



Digital and Technology Equity and Access Critical for Student Success

NYS PTA supports the Governor's broadband proposal, and Senator Mayer's E-Learn legislation.

Meaningful access to high-quality, free or low-cost broadband is critical for all students. What we know:

- 63% of NYS schools planned to start the school year with hybrid instruction;
- Only 20% of NYS schools planned to provide full in-person instruction;
- 17% of NYS schools indicated they will be sadly providing remote only teaching and learning.

Lack of digital equity is real. According to recent NYS Education Department survey data, more than 215,000 NYS students do not have access to a computer, Chromebook or tablet to use for instruction.

The same survey indicated that 165,000 NYS students lack internet access to fully participate in home/remote instruction and learning.

During the pandemic, we saw schools across the state deploy buses capable of WIFI connections to areas without broadband. Hundreds of thousands of students and families continue to have no reliable access to broadband.

Many of our rural areas are disproportionately impacted, and many of our highest-need students across the state may lack the family resources to purchase expensive internet services, assuming they have access.

It is likely some form of remote learning continues for the foreseeable future. We must do better in supporting our students and families to meet the technology demands of 21st century learning.

The Executive Budget proposal requires any broadband provider to offer high speed broadband service to low-income consumers at a rate of no more than \$15 a month, including any taxes or fees.

"Low-income" consumers are defined as those whose household is eligible for free or reduced priced lunch or whose annual gross household income is not above 185% of federal poverty guidelines.

We appreciate and fully support this proposal.

However, we are also concerned with the actual lack of broadband access in many communities.

NYS PTA urges comprehensive action to see that ALL children and families have access to high-quality free or low-cost broadband.

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