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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 7, 2020

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Venessa A. Keesler, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent *V. Keesler*
Division of Educator, Student, and School Support

SUBJECT: MI Safe Schools: Michigan's 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap -
Technology Guidance – MEMO #COVID-19-084

In light of the [MI Safe Schools: Michigan's 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap](#), as outlined in [Executive Order 2020-142](#), the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) would like to highlight the following guiding questions regarding technology supporting instruction. Local education agencies (LEAs), both traditional public school districts and public school academies, should work with intermediate school districts (ISDs) to consider these questions when planning for learning at a distance scenarios:

- I. How can the district provide connectivity for students who lack internet connectivity?
 - A. Share the Michigan mapping tool of [public WiFi hotspot](#) locations with students, parents, and families.
 - B. Distribute district-owned or leased hotspots to families and guardians who indicate that they lack internet, only have internet available by a mobile phone, or lack reliable internet connectivity.
 - C. Boost district network WiFi so it is accessible in other off-campus locations.
 - D. Equip school buses with WiFi.
 - i. Students can access and complete homework while in transit.
 - ii. Consider placing school buses in strategic locations overnight across the district in places that lack broadband access.
 - E. Notify parents and guardians of the website [EveryoneOn.org](#), which customizes discounted internet service availability options based on zip code.

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II. What funds are available to support technology?

- A. Districts can apply for [Education Equity Fund](#) grants from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund. The purpose of the grant is to address digital and mental health equity by providing targeted funding to reduce the digital divide and support Michigan's highest need districts. Districts can apply for the funds through MEGS+ through September 30, 2020.
- B. Districts are encouraged to leverage the [Title IV, Part A Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant](#) funds. Districts must not spend more than 15 percent of the Title IV technology-specific allocation for purchasing technology infrastructure (technology content, devices, equipment, and software applications).
- C. Districts may use other federal title dollars to support technology. For example, a school incorporating digital learning in a Title I schoolwide program might use Title I, Part A funds to purchase devices and digital learning resources to support all students and staff if this use is supported by the school's comprehensive needs assessment and schoolwide plan. More information regarding the use of title funds can be found [here](#).
- D. Districts are encouraged to monitor current and pending state and federal legislation for further opportunities.

III. What support tools do our students, staff, parents/guardians need?

- A. Create instructional materials for the district's learning management system (LMS).
 - i. Differentiate the guidance based on target audience.
 - ii. Share instructional documents, videos, and interactive webinars with students, staff, and parents.
- B. Name technology ambassadors across the district and in each building.
 - i. Consider peer-to-peer support for both educators and students.
- C. Identify a single system or single sign-on for parent/teacher interaction.
 - i. Identify a single contact for device hardware issues in each building.
 - 1. Contacts should oversee the following processes:
 - a. Asset tracking and software inventory.
 - b. Deploying/receiving and sanitizing technology assets.
 - c. Repairing/replacing damaged devices.
- D. Ensure appropriate compliance with the federal [Children's Internet Protection Act](#) (CIPA). Schools must:
 - i. Have an internet safety policy in place to protect students that covers, but is not limited to, access to inappropriate matter; safety and security when using electronic communications; unauthorized access and other unlawful activities by minors; unauthorized disclosure and dissemination of personal information; and restricting minors' access to materials harmful to them.
 - ii. Include technology protection measures that block/filter internet access.

- IV. How do our technology/software tools support student needs and outcomes?
- A. Ensure that technology leaders and instructional leaders collaborate when choosing appropriate technology tools.
 - B. Consider personalized learning options when and where possible.
 - C. Technology tools may need to be customized for a specific target audience, such as, but not limited to, English learners or students with disabilities.

School districts should address these questions in collaboration with ISD technology directors. For more information from MDE, questions may be submitted to the education technology unit at edtech@michigan.gov.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Directors