

A young girl with blonde hair in two pigtails, wearing an orange long-sleeved shirt, is seen from behind, writing on a green chalkboard. The chalkboard has some faint white markings, including a plus sign and a vertical line. The girl is holding a piece of chalk in her right hand.

CHOICES in EDUCATION

**QUARANTINE
SERVICE GIVES
STUDENTS PURPOSE**

PAGE 3

**FRONT LINES
SUPPORTING OUR
TEACHERS**

PAGE 8



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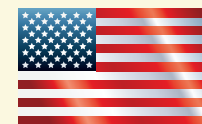
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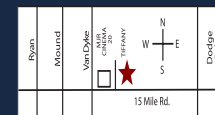
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MENTAL HEALTH

Service learning gives students purpose, connection in quarantine

The typical routine a school year brings has been lost this year, as students adjust to hybrid or fully remote learning models and ever-changing reopening plans. According to McKinsey, 75% of the 50 largest school districts in the country have decided to start remotely, and the UN estimates that 94% of the world's student population has been impacted.

While the disruption the coronavirus has caused the educational system is clear, the long-term impact on students' mental health is even greater cause for concern. Research recently published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* found that young people who are lonely are up to three times more likely to develop depression, creating mental health issues that could last nearly a decade. The study found that more than one-third of adolescents reported a high level of loneliness during lockdown. While these findings are alarming, utilizing service-learning to supplement traditional curriculum can give students a sense of purpose and connection, helping mitigate loneliness in a digital environment.

One program that has shown success in fostering social and emotional learning is the Lead4Change Student Leadership Program, which encompasses digital lessons in leadership, as well as creating and implementing team projects to meet a need in the community.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

More than one-third of adolescents reported a high level of loneliness during lockdown, according to a recent study published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*.

“What I want people to take away from our project is that even through isolation, you can still find ways to help out in your community,” says Genesis Morgane, a student from Garner, N.C. who created

the “Corona Relief Crew” through the program, distributing kits with essential food and supplies to the homeless and those in nursing homes who have been severely impacted by the pandemic.

While the pandemic meant that students had to rapidly adjust to physical distancing guidelines, they were successful in completing their project and building meaningful relationships in a remote environ-

ment.

“The most amazing part of their efforts was that everything was done virtually,” says Dr. Cleopatra Lacewell, the teacher overseeing the Corona Relief Crew. “The youth had to en-

gage one another through emails, texts and a computer screen, which is often a challenge for me as an adult.”

The Corona Relief Crew was honored by Lead4Change with a \$10,000 grant for the nonprofit of their choice, but an equally rewarding outcome of the project was instilling in its participants a sense of meaning in connection in their community.

“We decided that everyone is at home, alone, having to stay in quarantine and distance themselves from everyone else,” says Morgane. “We said, ‘Why don’t we think about them and let them know that we have not forgotten about them.’”

For more information about the Lead4Change Student Leadership Program and accompanying Challenge, visit lead4change.org.

The disruption students face due to the pandemic is widespread, but not evenly distributed. The UN’s research found that groups that are already vulnerable when it comes to receiving education—those living in poor or rural areas, girls, refugees, and persons with disabilities—experience the greatest impact. The good news is that many digital programs like Lead4Change, which is a free program for all participants, only require enthusiasm and investment of time from students and their teachers.

Story courtesy of StatePoint Media

ORGANIZATION

Five smart ways to keep kids organized

Simple organizational habits can help kids have a successful school year. Whether kids are in the classroom, learning remotely, or a mix of both, you can help them stay organized and motivated all school year in the following ways ...

Story courtesy of StatePoint Media



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

1. Resume the Routine. A structured routine is important during the school year. Establish set bedtimes and mealtimes for good school year habits.

2. Simplify Shopping. In addition to the usual school supplies, stock up on extra face masks, personal tissues and hand sanitizer. If your child is learning virtually, you may want to consider having extra USB chargers and ports, noise-canceling headphones – to help older siblings concentrate – and even blue light filtering glasses for kids that will be in front of a computer or tablet more than usual.

3. Set Up a Homework Station. A dedicated space to store supplies and paperwork is key to staying organized. Let kids take pride in this space so they want to spend time studying there by having them create their own accessories and decorating them to their liking. Duck Tape provides an easy, inexpensive way to add flair to school gear. Cover notebooks and folders in a favorite Duck Tape design, customize desk organizers and décor with cool on-trend colors, or craft one-of-a-kind creations, like pencil pouches and tablet covers. Available in more than 250 colors, designs and licenses, there's a roll to suit any kid's style.

4. Stick to the Schedule. It's important that students, parents and teachers stay on track. Find a unique way to display activities, homework or personal messages to your kids like a "quote of the day." You can use colored tape and chalkboard tape to outline a fun activity chart on a dry erase board or chalkboard easel. In addition to to-do lists and homework assignments, make sure to include outdoor time for recess and opportunities for arts and crafts. At the end of each day, sit together to check off everything that's been completed and help your kids update the schedule for the next day – this way they stay engaged and excited for what's to come.

5. Label Supplies. Kids are forgetful and it's easy for supplies to become misplaced or swapped with other children. To ease your mind about your child sharing pencils or accidentally grabbing the wrong backpack, have a night where you sit down and label supplies with colorful Duck Tape. Your child can select favorite colors and customize folders for each subject. If learning from home, this is also great way to prevent "he stole my pencil" arguments amongst siblings.

For more school craft projects and DIY inspiration, visit duckbrand.com.

RESOURCES

Distance-learning: What you need to succeed at home

Is your family distance-learning? Having the resources you need at home can be the key to success. Here are a few tools to consider as you navigate an unusual school year:

▪ **A Library Card:** If students lack access to the school's physical library, your public library can be an invaluable fount of information to turn to this school year. While it's true that some library systems have limited their print materials available for check-out, keep in mind that many offer a rich collection of electronic resources, which can be checked out instantaneously from the safety of home.

▪ **Math Tools:** Math class can be an especially challenging subject for students to tackle in the remote

learning context. Luckily, online tools exist which can help. Check out ClassPad.net, a free web-based platform featuring tools for calculation, graphing, geometry, statistics and more. Its interactive menu enables students and educators to draw geometry figures freehand and input calculations as they would on scratch paper. Users can also plot data points, as well as add text labels, expressions and pictures to graphs or geometry diagrams. However, for those who prefer a physical graphing calculator, look for a tool that can handle coursework now and in the future. For example, the fx-9750GIII from Casio contains all the features needed to make remote coursework easy to follow.

▪ **A Dedicated Workspace:** While desks used for remote learning may double function as a place for free time journaling and personal projects, drawing a clear mental separation between the school day and personal life is important. Students can make a few visual swaps to signal when class is in session and it is time to focus on schoolwork. These swaps may include using a particular setting on the desk lamp, clearing away personal objects or tacking up school-related paperwork to a corkboard during the day.

▪ **A Hotspot:** If you have multiple people learning and working from home, it doesn't hurt to have a mobile hotspot on hand in case of Internet outages or other connection snafus.

This can help ensure students don't miss a remote class session or lose their connection when it's most needed.

▪ **Smart Planners:** Free apps can help students organize their coursework so they never forget an assignment or quiz, as well as offer the tools needed for better time management. Unlike traditional paper planners or calendars, a smart digital planner actually learns the habits of the student in order to tailor push notifications and alerts.

As your family once again falls into the groove of distance-learning, a few tools and considerations can help expand everyone's ability to work from home.

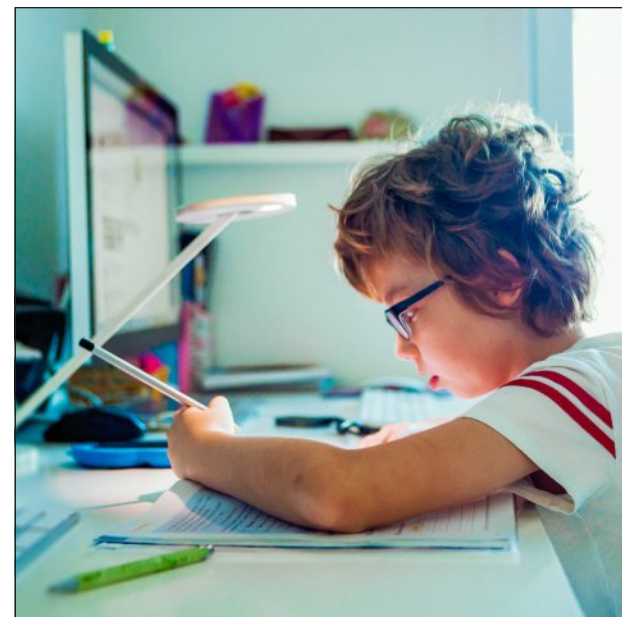


PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

As your family once again falls into the groove of distance-learning, a few tools and considerations can help expand everyone's ability to work from home.

Story courtesy of StatePoint Media

Macomb transitions most classes to virtual formats

Macomb Community College's Winter 2021 Semester will be distinguished by virtual discussion boards, live but remote instruction, online tutoring and, in a few instances, Plexiglas shields and face coverings.

"It has been and continues to be challenging moving from on ground to an online learning environment," says Julie Bartoy, nursing professor, who is teaching a nursing theory course online this semester. "I am appreciative of all the support (Macomb) has given to help me enrich my virtual classroom and adapt to the changes."

Most of Macomb's winter classes will be held in online, remote or hybrid formats, with only those requiring in-person instruction held on campus. In those instances, health and safety precautions being taken include regular cleaning and disinfecting of classrooms and labs, reconfiguration of shared spaces to maintain social distancing, installation of Plexiglas shields in high traffic areas and the required wearing of face coverings.

For Bartoy, like other Macomb faculty, it took eight weeks of intense training conducted by the college's Center for Teaching and Learning last summer to prepare for virtual instruction. Upon completion, she received her online teaching certification, required to teach online, remote and hybrid classes at Macomb.

"The assignments focused on how to create a virtual classroom environment that fosters student engagement," says Bartoy.

Terri Lawrence, Macomb biology instructor, misses the interaction with individual

students afforded by on-campus classes, but is discovering innovative ways to keep things personal.

"I start the term with a virtual discussion board where I introduce myself, and have each student introduce themselves to the class," relates Lawrence, who also teaches at the University of Windsor. "When I have (online) office hours, I get to know each student and I think this makes them realize I care."

One of Lawrence's students, Kayla McIntire, was "nervous" when she found out her Human Anatomy and Physiology class would not be held on campus this fall as initially scheduled. McIntire, who holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Michigan, is taking classes at Macomb in preparation for the physician assistant program she intends to enter next year. She attempted to take the anatomy class online during the summer, when semesters are accelerated, but found it too intense when coupled with her full-time job.

"It has been much better this semester," relates McIntire, who will be returning to Macomb to take more science classes in the winter semester. "My (online) classes have all been good experiences."



Terri Lawrence, Macomb biology instructor, holds "office" hours for her students at her kitchen table in Windsor.

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For more information about Macomb Schools, go to www.misd.net

COMMUNITY

Supporting teachers on the front lines of COVID-19

Educators are among the many on the front lines of COVID-19. During a time of immense disruption, they are quickly adapting their teaching methods, testing new skills, and discovering solutions to advance learning in profound new ways.

For K-12 educators who are designing instructional resources that align with the needs of today's remote- and hybrid-teaching realities, a new emergency fund can potentially aid their efforts. Launched by the National Geographic Society, the fund aims to directly support at least 50 teaching professionals, including formal and informal classroom educators, with grants ranging from \$1,000-8,000. In an effort to support as many teachers and students as possible, the resources created by grant recipients will become freely available on the National Geographic Society education website, and within the National Geographic Education communities on Twitter and Facebook.

"The role of teachers has never been more important as they work tirelessly to engage and inspire their students in a socially distant world," says Vicki Phillips, chief education officer at the National Geographic Society. "Our goal is to equip educators with the resources and support they need to continue creating, innovating and pioneering new ways of teaching so their peers and their students can continue growing."

The fund places particular emphasis on remote- and hybrid-learning resources, methodologies and practices that use the power of science, social studies and geography to help students understand



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

During an unusual school year, new avenues of support and funding are emerging for educators on the front lines.

the significance of current and complex challenges, such as a global pandemic.

Other priorities include instructional resources that help students bridge their personal experiences to a more global perspective on critical issues such as sustainability and social justice.

In an effort to identify, support and elevate a range of educator voices, perspectives and communities, priority will be given to those working

in communities that have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic and who have not previously received National Geographic funding. Applicants can apply individually, in collaboration with other educators or with National Geographic Explorers.

To learn more, visit NatGeoEd.org/covidgrants.

To provide additional guidance during the application process, the Society is offering weekly virtual

"Design Labs." Educators can also ask questions by visiting [@NatGeoEducation](https://twitter.com/NatGeoEducation) on Twitter.

During an unusual school year, new avenues of support and funding are emerging. Leveraging these resources can help educators continue their mission of preparing young people to confront the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Story courtesy of StatePoint Media

"The role of teachers has never been more important as they work tirelessly to engage and inspire their students in a socially distant world. Our goal is to equip educators with the resources and support they need to continue creating, innovating and pioneering new ways of teaching so their peers and their students can continue growing."

— Vicki Phillips, chief education officer at the National Geographic Society

CURRICULUM



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Be sure your student is equipped with a calculator well-suited to the curriculum.

Solving the challenge of math class this school year

Math can be one of the toughest subjects to conquer, even in a typical school year. In today's unusual learning environment, new challenges are presenting themselves to teachers and students alike.

Here is how you can help your child make the grade in math, no matter where their learning is taking place:

1. Use online resources: For distance-learners, (or students who would like to reinforce math concepts at home) free online educational resources can supplement formal instruction.

One unique site providing remote-learning support to educators, parents and teachers is Casio Cares. The site features free software, math lessons for K through 12 and live webinars, as well as provides a web-based calculation tool that supports the curriculum of grade levels 6 through college. Visit casioeducation.com to access

One unique site providing remote-learning support to educators, parents and teachers is Casio Cares.

these tools and learn more.

2. Encourage tailored learning: Leaning into the strengths of online learning can help your student make the most of this atypical school year. While online tools like webinars, instructional videos and activities may not provide the same type of interaction as an in-person classroom experience, they do have some clear advantages: such tools appeal to digital natives, can be tailored to individual needs, offer opportunities for self pacing and can be revisited again and again as needed.

3. Get equipped: Be sure your student is equipped with a calculator well-suited to the curriculum. The affordable scientific calcula-

tors and graphing calculators available from Casio feature hundreds of functions, as well as high-definition, three dimensional displays, helping students visualize mathematical concepts for a better grasp of the material. Tutorials offering in-depth instructions for using different calculator features are available online, and can expand your child's capabilities.

Remote and hybrid learning come with different challenges than regular classroom learning, especially when it comes to math class. However, new tools can help make this school year a success.

Story courtesy of StatePoint Media

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TECHNOLOGY

Keeping kids safe online this school year

Between schoolwork, socialization and gaming, kids will likely be online more than ever this year, especially with many students continuing to learn remotely. Families are yet again facing the challenge of ensuring children's online usage is balanced, healthy, and safe. Here are a few of the issues around increased screen time:

- **Disrupted sleep:** According to the National Sleep Foundation, blue light emitted from electronic devices disrupts quality shut-eye, as it can delay the release of melatonin, a natural sleep hormone. Over time, compromised sleep can create a number of physical and mental health concerns.

- **Safety threats:** With kids online more hours a day and less supervised than they would be during a typical school day, online predators have taken advantage of the situation. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's Cyber Tipline reported a notable surge in complaints.

- **Mental health issues:** The physical separation from friends, teachers and the classroom has created new mental health challenges for students, not all of which remote learning can completely address. With many adults and kids alike experiencing "Zoom fatigue," maintaining motivation throughout the school year will be even more challenging than in a typical year. Excessive online usage can also increase exposure to cyberbullying, and ultimately lead to other mental health issues, like anxiety and depression.

Despite these new chal-



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Families are again facing the challenge of ensuring children's online usage is balanced, healthy, and safe.

lenges, there are many steps parents can take to help kids strike a healthy balance with their screen time for a happier, more successful school year:

- **Set a schedule:** A typical school day includes natural breaks. Families can recreate this at home with scheduled time for kids to

walk around, stretch, and get fresh air between assignments.

- **Monitor online usage:** With parents themselves busy during the day, monitoring what children are doing online is a challenge in many cases, and impossible in others. However, screen time manage-

ment solutions for parents, such as OurPact from Eтури Corp., can prove a valuable tool in keeping kids productive and safe. Using the app, parents can set schedules, grant access to needed sites, create daily screen time allowances, block inappropriate content and apps and monitor internet

use. To learn more or download, visit OurPact.com.

- **Have a conversation:** Families should have an open dialogue about healthy digital habits. Parents can back up these conversations by setting a good example with their own device usage.

With the boost in online

usage come new health and wellness challenges. At the same time, parents can help their children navigate the remote-learning environment by taking steps to promote healthy digital habits.

Story courtesy of
StatePoint Media



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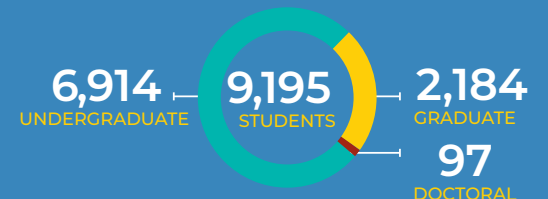
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