

## **DISTANCE AND REMOTE LEARNING FOR K12 STUDENTS**

National PTA recognizes that families can be faced with educating their children at home, while continuing to juggle work, support the social and emotional needs of their children and manage the stress of being homebound for an undetermined amount of time. Families need significantly more support.

National PTA believes that assistance should be provided to help educators be the conduit for learning at home and provide families with simple, yet effective, activities they can do with their children, so families aren't overwhelmed by the myriad of resources available. There is a strong need to ensure that students are receiving clear and consistent support when they are homebound.

National PTA finds it equally important that schools have the ability to directly and effectively connect with low-income families, students learning English and other marginalized student groups who are most likely to be impacted by school closures, to ensure that equity is at the forefront of online and other substitute school educational offerings.

According to The Pew Research Center, some students do not have reliable access to the internet at home – particularly those who are from lower-income households. The “homework gap” – which refers to school-age children lacking the connectivity they need to complete schoolwork at home – is more pronounced for black, Hispanic and lower-income households. Roughly 65% of students attending suburban schools say they use the internet for homework every day or almost every day, compared with 58% who attend schools in cities, 50% of those who attend in rural areas and 44% of those attending schools in towns.

National PTA applauds Congress in their efforts to ensure that schools and students have the resources they need to be connected and continue their learning online by providing direct funding to schools and libraries for Wi-Fi hotspots, connected devices and mobile broadband internet service.

National PTA has been consistent in its advocacy for federal resources to address the “homework gap.” Not all of America’s students or teachers have the internet connectivity in their homes or even the computing devices necessary to continue teaching and learning. Studies suggest that between 7 million and 12 million students have no internet access at home and only one out of four school districts indicate they currently offer loaner hotspots. This is making it impossible for too many students to continue their school year while their connected peers move forward with their studies.

National PTA supports dedicated funding under the Federal Communications Commission’s E-Rate program to provide internet service and internet-connected devices to students in need whose schools have shut their doors due to disasters such as COVID-19, weather-related catastrophes, 9/11, or the like.

National PTA joins education groups such as The School Superintendents Association and National Education Association in calling on lawmakers “to ensure states do not use federal dollars to backfill cuts in state funding; and to ensure any future education technology funds flow through the already existing federal technology program for schools.”

National PTA's mission is to ensure every child receives an equitable education. Most recently, reports have surfaced of schools and entire school districts citing the issue of equity in their decisions to provide no online learning to any students because not all students are connected. Furthermore, National PTA supports that parents, educators, community and business stakeholders should be engaged in the development of distance learning programs to ensure programs are adapted to their community's needs.

National PTA believes that by supporting efforts to ensure that funding is specifically dedicated to remote learning it will make it more accessible for all children to receive an equitable education. Adoption of these measures will allow our schools to continue with educating K-12 students regardless of their socioeconomic status and during unprecedented times.

Adopted: by the 2020 National PTA Board of Directors