

William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent

August 21, 2020

Dear Principals and Assistant Principals,

Mayor Jim Kenney, in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia, the charter school sector, and philanthropy, recently announced **PHLConnectED** to provide free and reliable high-speed internet connection to low income students and their families who are not connected and need it as we start our new school year virtually.

What is PHLConnectED?

The City's initiative to connect Philadelphia families with access to a reliable, high speed internet connection for school. Eligible students and families will be able to sign up for up to 2 years of Comcast Internet Essentials service at no cost to them, or based on need, can have access to a free T-Mobile hotspot option until June 2022.

Who is eligible to get connected through PHLConnectED?

Students and their families who do not currently have any broadband (wireline/in-home) internet access or only have internet access through their mobile phone may qualify for the program. Students and their families who are experiencing homelessness, are in-between housing, are housing insecure, or where a wireline connection may not be possible may be eligible for the program. If families currently have internet access, then they should not be encouraged to sign up for the PHLConnectED program. We anticipate future waves of outreach to be based on additional eligibility criteria and will communicate this as necessary.

What are the PHLConnectED internet options?

There are two options to receive free internet:

- Wired, high-speed internet for your home through Internet Essentials from Comcast, or
- A high-speed mobile hotspot from T-Mobile

How can I get my students and their families who do not have reliable internet access signed up with the PHLConnectED?

You and your staff are the most critical and credible messengers to our students and their families. To ensure our students get connected:

- **First**, encourage families to update their information in the Student Information System (SIS). Free access to the internet is best achieved when we have accurate telephone and address data because it will make it easier for families to enroll.
- **Second**, encourage only those families who do not have reliable internet access to call the hotline at 2-1-1 and choose option 1 to learn more about the program and how to get connected. The 2-1-1 hotline will be live on Monday, August 24. The hotline will be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and available in over 150 languages.

What happens when families call the 2-1-1 hotline?

Families will receive general information about PHLConnectED and if the family wants to proceed further, they will be directly connected to the School District's 215-400-4444 hotline. The School District's hotline will either assign:

- An enrollment promo code for students determined to be eligible for in-home wired Internet Essentials. Families will be given clear instructions on how to connect with Comcast, or
- A hotspot for students determined to be eligible for a mobile solution, including instructions for when and how to collect the device.

Thank you for your leadership and support as we work as quickly as possible to stand up this program. We will continue to provide more detailed information as the program evolves and details will continue to be updated at phila.gov/programs/PHLConnectED.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William R. Hite Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

William R. Hite Jr., Ed.D.
Superintendent
The School District of Philadelphia