then connect what students have observed (an interesting plant or animal) to an eBook or online article.

Summer literacy initiatives should be ambitious and include the researched components found in the Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy documents developed by the Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) a subcommittee of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA), General Education Leadership Network (GELN).

Informal Learning Opportunities – Educators and Students

Reading, access to books (print or digital), and life experiences outside of school are linked to positive impacts on students' comprehension and vocabulary development. Educators can support students in choosing to continue literacy activities this summer by providing informal opportunities for literacy learning and encouraging reading, writing, and listening engagement. Teachers might offer check-ins for students to read aloud and/or talk about summer experiences through a phone call or virtually, depending on the availability of technology. For more student-volunteered learning activities, teachers may provide virtual book club opportunities (depending on available technology), offer to

PBS Kids offers an array of activities and games that can enhance learning and a special site for parents that provides resources and tips for planning learning activities.

set up classmates as virtual or traditional pen pals, or mail/email parents a list of high-engagement books for students to enjoy this summer. In addition to offering ideas for reading, it is important to remind students of comprehension strategies that were taught earlier in the year and can now be used when reading independently or with family members. Teachers also are encouraged to set up informal meetings to support summer activities that promote vocabulary development through discourse. During this time, teachers might prompt students to talk about their summer experiences, books or articles read, or other topics of interest. Teachers may also offer to play games, such as scrabble and charades, to build vocabulary. These meetings can occur in-person using appropriate social distancing or virtually.

Informal Learning Opportunities – Educators and Families

Communication between teachers and families has a positive impact on student engagement in learning activities. Text messages, phone calls, or letters to the home can be useful in supporting families to promote literacy learning at home this summer. Consider providing simple guidance or minimal recommendations, such as reading 20 minutes a day for kindergarten through second grade students and 30 minutes or longer per day for students in third grade and above. Another recommendation to families could include spending time discussing a book, paired with resources. This will offer some structure and encourage families to support learning activities that will ultimately impact comprehension and vocabulary growth. Teachers can suggest high-leverage strategies, ones that research indicates are effective, for parents to use while reading with their children. For some families, teachers may provide resources at a more individualized level to meet a child's literacy learning needs.

In addition to the information above, middle school educators can offer families high-leverage strategies, such as engaging in debate or talking with their children about books they are reading. Parents should be encouraged to support their child's reading without concern for the length of the text or genre. Novels, short stories, articles, graphic novels (comic books), cooking recipes, and poetry are all forms of reading.

Family Activities

Spending time together participating in activities such as jump rope, hopscotch, sports, hide and seek, building forts, skipping, or walking a family pet, can promote family engagement and give students a boost of energy during the day.

Formal Learning Opportunities

A successful literacy learning opportunity will have a focus that is connected to the school's academic program. The approach could be on specific learning needs of the students or could include a preview of learning targets or skills for the upcoming school year. These summer reading initiatives should be ambitious and include the researched components in the Essential School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices in Literacy – Essential 9. Under normal circumstances, Michigan schools are working to ensure every child receives the MAISA/GELN Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy in every classroom, every day. At this time, intensive summer literacy programs should prioritize to address the Essentials that make the most sense to meet individual and/or collective student needs. This will support the research that indicates successful summer reading programs are connected to research-based instructional practices.

For students in lower elementary grades, decoding at grade level is essential. Educators can look to specific instructional practices 4 and 5 in the Literacy Essentials: Grades K to 3 for support in addressing phonological awareness and explicit instruction in letter-sound relationship. The activities suggested in the document may be done through small group or individual sessions (in-person using appropriate social distancing or virtually). In collaboration with families, specific practice activities can be shared to support learning growth between sessions.

For students who have strong fluency and intonation with grade level texts, the focus may shift to comprehension, which allows for knowledge-building. This is addressed in instructional practice number 7 in the Literacy Essentials: Grades K to 3 and instructional practice number 2 in Literacy Essentials: Grades 4 to 5. Educators can leverage free online articles and e-books to create reading opportunities to support student comprehension and knowledge-building. A book club or topic study approach with individuals or small groups (in-person using appropriate social distancing or virtually) can be provided with connected assignments or projects for students to work independently, with classmates, or with family members.

For students in grades 6-8 who are struggling with increasingly complex texts in content areas, educators can focus on instructional practice number 3 in the Essential Practices for Disciplinary Literacy: Grades 6 to 12 document. Older students will benefit from explicit instruction on navigating complex text and developing skills needed to respond to higher-level questioning. This can be done through a topic approach using shorter, informational articles in print or digital version. Adding YouTube videos and an opportunity to work with small groups to build knowledge, vocabulary, and complete short projects with the teacher as facilitator may support engagement and motivation for students.

Literacy Essentials

Literacy Essentials are a collection of professional resources that contain research-supported instructional practices that improve literacy development for students when used with every child, in every classroom, every day. The essentials were developed through a partnership between the Michigan Department of Education and the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN) Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF).

Virtual Field Trips

Families can join their students on virtual field trips to enhance student learning. Suggestions include:

- Pure Michigan Virtual Travel
- The Nature Conservancy
- Detroit Zoo
- Detroit Institute of Arts
- Ann Arbor Children's Museum STEM Field Trips
- DNR Nature at Home
- Virtual field trips around the world

ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL MATHEMATICS

Summer learning opportunities to support mathematics should include intentional hands-on math tasks that encourage children to persevere in solving them. While this may look different with distance learning, it is important for children to solve math tasks together and share their thinking with each other.

Informal Learning Opportunities – Educators and Students

Teachers are encouraged to provide informal opportunities for math learning by supporting students in choosing to engage in math activities during the summer. Educators may provide math club opportunities, offer to set up classmates as gaming pals, or mail/email lists of high-engagement math programs that are available online or on television during the summer. These activities can occur in-person using appropriate social distancing or virtually.

The Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BCGA) is offering free virtual clubhouse experiences for students to provide social connectedness and educational enrichment. Programs are offered by age/grade level to provide age-appropriate and engaging programming. BGCA participation contributes to improved academic achievement and school engagement.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA

Informal Learning Opportunities – Educators and Families

Families play a vital role in children's mathematical thinking. They should be given ideas that are fun, easy to implement, require no special materials, and can be included in daily life, such as counting items in the house, noticing patterns on playing cards, counting and matching cereal by colors and shapes, and one-to-one counting while playing family games. Parents can use these ideas to help their child maintain their mathematical understanding. The following are questions for teachers to use when partnering with families for math engagement at home:

- What types of daily activities involve mathematical thinking?

- Where might you see math happening during the day?

- How can your child engage in these activities with you?

- What mathematical ideas or concepts are important to you and your family?

- What types of mathematical support might you appreciate from me?

Stats at Home

The United States Census Bureau offers Home and Distance Learning Activities, highlighting the *Statistics in Schools* program with more than 200 free learning activities.

Formal Learning Opportunities

Summer learning programs in mathematics should be connected to the school's academic program. The approach could be on specific learning needs of the students or could include a preview of learning targets or skills for the upcoming school year. Summer learning programs need to leverage available resources while keeping all learners in mind. Students, parents and caregivers, families, and communities are valuable contributors to the growth of a student's mathematical identity. When educators collaborate with multiple partners in the learning process, it provides meaningful and potentially culturally responsive learning opportunities for the educator and the student.

Students should be able to recognize and perceive themselves as knowers, doers, and contributors in the field of mathematics. The strategies embedded in the Essential Instructional Practices in Early Mathematics: Prekindergarten to Grade 3 provide guidance in supporting educators. Teachers should engage students and incorporate virtual opportunities to play, tinker, and be creative with various concepts while students are explaining, demonstrating, and showcasing mathematical ideas. Teachers should pose open-ended tasks to students during small group sessions and peer-to-peer conversations, which can be conducted in-person using appropriate social distancing or virtually. This will allow students to engage in sense-making and problem-solving using mathematics.

Summer math programs should include the following in their design. With learning at a distance, the last two bullets will need to be achieved with the use of technology.

- Provide targeted, intentionally designed learning experiences that are engaging, active, and maximize flexibility to meet specific learning needs.
- Encourage problem solving by providing students with opportunities to generate creative strategies for solving intriguing mathematics problems on their own.
- Design to develop and support math talk by providing ample opportunities for students to communicate strategies and ideas with each other.
- Emphasize students working collaboratively to engage in rich mathematical tasks that draw on each other's knowledge and deepen learning.

Explore Art

Art can inspire, promote self-confidence, improve cognition, and help students develop a growth mindset. Educators can encourage students to be part of a design challenge, create an art project with friends, paint inside or outside, or create a mosaic with stones or other outdoor material.

High School

High school students typically attend summer learning programs to earn credit, which is not the case for elementary and middle school students. It is acknowledged and respected that many high school students have jobs, care for younger siblings or family members, and/or may participate in various hobbies, all of which provide learning in non-traditional forms. Knowing this, districts may consider providing a virtual summer learning experience that matches the needs of their high school students. Michigan Virtual offers over 160 summer courses that include credit recovery courses as well as a variety of elective courses, such as computer science, career exploration, and digital photography.

Equitable summer learning programs are designed with all learners in mind and offer most activities using print and analog media and materials. Programs at the high school level must be accessible by all, engaging, feasible, and recognize the independence of high school learners. Offering choices to students is key. To be most effective, choice should be relevant and meaningful, competence-enhancing, and realistically manageable.

HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Informal Learning Opportunities

Overall, research supports the importance of reading 30 minutes or longer per day to improve vocabulary and increase overall literacy. High school students should be encouraged to read what interests them, read to younger students, or write for authentic purposes, such as letters, resumes, and journal writing. Teachers may choose to offer optional writing clubs or book clubs based on high-interest topics. Reminding families and students to work on college applications or scholarship writing over the summer is an authentic way for students to build and maintain writing skills.

Formal Learning Opportunities

Many districts have established summer learning programs for high school students. To support student reading throughout the summer, districts may consider providing students with access to print books. In addition, educators can encourage students to engage in sustained independent writing within a wide range of genres. Encouraging students to talk with teachers, peers, and/or family members about a writing prompt can increase student interest and engagement. Teachers can offer instruction and support around mentor texts in order to scaffold student understanding.

Intentional efforts to build vocabulary and conceptual knowledge is integral to supporting student reading and writing development. This can be accomplished when teachers present vocabulary as language in use, provide multiple opportunities for students to review and use new vocabulary over time, engage students in morphemic analysis, and encourage conversation about vocabulary.

Enjoy Music

Music can enhance language capabilities, improve memory, promote teamwork, and heighten problem-solving skills. Ideas to integrate music into summer learning are to engage in a virtual concert, learn a new instrument, host a family dance party, or create a family playlist around a specific topic or theme.

Intensive summer literacy programs should prioritize the Essential Practices for Disciplinary Literacy: Grades 6 to 12 to meet individual and/or collective student needs. This will ensure that summer literacy programs are connected to research-based instructional practices.

HIGH SCHOOL MATHEMATICS

Informal Learning Opportunities

Educators can provide support to families by building community and engaging learners in doing math by talking about math together. Resources are provided to help engage learners in reasoning, problem solving, creating justifications, and critiquing arguments to support and extend their math learning throughout the summer.

Family Games

Family games that promote math skills, such as counting, reasoning, and problem solving could include: Dominoes, Monopoly, Uno, Yahtzee, Blokus, Chutes and Ladders, Connect 4, Hi Ho! Cherry-O, Trouble, Qwirkle, and Catan.

Formal Learning Opportunities

As indicated above, many districts already have identified summer learning programs for high school students and the additional resources can complement those programs. Educators may expand on the informal approaches to math and extend them to ensure equitable access to formal summer learning.

PSAT/SAT/ACT Test Prep Resources

Some students and families might want to focus on PSAT, SAT, and/or ACT test practice, as doing well on these tests can lead to scholarship money and entry to higher learning.

PSAT & SAT practice tests with answer keys:
- PSAT/NMSQT practice (grades 8-10)
- SAT practice (grades 10 & 11)

Khan Academy SAT math practice

Khan Academy SAT ELA practice

MeL: Prepare for College from Learning Express

For educators helping students with PSAT/SAT prep

Common App: for students needing to work on college application essays

College Admissions Test Preparation: Resources to explore college and practice for ACT, PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, AP, TOEFL iBT, and more.

Career and Technical Education

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs may continue learning at a distance through the summer by using the Perkins grant year extension in coordination with the Section 61a(1) added cost funding extension to provide credential specific skills training. School districts may offer a variety of approaches to maximize the number of students served while supporting social distancing and other criteria.

CTE programs are encouraged to continue to focus on the strategies outlined in the (CTE) Virtual Delivery Guidance memo. Teachers and Work-Based Learning coordinators may design lessons with an intentional focus on the remote delivery of Work-Based Learning options, review and assessment of career ready practices, and planning of student leadership activities for the 2020-2021 school year. CTE teachers should be mindful to utilize instructional strategies that engage students, require greater depth of knowledge, and demonstrate understanding through formative assessment of student competencies. Please contact the program specific MDE CTE Education Consultant with questions or recommendations for the MDE CTE Instructional Resources webpage.

Special Populations Students (Grades 9 – 12)

CTE students in special populations categories face unique challenges and their needs should be addressed to ensure they continue to have the opportunity to learn at a distance. CTE staff should accommodate the needs of all special populations students with caregivers, special populations coordinators and counselors, special education teachers and all additional support personnel to continue supporting and addressing each student's unique needs. Special populations resources have been identified on the MDE COVID-19 CTE Instructional Resources webpage.

Student Career Planning – Educational Development Plan (EDP) Development (Grades 7 – 12)

A robust student Educational Development Plan (EDP) is dependent upon the completion of comprehensive career awareness, career exploration, and career preparation activities. Specific strategies are outlined in the Michigan Career Development Model (MI CDM), which is designed to provide all students (K-12) with the necessary knowledge and skills for success in a career of their choice and encourage lifelong learning.

Early Middle College (EMC) Programs (Grades 9 – 12)

Throughout the summer, districts are encouraged to recruit Early Middle College (EMC) students by sending letters and emails to students and parents and promote EMC opportunities by including a district staff person's email and phone number for additional information. In collaboration with postsecondary partners, MDE recommends summertime virtual bootcamps to support current and new EMC students. Many EMC programs recruit students who will continue to need social and emotional supports.

EMC programs can identify and provide students with summertime tutoring opportunities that support academic development. Consider taking advantage of the new Michigan College Access Network (MCAN) free statewide college advising hotline to support college and career advising.

English Learners & Students with Disabilities

English Learners

During the summer months, an intentional focus on specific instructional components will enable English Learners (ELs) to more fully engage and maintain or increase their English proficiency. These components include direct English language instruction that prioritizes oral language development, individual or small group pre-teaching to ensure meaningful access to core content instruction, and English as a Second Language family-based activities. Native language support that bridges the native and target languages is enormously beneficial when and where available. The extended period removed from the classroom and school environment reduced the opportunities for ELs to engage in academic and conversational English. Therefore, activities that engage students in speaking and listening are critical. Additional resources to support English learners can be found at MDE COVID-19 Online Instructional Resources, Meeting the Needs of English Learners.

Students with Disabilities

District determinations of summer learning opportunities should be made available for all students, including students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), to increase student skills, reduce loss of instructional time during summer break, and prepare students to resume their education without regression when the new school year begins. The determination for Extended School Year (ESY) services is defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and is a supplemental opportunity for students with an IEP (34 CFR §300.106). Additional guidance pertaining to ESY services will be available with the upcoming release of version 2.0 of the existing special education guidance document. Information on providing equitable education to students with disabilities can be found at MDE COVID-19 Education Information and Resources, Special Education.

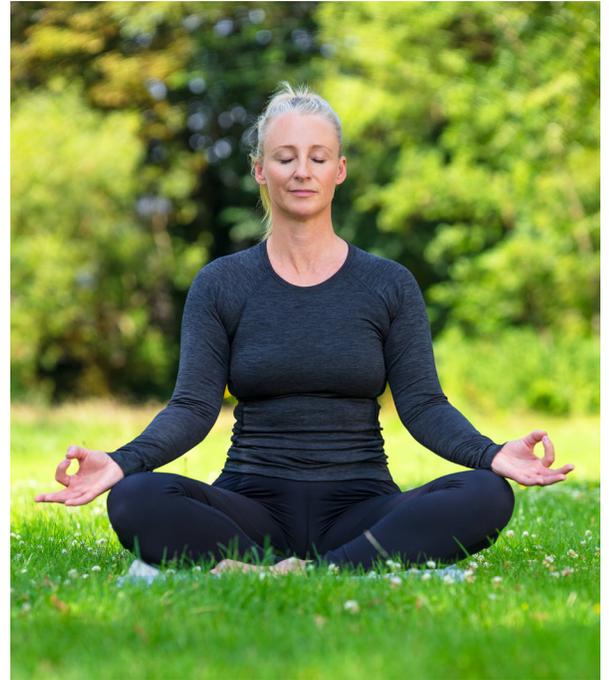# Social Emotional Wellness

Educator Wellness

The pandemic has made the focus for educator self-care more critical as teachers shift to teaching from a distance, developing the skills required for virtual learning, and tending to their own families. Educators are encouraged to use these summer months to:

- Give yourself permission to acknowledge your feelings.
- Journal or talk about those emotions with a trusted individual.
- Examine the degree to which you maintain nurturing routines. Structure provides security.
- Take walks, get outside, read a good book, play an instrument, or enjoy a hobby.
- Recognize these challenging times and take time to reflect on these experiences.
- Remember you cannot pour from an empty cup; others need you, and you need you, too.

Student Wellness

End of school, summertime, and back to school are rites of passage that have been affected by safety concerns related to COVID 19. Children and families are always encouraged through the support they receive from caring educators.

- Think about connecting. Remind them that you care and will be excited to see them again.
- Consider ways to stay connected. Sending inspirational postcards through the mail or virtual check-ins will help them stay engaged and feel valued.
- Encourage students to continue developing their own Social Emotional Learning (SEL) skills.
- Offer tips to cope with their emotions. They can draw or write what they are feeling and/or find healthy outlets such as bike rides or playing outside.

"We are delving into uncharted territory, so give yourself and others grace."

– Learning at a Distance Guidance document,
Michigan Department of Education

Public Library Resources

Educators are encouraged to partner with public libraries to ensure that students and families are informed about summer reading programs and other resources that are provided by their local public libraries. According to a three-year study, students who participated in public library summer reading programs scored higher on reading achievement tests at the beginning of the next school year than their peers who did not participate.

Digital resources and programming provided to communities through their public library, combined with Michigan eLibrary (MeL) resources, create a wealth of vetted information on a variety of topics and subjects. Summer learning programs will benefit when library media specialists coordinate with public libraries to connect resources and programming.

Nearly all public libraries offer free public Wi-Fi access, summer reading programs, and basic digital literacy training. Many also host social connection events for adults and teens, such as book discussion groups or gaming programs.

Public Library Service This Summer

Although public libraries may be closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers, students, and parents can access library services from the safety and comfort of their home. Free digital content in a variety of formats including audiobooks, eBooks, music, movies, magazines, and more is available. Local libraries may curate lists of materials that students will find useful for summer learning. Many public libraries have boosted their Wi-Fi signals to allow community members to connect safely from their cars in a library's parking lot. Check to see when the local library will reopen and if/when it will offer curbside services.

Most library events this summer will be held online. Libraries are working hard to foster community and adapt inclusive literacy-based programming for this summer to share remotely with families. The Collaborative Summer Library Program theme this year is "Imagine Your Story," which highlights fairy tales, mythology, and fantasy literature. Virtual programs will be highlighted until it is safe for groups to meet in the library's public spaces. Contact the local public library for a list of summer programs.

If you are not a library card holder, this is a good time to apply for one online. You can use the Michigan Library Directory to locate local public libraries.

Michigan eLibrary (MeL)

Michigan eLibrary resources are provided to all schools and libraries across Michigan. MeL offers 24/7/365 reading and research materials for students. Whether the focus is on content-specific curriculum, Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy, or Michigan Integrated Technology Competencies for Students (MITECS), there are eResources that support teaching and learning at every grade level. Educators can learn more about MeL eResources through MeL's Educator Guide and connect to Grades K-5 and Grades 6-12 eResources by visiting MeL.org.

Best Bets to Get Started with MeL

- **PreK-3rd Grades: PebbleGo –** Content available from the Animal and Social Studies modules. For beginning readers, this eResource includes read-along audio, multimedia, and activity sheets.

- **K-8th Grades: eBooks K-8 –** Thousands of fiction and nonfiction titles. Available as PDFs, electronic publications (EPUBs), or downloadable files.

- **8th-12th Grades: eBooks High School –** Thousands of fiction and nonfiction titles. Includes a selection of teacher resources. Available as PDFs, EPUBs, or downloadable files.

Book-Based Summer Reading Programs for Families

Book-based programs are beneficial to all students. Research supports that having access to books of student interest or choice improves reading achievement. Book-based summer reading programs that offer books of student interest/ choice to be sent home is an evidence-based strategy for mitigating summer literacy learning loss and/or improving literacy skills.

Developing Book-Based Summer Reading Programs

Distributing print books to students to read over the summer has been shown to be an effective reading intervention, according to research (Lindsay, 2010). The What Works Clearinghouse provides examples of many book-based summer reading programs and can be a great resource for educators who are developing a book-based summer reading program. Educators who are interested in creating their own book-based program should keep the following in mind:

- Provide eight to ten books (which can be purchased or borrowed from the school library) to students to read at home over the summer. Books can be loaned to students before the end of the school year. Other options are to mail or distribute books through school-based curbside service or meal pick-up sites.
- Provide guidance to parents on co-reading and interacting with children and send reminders through postcards, phone calls, emails, or texts.
- Allow students some choice in books to be read during the summer. Before the end of the school year, educators can collaborate with library media specialists or other staff to help identify lists of high-interest books, sources for books, and methods for student selection and distribution.

Family Engagement and Summer Learning

Meaningful family engagement is a collaborative process among families, educators, providers, and partners to support and improve the learning, development, and health of every learner. One element that is extremely important both during the school year and during the summer months is effective and efficient communication with families. This includes regular two-way calls/texts/ emails to collect and share information with families. This empowers families to support students and can lead to increased student achievement. Resources for two-way communication are:

- Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project Tips for Teachers: Maintaining Relationships of Trust in a Time of Social Distancing (Parent Teacher Home Visit Project www.pthvp.org)
- How to Prevent the Summer Slide and Help Reduce Educational Inequality
- Strong Home-School Bonds for English Learners: A Proactive Approach

Program Funding Options

There are many new opportunities for districts to fund the expenses associated with summer programs. The Michigan Department of Education has provided several memos with guidance to districts on use of their state and federal funds during the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaborative district leadership teams and representative stakeholders are encouraged to review and prioritize their needs for summer programming for all students. It is important to note: Activities planned for summer must match the funding source's allowability guidelines.

Specific funding sources for summer programs can be identified in an amended 2019-2020 Consolidated Application, which allows for increased flexibility for the use of funds. Districts may also apply to use funds for summer programs within the 2020-2021 Consolidated Application, Section 31a, Section 35a(5) and Section 35a(9), as well as the 2020-2021 CARES Act funds. Federal Grant amendment and initial applications are now open. For more information on allowable expenditures, please see MDE COVID-19 Guidance Memos on the MDE webpage.

Educators and district leaders should collaborate on the best use of these funds for providing summer learning and family engagement. Examples of activities include:

- Provide summer stipends to educators to support and extend summer learning.
- Purchase student and teacher devices for remote learning.
- Purchase hot spots or other internet connectivity for family access.
- Provide educators with technology training.
- Provide learning materials to meet the needs of English learners and migratory students.
- Provide access to social emotional resources and personnel.
- Extend homeless services throughout the summer months.
- Extend Individualized Education Program (IEP) plans throughout the summer months.
- Purchase basic learning materials, such as paper, pencils, crayons, etc. that families may not have available.

Online Safety for Students

Online safety is extremely important for students using internet resources. Suggestions to help families navigate online resources include:

- When students are accessing the Internet, make sure they are in an open area of the home where adults are close.
- If using a personal device, ensure that security settings are set for the appropriate age of the user. The device should also have virus protection.
- Be aware of the applications students are using and why. Ask questions, such as: Is there a chat function embedded within the platform? Are students connecting only with students they know and interact with physically?
- Talk with students about online safety, making safe choices, and reporting any suspicious behavior.
- Ensure students are using safe and trusted content provided by either their school or teacher, or through other trusted sources such as a public library or the Michigan eLibrary (MeL).
- Stay informed of what students are learning and their activities.

When it comes to learning in the home, there are several resources to help ensure student safety:

- Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Chatting with Kids Booklet (PDF)
- iKeepSafe Guidance for Safe and Healthy Use of Technology – Parent/Youth Fireside Chat
- NetSmartz Protecting Your Kids Online 2.0 (PDF)
- Michigan State Police Internet Safety