

**BOARD BRIEF**

Date: April 17, 2020

**BOARD INFORMATION:**   X  

**MEETING PREPARATION:**       

**FROM:** Elizabeth Hoover, Ph.D., Chief Technology Officer

**THROUGH:** Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

**TO:** The Honorable Cindy Anderson, Chair, and  
Members of the Alexandria City School Board

**TOPIC:** Providing at Home Internet Access for Students

**ACPS 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL:**

Goal 1: Academic Excellence and Educational Equity  
Goal 4: Facilities and the Learning Environment  
Goal 6: Effective and Efficient Operations

**SY 2019-2020 FOCUS AREA:**

Focus Area 1: Educational Equity

**FY 2020 BUDGET PRIORITY:**

Specialized Instruction  
English Learner Services  
Gap Group Achievements  
Academics  
Optimal and Equitable Learning Environments

**SUMMARY:**

With the sudden transition to learning from home, the need for internet access has grown significantly due to the increased number of students using Chromebooks at home. Almost 12,000 students in grades 3-12 are using Chromebooks to access their teachers and learning materials.

Schools have reached out to families to identify which ones need internet access. Currently there are close to 600 households with over 1,200 students who need assistance. To address this need, ACPS has acquired an additional 700 Kajeets to distribute. Mailing of these devices is scheduled to begin Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup>. Letters and directions in multiple languages will be included with the kajeets. Collaboration with the Family and Community Engagement Center (FACE) has been critical for translation and communication with families.

It is expected that additional families will request internet access in the coming weeks. Technology Services is exploring additional solutions that can provide internet access for households in concentrated areas of need.

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### **BACKGROUND:**

Since the outset of TC William's 1:1 laptop program in 2004, ACPS has consistently provided a means for students to access the internet outside of school. Over the years, solutions have included dial-up, evening library hours, access at the city recreation centers and providing information on how to sign up for Comcast Internet Essentials program. For the last 5 years, ACPS has provided up to 500 Kajeet mifis (hotspots) to students who have expressed the need for Internet access at home. As a result of several surveys, and usage data, it is believed that between 10 to 15 percent of our students do not have internet access at home.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Superintendent recommends that the School Board review the information about providing internet access to students at home.

**IMPACT:** The cost for the additional Kajeets, data plans, communications and support is approximately \$150,000. The PTAs have been very generous in raising and donating funds to support this project. At present, at least \$16,000 has been raised. ACPS is grateful for this partnership, as providing additional internet access was not anticipated during this school year.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

None

### **CONTACT:**

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