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PATERNSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO RAISE FUNDS TO PROVIDE INTERNET ACCESS AND DEVICES TO ALL DISTRICT STUDENTS

Two-thirds of the district’s students are without internet access during the COVID-19 crisis

Nearly 50 donations made from private individuals over the weekend

PATERSON – District officials announced today that an online campaign has been launched to raise funds to purchase online devices and internet access for students to use while schools are closed due to the COVID-19 crisis.

A PayPal account for Paterson Public Schools was established on Friday and linked to the homepage of the district’s website to accept donations to provide technology for students. Since then, nearly 50 donations have been made by private individuals in amounts ranging from five dollars to more than $1,000. The donations are tax-deductible as charitable contributions to a federally-recognized tax-exempt organization under 26 U.S. Code § 170(c)(1).

“We are all enormously grateful for the generosity these people have shown for our students,” said Superintendent of Schools Eileen F. Shafer. “This COVID-19 crisis has been difficult, to one degree or another, for everyone. That is why we so greatly appreciate these donations from people who have given of themselves during this crisis. The difference they are making is simple. A student with internet access and a device is connected to teachers and classmates, and engaged in online learning experiences. A student without them is alone in isolation doing paperwork.”

There are nearly 29,000 students in grades kindergarten through 12 in the Paterson Public School District. The district began distributing 7,000 Chromebooks to its high school students last week. This week, 1,667 Chromebooks that were purchased with reapportioned budget funds will be distributed to middle school students this week. When those resources are depleted, about two-thirds of the district’s students will still be without a device or access the internet while schools are closed.
Before schools closed on March 17th, students left school with paper packets for the first 10-day round of home instruction. The student work that has been turned in for grading has been delivered to the Central Office building, where a few district employees have been volunteering to sort the work by school and grade level.

“Having thousands of Paterson Public Schools students on the wrong side of the digital divide during this COVID-19 crisis is simply unacceptable,” said Shafer. “We intend to continue our efforts to seek the resources necessary to provide a device and internet access to every Paterson Public Schools student.”

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