



March 25, 2020

Staff, Families, and Communities,

As a result of our unexpected closure, some families in our communities have expressed concern and confusion regarding online learning for students. The Superintendents of the Shiawassee RESD service area believe in equitable access to education for all students and are committed to this end within and between our districts.

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) [states](#) that for school districts to adequately provide online learning they must be able to answer “Yes” to ALL of the following questions:

- Do ALL students have access to appropriate learning devices?
- Do ALL students have access to the internet?
- Can the district successfully support the needs of ALL learners? (Including all IEP, 504, English Learners and other student accommodations)
- Have educators previously participated in professional learning opportunities that prepared them to transition teaching and learning online successfully?
- Have students had enough prior exposure to online learning to be successful?
- Does the district have in place an online management system to effectively support online learning?

Public schools cannot provide instruction that knowingly excludes any student or groups of students and have an obligation to ensure equitable access for all. Additionally, the MDE answered the question about instructional time during this school closure in a [memo](#) released today stating “there is no mechanism to earn instructional time during a period of mandated school closure” and also sent out a [press release](#) on Friday regarding this topic. We will continue to seek assistance from the State regarding this concern.

Considerable planning, resource allocation, and training must occur to effectively transition to online instruction. While districts are taking steps toward this, significant barriers must be addressed to fulfill the mandate that a public education is free and accessible by all.

As school leaders, we are humbled by watching our communities mobilize to help one another. So many volunteers have stepped in to help families and students. This includes our staff who are sharing optional enrichment resources, playing music and reading stories on Facebook Live and assembling or delivering food to those in need. Thank you for your patience, understanding and support as we work through this unprecedented time together.

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