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WBGU to Participate in Statewide Initiative to Accelerate Learning

BOWLING GREEN, OH - WBGU-PBS is part of a new partnership that will be working with local summer and afterschool programs throughout Northwest Ohio to address disruptions to learning caused during the COVID-19 pandemic. The partnership, called *Ohio Learns 360*, includes Ohio's eight PBS stations and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). As part of this new initiative, PBS will provide these programs with various resources including standards-based curriculum and materials, virtual field trips, interactive video programs and community events all designed to accelerate student learning and support the state's most vulnerable learners.

"Ohio's PBS stations have been wonderful partners in prioritizing additional education opportunities to support Ohio's students since the beginning of the pandemic," said Stephanie Siddens, ODE interim superintendent of Public Instruction. "The *Ohio Learns 360* initiative will give families an additional pathway to support student learning beyond the school day."

Ohio Learns 360, which targets kindergarten through fifth-grade students from underserved communities, kicks off this April and will continue through September 2024. ODE will provide \$5 million in funding through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER), first authorized by Congress in 2020. Public Media Connect in Dayton/Cincinnati is leading *Ohio Learns 360*.

"During the height of the pandemic we quickly realized the educational gaps that were happening, not only locally, but across the state and the nation," said Tina Simon, WBGU-PBS General Manager. "This program is just one way that we're working to help close that gap."

Students in out-of-school-time programs will be able to engage in hands-on STEM activities with some of their favorite characters, such as Cat in the Hat, or go on a virtual field trip to one of Ohio's leading science museums. Meanwhile, students at home will be able to participate in virtual programs that feature well-known PBS Kids characters. Parents can learn how to support their child's learning through Parent Power webinars. Families also will be invited to WBGU-PBS station-hosted events.

Ohio Learns 360 exemplifies what Ohio public media does best, coming together and using our resources to provide a needed statewide service,” said Kevin Martin, president of Ohio Educational Television Service and Ideastream Public Media. “Our colleagues at Public Media Connect will continue to lead this effort on behalf of all of the Ohio PBS stations, so we can be assured to meet the very high expectations and standards of the ODE, educators and parents.”

More information about *Ohio Learns 360* will be coming soon.

WBGU-PBS is a PBS affiliate and partner of Bowling Green State University serving a 19-county region with award-winning programming and educational resources. For more information, visit www.wbgu.org.

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