



Digital and Tech Equity

We continue to be concerned with the actual lack of broadband access in many communities, and even if low cost, some families may not be able to afford any costs for broadband.

The proposed legislation S.3184 (Mayer)/A.5180 (Benedetto) would establish the E-learn Fund, to provide free internet to all school children aged 5-21 during the pandemic, supported by an assessment on broadband providers. We fully support this legislation.

Our students have sadly always faced digital and technology inequities, which have been greatly exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

NYS PTA urges comprehensive action to see that ALL children and families have access to free high-quality broadband, and that digital inequities are eliminated.

The Executive Budget includes a number of initiatives to support the expansion of high-quality, low-cost and affordable broadband for families, including rural broadband grants and digital equity programs.

NYS PTA supports these proposals, and fully supports free access to broadband for all low-income, high-need NYS families, and continued tech and digital equity initiatives.

The pandemic truly brought tech and digital equity issues to light. We continue to be concerned with the lack of broadband access in many communities, and lack of devices to support students, as meaningful access to high-quality, free or low-cost broadband is critical for all students.

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
- 165,000 NYS students lack internet access to fully participate in home/remote instruction and learning

While we have seen these numbers improve, until every child has both access and a device capable of connection, we have work to do.

We must do better in supporting our students and families to meet the technology demands of 21st century learning.