



GAVIN NEWSOM

GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA

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Governor Newsom Announces Cross-Sector Partnerships to Support Distance Learning and Bridge the Digital Divide

Governor announces commitments from companies, business leaders, and philanthropists to provide Internet access for hundreds of thousands of households and laptops, Chromebooks, and tablets for over 70,000 students

The California Public Utilities Commission will make \$30 million available to help school districts ensure that families have Internet access and computing devices for distance learning

The California State Transportation Agency will partner with the City of Sacramento to convert and deploy seven transit buses to be used as super hotspots

SACRAMENTO – Governor Gavin Newsom today announced new cross-sector partnerships to support the state's distance learning efforts and help bridge the digital divide.

"School may be physically closed, but class is still in session," said Governor Newsom. "But for class to be in session, it is imperative that California addresses the inequities in access to computers, technology tools and connectivity to ensure that online learning can in fact reach all of California's children. It's inspiring to see parents, teachers, businesses and philanthropy step up to meet this moment and provide tools to help bridge the digital divide and get more students connected."

"I am beyond grateful for the generosity and leadership of our community leaders to help us bridge the technology gap that too many California families are facing," said First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom. "As a mother of four, I know well that the challenges of distance learning can take a toll – both on the child and the parent. That is why it is crucial we close the digital divide and work to ensure that every child has what they need to reach their full potential."

Approximately one in five students in California lack high-speed Internet or an appropriate computing device at home. In a parent survey two weeks ago, 50

percent of low-income families and 42 percent of families of color reported that they lacked the laptop, Chromebook, or tablet needed to access distance learning.

“We are so thankful to everyone that is stepping up to help us close the digital divide. These efforts will truly make an impact in the lives of our students and an even greater impact as we work to close achievement gaps that existed before this public health crisis,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond. “I look forward to continuing these efforts with my “Closing the Digital Divide” task force, co-chaired by Senator Connie Leyva, because we are stronger together, and together, we can close the digital divide for all students in California.”

Earlier this month, Governor Newsom issued a [call to action](#) to business, government, and community leaders to help bridge the digital divide. Leaders across sectors stepped up to heed the call.

Private Partnerships

First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom, State Board of Education President Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond led – and will continue to lead – the drive for community leaders to heed the Governor’s call to action.

Companies, business leaders, and philanthropists heeded the call by committing to provide Internet access for hundreds of thousands of households and over 70,000 laptops, Chromebooks, and tablets for students.

- T-Mobile is donating 13,000 tablet devices, in addition to the [previously-announced](#) 100,000 hotspot devices (for which they partnered with Google.)
- Amazon is donating 10,000 tablet devices.
- Apple is actively working with 800 districts across the state, offering free coaching sessions to teachers to help them with the transition to remote learning. In addition, Apple is offering special pricing for iPads with cellular, and has given the equivalent of 9,000 iPads to ensure the most vulnerable in our state have access.
- Verizon is partnering with the State of California to provide 250,000 students with unlimited Internet service at a discount.
- The Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative is donating \$1,000,000.
- Jack Dorsey (*via #startsmall*) is donating \$1,000,000.
- Ann & John Doerr are donating \$1,000,000.

Other commitments are listed at the bottom of this press release.

All monetary contributions will be deposited in a fund established at the CDE Foundation and used to bulk-purchase computing and hotspot devices for allocation to school districts in need, with a priority on rural and low-income communities.

CPUC Broadband in Schools Initiative

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and the California Department of Education (CDE) will partner to distribute a total of \$30 million to support connectivity.

The CPUC will make \$25 million available from the California Teleconnect Fund for hotspots and Internet service for student households. School districts will be able to apply to receive 50 percent discounts on the cost of hotspot devices and on monthly recurring service charges until September 30, 2020. Rural, small, and medium-sized districts will be prioritized. More information is available [here](#).

The CPUC is also proposing to make \$5 million available from the California Advanced Services Fund to help cover the costs of computing and hotspot devices. CDE will review requests and coordinate purchases in order to leverage economies of scale. Low-income communities, communities with high percentages of residents with limited English proficiency, and communities with high percentages of residents with limited education attainment will be prioritized. More information is available [here](#).

City of Sacramento Proof of Concept

The California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) is partnering with the City of Sacramento for a 60-day proof of concept to be launched on May 1, 2020.

Seven transit buses will be repurposed and outfitted with super hotspots providing connectivity with at least a 500-foot radius. Buses will park between 4-8 hours to provide high-speed Internet services to surrounding locations while people remain in homes or congregate at safe distances while under supervision.

Hotspot locations and protocols will be determined in collaboration between the City of Sacramento, Valley Vision, Sacramento Public Library, SacRT, CalSTA, and public health officials.

Lessons learned from the proof of concept will be converted into a model for cities throughout California to replicate.

Full List of Private Partnerships

In addition to the commitments listed above:

- HP Inc. is donating 5,000 Chromebooks and launching HP Refresh with dedicated resources to the state.
- Lenovo is donating 4,000 Chromebooks.
- An anonymous foundation is donating \$1,000,000.
- Box is donating free 12-month licenses to its secure file-sharing services (up to \$1,000,000) for school districts to enable administrators and teachers to collaborate. Box CEO Aaron Levie is also personally donating \$100,000.
- Scott Cook and Signe Ostby through The Valhalla Charitable Foundation are donating \$500,000.
- An anonymous foundation is donating \$500,000 for LA County public schools.
- Zoom is donating \$500,000.
- AT&T is donating \$300,000 for devices and \$250,000 for distance learning programs.
- Microsoft is donating 1,000 Surface tablets.
- The Stuart Foundation is donating \$250,000.

- Todd McKinnon and Roxanne Stachon are donating \$250,000.
- Heising-Simons Foundation is donating \$200,000.
- Akiko Yamazaki and Jerry Yang are donating \$100,000.
- Silver Giving Foundation is donating \$100,000.
- The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation is donating \$100,000.
- Craig Newmark Philanthropies is donating \$100,000.
- VIPKid is donating \$50,000.
- PayPal Gives is donating \$50,000.

Learn more about the state's ongoing COVID-19 response efforts [here](#). Visit covid19.ca.gov or covid19.ca.gov/es for critical steps Californians can take to stay healthy, and resources available to those impacted by the outbreak.

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Governor Gavin Newsom

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