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**ONLINE AND DISTANCE-LEARNING COURSES EXPANDING  
FOR STUDENTS THROUGHOUT MANITOBA**

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**InformNet Among Growing Platforms and Tools  
As Teaching Technology Develops and Improves: Goertzen**

The province has partnered with the Pembina Trails School Division and the St. James-Assiniboia School Division to offer expanded access to InformNet online courses during the suspension of in-school classes due to COVID-19, Education Minister Kelvin Goertzen announced today.

The expansion of InformNet comes as teachers across Manitoba embrace new approaches to teaching using this and various other online and distance-learning tools developed by schools and school divisions.

“A growing number of teachers in Manitoba will be able to use InformNet course content with their students,” said Goertzen. “This resource offers full online courses and will expand to accommodate as many students as possible while they learn from home during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

InformNet is an online high school operated by the Pembina Trails and St. James-Assiniboia school divisions, using the Department of Education’s online learning management system Brightspace by Desire 2 Learn (D2L) Corp. There are 17 courses for students in Grade 11 and Grade 12 now available to teachers across the province. Other courses may be added over time.

The department is acting as a help desk and offering professional development to support the expansion. Coaching and assistance with applications on InformNet will be offered to teachers through a support team with direct online teaching experience.

“This is just one of the online systems that allow Manitoba teachers to offer high-quality programs for students to learn and carry on with their studies during the 2019-20 school year,” said Goertzen. “We appreciate the willingness of divisions, schools and teachers to partner in support of a rapid transition to online learning during these unprecedented times.”

The Department of Education offers 44 other web-based courses on the same Brightspace platform, for a total of 61 online courses available to teachers and students. More than 400 Manitoba teachers have already signed up to use Brightspace.

In addition, print-based modules are being generated for teachers to use with students who do not have access to technology. The province has formed a working group to further explore strategies for students without Internet access.

Planning is underway to address the particular needs of French and French immersion teachers and students. There are 12 distance-learning courses available in French and more to be added, the minister said, noting implementation will unfold over the coming weeks.

The department also hosts the Manitoba Professional Learning Environment (Maple), which provides more than 13,000 educators with a secure space to access curriculum-related supports and resources, to share ideas and to connect with consultants and other teachers. More than 1,200 teachers in Manitoba have joined Maple since in-school classes were suspended last month.

New groups titled Online and Unplugged: Supporting Student Learning During COVID-19 – Suspended Classes, and Corona-virus: Appuyons nos élèves, partageons nos ressources!, provide teachers with a forum to share resources and ideas for remote student learning. More than 840 educators have joined these groups.

A comprehensive list of Manitoba government COVID-19 measures can be found at:

<https://manitoba.ca/bq/2020/04/covid19.html>.