

MICHIGAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
AND  
MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION  
OF  
INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

*DIGITAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
(DWD)  
PROPOSAL*

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce and the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators have joined forces to pursue an integrated package of digital resources to support career exploration and workforce development in an effort to help solve the critical workforce shortages Michigan faces.

The DWD proposal will create a single platform for career exploration and skill development and connect prospective employees with interested employers.

Building on the MAISA effort to develop the Virtual Reality Learning Initiative (VIRLI) and the Michigan Chamber's support for the Emerge Skilled tool to connect employees and employers, DWD will provide students, teachers and employers a one-stop platform for more informed decisions by prospective employees and better connections with employers.

The DWD partners are requesting \$4.9 Million to support the integration of the DWD platform with all Michigan Intermediate School Districts and the Michigan employer community.

For FY 22, all ISDs and employers will be able to join DWD free of charge. Both ISDs and participating employers will be charged an annual fee after the first year to support ongoing maintenance and operation.

DWD will provide the following to the education and business communities:

**DWD Infrastructure** - VIRLI and EmergeSkilled will maintain separate databases, but all content will be accessed through a shared single sign-on. System administrators will be able to use platform usage data to help inform educators and employers about trends in career development. This data can better connect students with skill development providers and prospective employers.

**VIRLI Library** - The library of Virtual Reality content curated to meet Michigan's education, career and life skill development and STEAM teaching objectives will be made available to all students, teachers, parents and others in Michigan.

Additional Virtual Reality content will be developed as part of this project in the following areas:

Construction Trades

Health Care

Electric Vehicles and Charging Systems

Building Electrification and Energy Efficiency

Nutrition and Food Safety

**Career Explorer** - Students and teachers will have access to a career exploration tool that allows students to analyze their skill interests, discover occupations that relate to their interests and access information to help them determine if those occupations are appropriate. Career information will be presented through a wide variety of multimedia (i.e. videos, podcasts, etc.) and immersive experiences (i.e. virtual tours, web-based 3D applications, etc.)

This tool will allow any student to explore their career path at any time, from anywhere (inside or outside the classroom) on any device.

**Virtual Career Fair** - Students and teachers will have the opportunity to participate in virtual career fairs that “gamify” career exploration. This career fair in a virtual environment will allow students to “walk around” multiple areas with each area themed around a career or job sector. In each area, students can learn more about various jobs, play related games and view content developed by Michigan companies for the Virtual Career Fair.

This virtual meeting space will also be a social conference for students to connect on shared interests and see live presentations.

**EmergeSkilled** - EmergeSkilled is an online platform that connects employers with students who are participating in CTE high school training programs, trade schools, community colleges, certificate programs and credential bootcamps and supports workforce development strategies.

Collectively, these tools will offer students relevant content in the digital media they consume everyday as well as connect them with employers that want prospective employees that have shown an interest in the career field.

The nation's two largest employers are the United States military and Walmart. Both of them are moving as much of their education and training as possible to virtual reality. Major employers across the country are adopting VR to support their workforce development activities.

A 2020 report from PwC found that VR can train students 4X faster than traditional teaching methods and that VR learners were 3.75X more emotionally connected to content than classroom peers that did not use VR.

Michigan can take this opportunity to be the leader in the use of immersive technologies for teaching and training.