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Spotlighting How ESAs Impact the Nation's Education System

Michigan Association Launches Effort To Connect All Michigan Students To Internet

WHO: The Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA), Lansing, MI

CHALLENGE: The COVID-19 pandemic meant many Michigan schools closed to in-person learning and pivoted to remote learning for students. Although most students and educators were able to access the Internet from home, many were unable to do so due to the lack of appropriate devices or Internet connections. Initial data showed 500,000 students and educators could not access the Internet.

SOLUTION: To assess and address the need for all students and educators to have Internet access, the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) and its affiliate, Michigan Education Technology Leaders (METL) recognized that private and public partnerships were necessary and formed the MiConnect initiative. MAISA received a \$300,000 planning grant from one of its public partners, The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, to begin that work.

RESULT: A comprehensive effort to analyze the connectivity gap among Michigan students and educators is underway with the ultimate goal of leveraging public and private partnerships to close the gap and provide digital inclusion.

CONTACT: Dr. William Miller, executive director of MAISA, 517-327-9263, gomaisa.org

Pullout Quote: "When a student does not have access to the Internet and online learning resources like their peers, simply because the broadband infrastructure doesn't exist to reach their home, they are left at a disadvantage and inevitably start falling behind," Michigan Sen. Rosemary Bayer said. "I'm grateful the Mott Foundation recognizes the need for us to close this gap and am excited to see the work MAISA will do so that all students, no matter where they are located, have a fair chance at success."