

# Georgia's Restart Guide for Connectivity and Devices

<https://www.georgiainsights.com/connectivity-restartguide.html>

## Georgia's K-12 Restart: Connectivity and Devices Working Group members:

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*Georgia's K-12 Restart Working Groups provide considerations, recommendations, and best practices to ensure a safe and successful 2020-2021 school year. This guidance is not mandated, or state required. Local school districts have the authority and flexibility to meet their individual needs and be responsive to their communities.*

## Intro: Expanding Access to Remote Learning by Providing Connectivity and Deploying Devices

As school administrators and educators plan for various teaching scenarios in the coming 2020-2021 school year, students in both urban and rural Georgia may need to continue their education from home. In many cases, such remote learning will need to be supported by digital devices and internet connectivity.

The guidance provided here is intended to assist district administrators and staff to digitally “bring school home” for students and educators, as necessary and as much as possible, considering potential school budget constraints, digital learning devices and software available for deployment, accessibility of internet connectivity and cost of service charges, execution of teacher training, and parental involvement.

### 1. Prepare

#### Being Ready at a “Week’s Notice”

Considering that public health conditions can rapidly change county-by-county, meaning schools may need to respond to [various community spread scenarios](#) on short notice, it is important to prepare for remote learning capacity in advance.

This advance planning, procurement, and deployment is necessary because providing connectivity and device options to students and teachers requires sufficient lead-time (three to eight weeks) to be sure digital access is readily available and able to be quickly deployed and effectively utilized at a week’s notice.

The guidance below includes information on assessing existing resources, identifying access gaps, determining options for internet connectivity, and purchasing internet services and digital learning devices.

#### Prepare for Internet Connectivity for Students and Educators

- 1. Assess digital access at student and educator households.** The most effective method to gather information from families about their at-home internet connectivity may be at the school level. This could include individual school staff performing surveys or making direct contact with families (via phone calls and/or emails) to inventory the internet options at the student’s household. Another option is for teachers to reach out directly to families about internet and device availability for students. Consider that surveys conducted with online platforms or other electronic information sharing may skew the results, since all students and caretakers may not have access to devices or internet connectivity to complete electronic surveys.

2. **Assess if household internet speeds are sufficient.** Ask educators, administrators, and student households to test their internet speeds at home, on their computers and laptops, as well as on their mobile devices. Ask them to relay their results back to school leaders, via screenshots or other methods to report their internet speeds. GaDOE recommends using Ookla's Speedtest. For laptops and computers connected to home internet service, visit <https://www.speedtest.net> and click "GO." For mobile devices, download the Speedtest app. On Android, once installed on your device, open and click "GO." Users of Android devices can also turn on the "Speedtest" function in your "Settings". On iOS (Apple iPhones and iPads), once installed on your device, open and click "GO." For more information, see the Governor's press release about this important initiative to gain more information about Georgians' access to internet connectivity: <https://gov.georgia.gov/press-releases/2020-06-23/state-launches-internet-speedtest-pilot-schools>.
3. **Consider the required connectivity speeds and capabilities** to support various digital education delivery platforms as well as to enable the needed functions for your district's or your school's [Learning Management System](#) (LMS). An important step is to identify bandwidth requirements needed for grade-level learning environments. The vendors of LMS software should inform their education customers about the minimum and optimal internet speed levels required for different use scenarios. The Technical Support Guide published by the [Georgia Virtual Learning School](#) may also be helpful.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) offers guidance that indicates speeds of at least one megabit per second (1 mbps) per student are required for educators to utilize online tools: <https://www.educationsuperhighway.org/upgrade/types-of-fiber-services/k-12-bandwidth-goals/>. LearnCube.com also provides guidance on minimum and optimal speeds: <https://www.learncube.com/virtual-classroom-requirements.html>. Additionally, for best performance, [Microsoft Teams guidance](#) recommends 500 kilobits per second (500 kbps, which is equal to one-half of 1 mbps) per student download and 500 kbps upload for *person-to-person* video conferencing, and for *group* video conferencing, 1 mbps download and 500 kbps upload, per student. Google provides guidance about its "Meets" tool that may also be helpful: <https://support.google.com/a/answer/1279090?hl=en>.

Therefore, if there is more than one person simultaneously using the internet in the household at one time, download and upload speeds will need to be sufficient. For example, if a household has three students plus one adult internet user who will simultaneously be using the internet, speeds will need to be at least 4 mbps download and 2 mbps upload, to enable *group* video conferencing scenarios for all users. If most households do not have these internet speeds available, consider options for a staggered schedule which could minimize the number of grade bands and/or classes online at the same time.

If your school or district has not yet determined which digital platform or LMS to deploy, please see the Restart Guidance forthcoming from the Distance Learning & Professional Learning Working Group.

4. **Review GaDOE’s Student Connectivity Dashboard** to determine how many total households in each of your district’s schools have the ability to connect to high-speed internet (25 megabits per second download/3 megabits per second upload or “25/3”). This internet access information refers only to “wireline” services to households, offered by internet service providers in students’ neighborhoods. Actions in the next step ([#5 below](#)) will be important to pinpoint which providers can connect which student households in your district. Note that at-home wireline connectivity (i.e. fiber optic cable) has the best ability to provide reliable and cost-effective access to sufficient internet speeds. The Student Connectivity Dashboard was created by GaDOE in conjunction with the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative (GBDI). Access to this Dashboard has been provided to at least one official in each school district – if your district has not yet received a link to the Dashboard, a login ID and password, please email Juan-Carlos Aguilar at [JAguilar@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:JAguilar@doe.k12.ga.us). This step refers to Option 1 in this guide’s [Decision Tree](#).

5. **Contact internet service providers** who can provide service in your school district’s area. All private-sector providers know which households they may have the ability to readily connect to wireline and wireless internet, and to which households they may be able to provide service in time for the coming school year. Wireline providers in Georgia include Windstream, Spectrum, and local telecommunications cooperatives such as Pineland Telephone Cooperative in Southeast Georgia. Wireless providers in Georgia include Verizon, T-Mobile/Sprint, and local carriers. Companies like AT&T and Comcast offer both wireline and wireless services in various parts of the state. Some private providers in your community can be searched by zip code at [BroadbandNow](#).

Some providers may offer very low cost, subsidized “Lifeline” service, which is typically basic internet connectivity (10 mbps download/1 mbps upload). However, we recommend you contact the staff identified at each of Georgia’s internet service providers regarding options by address and for bulk pricing options – this list of internet service staff has been emailed to school administrators from GaDOE, but if you haven’t yet received this contact list, please email Chris Shealy at [CShealy@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:CShealy@doe.k12.ga.us).

6. **Evaluate the potential for wireless connectivity at student and educator households.** For the households that do not have access to wireline services ([see step #4 above](#)), the other option for connecting those students and educators will be wireless -- either fixed wireless, mobile wireless, or satellite. Personal Internet Equipment (PIE), also known as “Personal Hotspots” or MiFi, can be purchased directly from mobile phone carriers or through statewide contracts ([see “Conduct Purchasing” section below](#)). **Note:** sufficient data signals are required (3G or 4G LTE) for these devices, which may not be possible for all households in Georgia, especially in rural areas. This step refers to [option 2A in this guide’s Decision Tree](#).

7. **Evaluate the potential for wireless connectivity to be transmitted from school buildings and from school buses.** WiFi transmitters can be affixed to school buildings to project internet signal on school grounds. The distance of the signal will depend on many factors, including equipment type and topography/layout of school grounds. This option can be very low cost, because no additional monthly data plans are required by your school’s internet service provider. This step refers to [option 2B in this guide’s Decision Tree](#).

WiFi equipment can also be placed on school buses or other school vehicles and driven out to student neighborhoods, to enable time-limited internet connectivity for downloading and uploading assignments (please ensure social distancing at these locations). Please contact the mobile phone carrier for more information about data transfer speeds available at various household and community locations in your area. For more information, [see option 2C Decision Tree and table below in this guide's Decision Tree](#).

8. **Identify and develop connectivity points throughout the community.** Here is a [map of all schools in Georgia and their three closest public libraries](#). Many public libraries in Georgia have broadband internet inside buildings and on their grounds, offering WiFi connections onsite. Also consider collaborating with community leaders in your area. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs has also published an [initiative map](#) that shows where free public WiFi is available at more than 300 libraries and another 100 facilities across the state. Georgia's public libraries have broadband internet access and offer high speed WiFi connections, and if library buildings are open, may also provide computers for use by [library card holders](#). The Georgia Department of Community Affairs has published this [interactive map](#) showing free public WiFi hotspots. In addition to contacting your civic, local government, faith and business communities, we recommend reaching out to others in your community who may be willing to partner on connectivity options for students and teachers. This step refers to [option 2D in this guide's Decision Tree](#).

## Prepare for Deployment of Digital Learning Devices

1. **Conduct an asset inventory.** Do you have devices available to sign out? Does every educator have a device at home? Do they have connectivity? Are there older devices in closets? Each year, GaDOE conducts a statewide inventory; you can see your district's response [here](#).
2. **Choose devices that are developmentally appropriate** and useful for educational purposes. Here are some online resources to advise on the evaluation of options:
  - Education Week (EdWeek):
    - Choosing the Right Digital Learning Device <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/06/11/choosing-the-right-digital-learning-device.html>
    - U.S. Department of Education (USED): Use of Technology for Teaching and Learning <https://www.ed.gov/oii-news/use-technology-teaching-and-learning>
    - Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD): Choosing the Right Device <http://www.ascd.org/about-ascd.aspx>

Remember to also inventory the capabilities of the digital learning devices, for processing speeds, RAM, and embedded equipment such as cameras, microphones, and speakers – in some cases auxiliary audio-visual equipment may need to be provided to enable interactive learning.

- 3. Evaluate educators' need for devices.** Educators may need laptops, tablets, and data-capable smartphones to enable them to teach classes remotely, as well as interact with parents and school administrators during and after regular school hours. These devices and any affiliated data service plans can be funded with various traditional and new sources available at the local school districts and may be procured directly with the vendor or via statewide contracts (see the [Purchasing Devices and Internet Service section](#) in "2. Respond"). In scenarios when students are not able to come into the school building it may be possible for teachers to come to their classrooms while still following social distancing and other precautionary measures to utilize the school's broadband and other resources for delivering instruction.
- 4. Consider assigning existing devices to families and students before executing procurement of additional devices.** Checking out devices to different students (depending on which students will be learning from home) would require an inventory tracking system at the school and possibly the grade level. If schools do not have the quantity of devices for a one-to-one (1:1) deployment, devices should be sufficiently sanitized in between deployment to different students and/or teachers.
- 5. Consider possible procurement constraints due to shortage of devices available in the marketplace.** Because the nationwide demand for laptops and tablets may have exceeded manufacturers' ability to manufacture sufficient supplies, it is important to consider that vendors' delivery timeframes may be much longer than usual. Additionally, older Google Chromebooks will soon become obsolete because of manufacturer-mandated software changes.
- 6. Determine if devices available for lending within your community.** Public libraries and local non-profits may have devices for lending to families and students. There are approximately 500 Chromebooks available at several public libraries across the state. Please contact your local public library to determine whether Chromebooks are available and if a partnership might be possible for students in your district. The public library directory is here: <https://georgialibraries.org/find-a-library/>, and is the best way to learn about the catalog of what each library owns.
- 7. Take into consideration there may be constraints for utilizing donated devices.** Schools can also reach out to local businesses and government offices, who may have slightly older devices to donate for families. However, precautions should be taken when attempting to incorporate donated devices into schools' inventory. Issues are likely to arise, such as aged devices that cannot be updated with the latest software or that lack interactive equipment (i.e. webcams), network security, content filtering, and others. Any of these considerations and others could compromise student learning and student safety and security.
- 8. Establish an effective device refresh schedule** so laptops and tablets can be kept up-to-date and capable of being effectively used for supporting various educational platforms (e.g. Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, etc.) as well as the needed functions for your district's or school's Learning Management System (LMS). Also consider purchasing devices with specifications that exceed the minimum requirement for your district's educational platforms. This allows schools to get more use out of the devices.

**9. Consider how to deploy resources** to ensure proper use of all devices for educational purposes (e.g. professional learning, consultation, IT support, library media, library media specialists). It is critical for teachers to be adept at leveraging the platform and understanding how to use technology for successful learning. Distance learning can go beyond simply one-way instruction in front of a camera. Library media specialists can provide instructional coaching, curated resources, and professional learning for effective digital teaching and learning. One suggestion is using high school students for possible device support and reaching out to the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) and local universities for possible system administration and technical support. Also consider methods to help all stakeholders understand how to use devices. For example, Rockdale County is holding virtual instruction sessions before the first day of school so that students and families can become familiar with virtual learning.



## 2. Respond

Respond to the identified connectivity and device needs. Develop a strategy to secure student and staff internet access, distribute devices, and ensure both will be used to facilitate learning.

### Purchasing Devices and Internet Service

#### 1. Federal funding for internet connectivity and devices:

- Federal formula funds (Title funds, current 1003 funds and [1003 Digital Connectivity Grants](#), Consolidated Funds)
- CARES Act funds (allowable uses include “planning for and coordinating during long-term closures” and “purchasing educational technology”)
- Federal Communications Commission
  - Eases Lifeline Application Process for households with unemployed workers: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-364070A1.pdf>
  - Other FCC updates, including E-Rate flexibility: <https://www.fcc.gov/coronavirus>
- Multiple Federal agencies have programs, grants, loans, etc. that can fund internet connectivity equipment, infrastructure and devices, such as
  - U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Distance Learning & Telemedicine Program: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants> (**DEADLINE is JULY 13, 2020**)
  - U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD)’s Connect Home: <https://connecthome.hud.gov/playbook>
  - U.S. Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS): <https://www.ims.gov/grants/grant-programs>
  - Other Federal fund options: <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/new-fund-search>

#### 2. State grants

- [L4GA](#) grant funds (for current L4GA grantees)

#### 3. Philanthropic and private options to research and explore:

- Georgia Foundation for Public Education’s (GFPE) [Rural Education Fund](#): provides traditional public schools, charter schools, and school districts located in counties with 35,000 or fewer residents up to \$5,000 to use however they wish to drive student outcomes. The Rural Education Fund is made possible through the purchase of the “Educator” and “Support Education” license plates by Georgia residents. The GFPE supports educational excellence for all of Georgia’s K-12 students. (**DEADLINE JULY 14, 2020**)



- [The Innovation Fund Foundation](#) and the Georgia Foundation for Public Education partnered to provide funding for devices and connectivity for some of the neediest schools in Georgia. Later, the foundations offered up to \$10,000 to schools through a competitive grant process called the COVID-19 Response Grant. Foundation funding of \$100,000 allowed 11 awards; however, 890 applications were received during the grant cycle. From this grant cycle, these foundations learned about COVID-related needs in all areas of the state and the majority of schools sought funding for devices and connectivity. The foundations are continuing to seek private funding to meet as many of these needs as possible during the summer of 2020.
- [Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta](#)
- United Way of Greater Atlanta – see COVID-19 [donation link here](#)
- [Literacy for All](#)
- AT&T’s Aspire Grants for K-12 Education: supports education, communities and quality of life, prioritizing the areas in which its employees live and work. Aspire includes four funding initiatives: jobs of the future, future storytellers, educational technology and high school success. Jobs of the future supports “organizations that help people build the skills they need for successful careers in technology, media and telecommunications” and prioritizes “people from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds.” The future storyteller’s initiative aims to introduce students to skills and opportunities related to careers in the media industry. In the area of educational technology, AT&T invests in startups that are developing promising K-12 curricula. AT&T and the AT&T Foundation accept requests for funding through their website: <https://giving.att.com/Account/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f>.
- Comcast Foundation’s Grants for K-12 Education: offers funding for digital literacy for K-12 in the geographic areas served by its parent company. The foundation does not fund education directly, though many of its grantees serve K-12 populations. Some of the Comcast Foundation’s recently funded projects include [My Future](#), an online platform used at Boys and Girls Clubs across the U.S. that teaches children to “learn play and socialize,” online, and the Arc of Southern Maryland, which uses technology to enable increased independence for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Comcast also runs the [Internet Essentials](#) program, which brings affordable internet access to eligible low-income households in the U.S. Grantees are usually identified by local Comcast operations. The foundation accepts information from eligible nonprofits in its service areas.
- [Electric Membership Cooperatives](#) (EMC) offer grants in various communities throughout Georgia
- Local community foundations, civic organizations ([Rotary Clubs](#), [Kiwanis Clubs](#), etc.) and [Chambers of Commerce](#)

In the coming weeks, the K-12 Restart Student Connectivity and Devices Working Group will be identifying additional private donors to support school and family needs relating to connectivity, devices and service fees. Schools and school systems may contact the [Georgia Foundation for Public Education](#) to assist in identifying philanthropic organizations interested in supporting students.

The Working Group will also explore Federal funding sources and grant opportunities relating to COVID-19 and/or internet services. As schools and school systems learn about similar opportunities, they may contact Joy Hawkins, Executive Director, Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, [joy.hawkins@gosa.ga.gov](mailto:joy.hawkins@gosa.ga.gov), to coordinate.

## Conduct Purchasing

The Georgia Department of Education has developed various options for local school districts to procure internet services for students, teachers, and administrators. The new, lower-priced contracts for data services were created in partnership with internet service providers and reflect the dedication of both the State and the private sector to support Georgia’s local schools. For instance, mobile phone data plans and connection devices are now available to Georgia schools at approximately half the monthly subscription charges versus standard retail rates. Content filtering compliant with CIPA rules is also available. Use the [Decision Tree](#) and Deployment Cost Calculator in this guide to review and evaluate options.

[CLICK HERE FOR DEVICE AND DEPLOYMENT COST CALCULATOR](#)

**DIRECTIONS:**  
This worksheet can help district leaders estimate costs associated with various connectivity solutions. It has pre-loaded formulas. Enter the numbers into the yellow columns based on local data. NOTE: These are estimates and final costs will be determined by contracts with local suppliers and the district.

**NOTE:** Information can be entered only on columns B, C, D, and E. All other columns are locked.

Solutions	Users supported	one time cost	avg. monthly recurring	Months	Total one time cost	Monthly location cost all locations	Total 12 month recurring cost all locations	Total 12 Months	cost per student/year
Building WiFi	40	\$ 900.00	\$ -	100	\$ 90,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 21.50
Bus WiFi	40	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 12.00	100	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 14,400.00	\$ 244,800.00	\$ 64.50
User WiFi	3	\$ 350.00	\$ 10.00	100	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 47,000.00	\$ 114.47
Mobile Connection (SIMs)	3	\$ 45.00	\$ 25.00	100	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 34,500.00	\$ 85.50
CIPA Filtering	1	\$ -	\$ 250.00	100	\$ -	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 1,000.00

Cost Summary	
Option	Cost per student/year
Bus WiFi	\$64.50
Mobile Connection (SIMs)	\$85.50
Building WiFi	\$21.50
User WiFi	\$114.47
CIPA Filtering	\$1,000.00

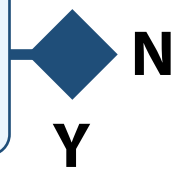
Check student connectivity data on GaDOE's dashboard (email [jaguilar@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:jaguilar@doe.k12.ga.us) for access)

**Question:** Internet is available to the student's home?



**Does student's household subscribe to high-speed internet?**

Review school's existing data or conduct a survey of connectivity options at students' homes



**Connectivity need solved**

Review GaDOE guidance and use Internet Options Tool to calculate costs

**Parent or caretaker can escort student to location for free Wifi?**



**Option 1: District provides home internet connection if available**

**Option 2 A: District provides Personal Internet Equipment (PIE)**

**Option 2 B: District provides Wifi internet connection on school grounds**

**Option 2 C: District deploys WiFi internet connection on school buses or other vehicle**

**Option 2 D: Advise caretaker of nearby public library or other hotspot for free WiFi**

Value	Benefits	Limitations	Costs
<p><b>Option 1: District Provides Home Internet Connection</b> Internet service providers can work with district leaders to identify unserved homes and cost structures.</p>	<p>Most direct way to serve families and students.</p> <p>Takes advantage of current consumer discounts and some providers may offer bulk benefits.</p> <p>Demonstrates potential for future long-term home-based learning opportunities (e.g., solves the “homework gap”).</p>	<p>Potential for ongoing data and service fees, which may be dependent on households’ history with various providers. This further emphasizes the role of schools and school districts to assist certain families with internet access to support proper learning options if/when school buildings are closed.</p>	<p>\$10/month to \$50/month (or more depending on individual plans)</p> <p>Remember to inquire about CIPA content filtering options, as required by Federal law.</p> <p>NOTE: <a href="#">Lifeline Assistance Program</a> provides low-cost solutions for families with low income. Lifeline service (~\$10/month) is now easier for unemployed Georgia households to apply for. See the FCC announcement <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p><b>Option 2A: Provide Personal Internet Equipment (PIE)</b> <i>(also known as “personal hotspots” or MiFi)</i></p>	<p>This option provides close-range internet connectivity in the homes of students, teachers, and staff; connects 5-10 devices and can support interactive teaching and learning, including video playback and conferencing.</p>	<p>This option requires sufficient mobile phone signal at 4G LTE; requires constant power supply or frequent recharging; and speeds may become slower as more computers/tablets are connected to Personal Internet Equipment (PIE).</p>	<p>One-time charge per device, plus a per-month data plan.</p> <p>Remember to inquire about CIPA content filtering options, as required by Federal law.</p>

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Value	Benefits	Limitations	Costs
<p><b>Option 2B: WiFi Access on School Grounds</b></p> <p>WiFi equipment attached to the exterior of buildings that connects to schools' existing Ethernet port and power sources; high data flows and low-latency performance based on a network that has 250 GBPs currently available across Georgia; schools manage security and content access.</p>	<p>Can connect hundreds of devices from a single location while maintaining social distancing (students can stay in cars to access internet); leverages equipment already installed at the school, with minimal additional one-time expenses.</p> <p>FCC has recently approved temporary rules to relax requirements on access to E-Rate-supported WiFi networks. According to the <a href="#">March 23<sup>rd</sup> ruling</a>, community access is now permitted.</p>	<p>Requires parents or other caretakers to travel to school; requires students to learn in an automobile, possibly in close proximity to other students in the household who are participating in their own remote classrooms; requires IT support at school (for logins and troubleshooting); some schools may require installation of more than one access point.</p>	<p>\$3,000 to \$5,000 per access point; no additional monthly costs for data.</p>

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Value	Benefits	Limitations	Costs
<p><b>Option 2C: WiFi Internet Access in students' neighborhoods on school buses</b></p> <p>Easy-to-use mobile WiFi device on school buses or other school vehicles, or affixed to buildings in students' neighborhoods for students to access the internet by walking up or being driven to location of the WiFi transmitter based on logistics factors determined by schools; WiFi signal transmits up to one-tenth of a mile (approx. 500 feet); can simultaneously connect 30 to 50 learning devices, depending on the strength of the mobile data signal and the type and size of data being transmitted upload and download; magnetically mounts to roof of vehicles and plugs into 12V power port. Additionally, note that the WiFi transmitter utilizes the battery power generated by the vehicle's engine (running or on battery power). Online resources are available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">WiFiTransmitter Teton LTE C19 School Bus Setup (video)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Using School Bus WiFi to Support Distance Learning (article – School Transportation News)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">School Districts are Transforming Buses Into WiFi Hotspots for Students Without Internet (article – Upworthy)</a></li> </ul>	<p>Best cost-efficiency for number of students connected versus cost to purchase equipment and data service plan.</p> <p>Basic mobile data signal will enable email, web browsing, and document upload and download. Depending on signal strength, internet speeds may also be sufficient to support interactive teaching and learning, including video playback and conferencing from a single location while maintaining social distancing (students can stay in their cars to access internet). Can be placed on other vehicles that have 12V power outlets, as well as affixed to multi-family housing units (AC power adapter required).</p> <p>School buses and other school vehicles that are delivering meals to students can also be equipped with the WiFi transmitter. The WiFi transmitter can also be placed on vehicles and positioned in student neighborhoods.</p> <p>Content filtering is easy to include, to comply with CIPA rules.</p>	<p>Requires parents or caretakers to travel to the location of the parked bus or school vehicle with the WiFi transmitter; requires students to upload and download assignments from an automobile or in some more dense/urban areas by walking up to the WiFi transmitter, possibly in close proximity to other students; social distancing protocols should be enacted and reminders should be prominently posted.. Requires IT support at the school and possibly by the driver of the bus/vehicle. Requires the WiFi transmitter be positioned in areas that have sufficient mobile/cellular data connectivity (LTE), which can be a challenge in rural areas. Please contact the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative (GBDI) or GaDOE for information about the best mobile/cellular data locations in your school's area. Please also review the recommendations of the Facilities, Transportation, and Equipment Working Group and the School Meals Working Group, to synchronize the WiFi transmitter deployment with the district's/school's plans for buses and other vehicles, as well as meal deliveries in cases of various community spread scenarios.</p>	<p>Approx. \$250 per device, plus a per-month service charge for data and CIPA content filtering</p> <p>Estimated cost per student connected = \$16 for the full school year</p>

Value	Benefits	Limitations	Costs
<p><b>Option 2D: Advise Families to Utilize Public Internet Access Points</b></p> <p>See interactive <a href="#">map</a> of Free Public WiFi locations throughout the state, published by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Local county and city government centers may also offer WiFi access. Please practice social distancing while visiting these sites.</p>	<p>Last-resort option for connectivity for hard-to-reach areas. Public libraries may be able to offer other innovative options for student and teacher connectivity and devices, as well as training on how to best deploy. Please contact your local public library system for options available to nearby students. Find your library <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	<p>Requires students to learn in automobile or possibly in close proximity to others utilizing the public wifi access.</p>	<p>Free from public libraries and some providers, otherwise costs can vary.</p>

### Content Filtering for Student Security

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, “Congress in 2000 enacted the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) as part of the 2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act. The act provides three different types of funding: 1) aid to elementary and secondary schools; 2) Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grants to states for support of public libraries; and 3) the E-rate program that provides technology discounts to schools and public libraries. CIPA also requires public libraries that participate in the LSTA and E-rate programs to certify that they are using computer filtering. For applicable laws, see [National Conference of State Legislatures, “Children and the Internet: Laws Relating to Filtering, Blocking and Usage Policies in Schools](#) and [Libraries and the Federal Communication Commission’s Consumer Guide on the Children’s Internet Protection Act \(CIPA\)](#).

### State & Local Support

**State Purchasing:** The Georgia Technology Authority has worked with providers to expand public use. For wireless service provider contact information see [here](#). The Georgia Department of Administrative Services and GaDOE are working together to identify relevant supply sources of digital devices for K-12 schools. Those contracts are included on the K-12 IT Technology Matrix [here](#). Offerings specific to [AT&T](#), [T-Mobile](#), and [Verizon](#) are available with [a summary of these offerings here](#).

If you have questions regarding these contracts, need assistance identifying a reseller who maintains access to the devices your district needs, or have questions about other offerings available under DOAS contracts, contact Benetta Daniels: [Benetta.Daniels@doas.ga.gov](mailto:Benetta.Daniels@doas.ga.gov).

Know a good company? Click [here](#) for information about how to get on the State Vendor list.



**Resources:** Each school system is encouraged to contact their local [Chamber of Commerce](#), civic organizations (e.g. [Rotary Clubs](#), [Kiwanis Clubs](#)), small businesses, community and other foundations, individuals who may be in the position to help, and utilities such as the local [Electric Membership Cooperatives \(EMC\)](#), who may be interested in supporting connectivity and device needs of local students. A recent report about [rural current affairs](#) indicates EMCs may be a good option for partnership with school districts. For instance, in addition to possible monetary donations, local companies may be able to donate lightly-used connectivity equipment that may no longer be needed for business operations but may be suitable for student and teacher use, such as Personal Internet Equipment (PIE) (e.g. “Personal Hotspots” and MiFi equipment) and laptops.

**Shipment:** For all COVID-19 emergency learning equipment purchases, school districts need to attach the [School District Emergency Justification Form](#) after completion of each purchase request.

**Caution:** [Multiple reports](#) suggest that companies and individuals are dealing with fraudulent transactions related to COVID-19. Caution is strongly encouraged when procuring any of these supplies or services.

## Distribute Devices and Ensure Remote Communication

Set up a plan to prepare technologies for launch and monitor use, including preloading applications, inventorying, updates, firewalls, and distribution.

Consider how you will communicate about the devices to your families. Utilize regular and possible new channels to reach your households, including but not limited to email, phone calls, newsletters, U.S. mailing, school marquee, and social media. Identify other communication networks in your community and consider asking media partners (newspapers, social media, libraries, as well as local radio and television stations) to help communicate about device usage and updates. Consider hosting Virtual Information Sessions to assist teachers and parents to better prepare and understand how to use devices and internet connectivity options supplied by the school.

Use the hashtag [#KeepGALearning](#) on social media to tag your district's efforts to deploy devices, ensure connectivity, and expand access.

Consider the limitations of the devices and connectivity, such as multiple students in one household all requiring synchronous classes at the same time – the internet speeds and bandwidth could overwhelm the household connection and none of the students will have a good experience. This is also an issue if the household does not have a device for each student. One option would be for the school to set unique times for each grade, so it is possible to have only one student at a time requiring use of online streaming data.

## Accompany Connectivity and Devices with Distance Learning and Professional Learning

See forthcoming guidance from the Distance Learning and Professional Learning Working Group to ensure that educators have professional knowledge on how to use devices for remote learning in K-12. Select and assign online courses for teachers, as needed. Work with school library media specialists and technology coaches to establish virtual professional learning sessions for teachers and parents. Topics can include effective digital teaching and learning, online safety and best practices, and digital resources for teaching and learning.

- [Effective Online Instruction](#) (free – from GaDOE)
- [Serving Students with Disabilities](#) (free – from GaDOE)
- [Introduction to Synchronous Learning](#) (free – from GaDOE)
- [Translation of Practice for Digital Learning Days for the School Librarian Evaluation Instrument](#)
- [GALILEO Resources for Educators](#)
  - [Educator Resources for Elementary](#)
  - [Education Research](#)

Provide ideas for families about where to find learning resources.

- [Common Sense Media’s family-friendly educational resources](#)
- [Georgia Public Broadcasting Education Resources](#)
- [GALILEO Resource for Students and Families](#)
  - [Elementary School Resources](#)
  - [Middle School Resources](#)
  - [High School Resources](#)
- [Georgia Public Library Service](#)
  - [E-Resources for Everyone](#)
  - [eRead Kids: free collection of ebooks and audio books for pre-K to 4<sup>th</sup> grade.](#)

## Train on the Use of Devices

Provide training opportunities for teachers, parents, and students to learn the technical aspects of digital distance learning. This includes training on the LMS, the digital platform (i.e. Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, etc.), basic use of devices, how to connect to the internet, and methods to obtain technical support. It is advised that this training occur in person, following social distancing and other applicable activities to comply to public health recommendations. In case parents, families, or other caretakers are not be able to attend an in-person training due to work or other obligations, consider recording trainings and making them available on a website, social media platforms, or through other formats (e.g. jump/flash drives, printed versions, etc.). Also consider publishing a “Parents’ Resources” link on all digital learning devices.

Inform parents and students on safely cleaning the devices:

- Identify times and frequencies for device cleaning (e.g. – upon receipt, after face to face instruction, after use in a public space, etc.)
- Using a wipe containing at least 70% alcohol, gently and carefully wipe the hard, nonporous surface of the item.
- This includes the display, touchscreen keyboard, mouse and the exterior surface of the item. If you have concerns about the cleaning product being used, please refer to the manufacturer’s recommendations and warning label.
- When using a disinfectant wipe, it is important to follow the contact time found on the label. It may be necessary to use more than one wipe to keep the surface wet for the recommended contact time.
  - [GaDOE Distance Learning Resources](#)
  - [Resources for continuity of learning](#)

## 3. Recover

Begin the long-term recovery process. Establish policies and procedures around continuity of learning, identify ongoing professional learning for educators, engagement of caregivers, and implement your continuity of learning plan and measure its effectiveness.

### Establish Precedence for System Continuity

Create long-lasting policies that support distance, digital, and personalized learning.

- [Acceptable Use Policies During COVID-19](#)
- [Resources for Policies Regarding Open Educational Resources \(OERs\)](#)
- [Chief Technology Officer Tools](#)

# Appendix

## [Facilities, Transportation, and Equipment Working Group Guidance](#)

[Georgia Virtual Learning School](#): options for coursework, teacher training, and a virtual learning tech guide

### **Georgia Public Libraries content**

- [Georgia Public Library Service: Library Resources You Can Use Everywhere](#)
- [GALILEO at Home: A Guide for K-12 Students and Parents](#)

## [6 Ways You Can Show True Leadership in How You Communicate During a Crisis](#)

6 Ways You Can Show True Leadership in How You Communicate During a Crisis. (2020). Retrieved 8 April 2020, from <https://www.inc.com/amy-george/6-ways-you-can-show-true-leadership-during-a-crisis.html>

## [Digital Learning | COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)

Digital Learning | COVID-19 (Coronavirus). (2020). Retrieved 7 April 2020, from <https://www.georgiainsights.com/digital-learning.html>

## [K-12 Bandwidth Goals - EducationSuperHighway](#)

K-12 Bandwidth Goals - EducationSuperHighway. (2020). Retrieved 7 April 2020, from <https://www.educationsuperhighway.org/upgrade/types-of-fiber-services/k-12-bandwidth-goals/>

## [Making the Connection - Southern Regional Education Board](#)

Making the Connection - Southern Regional Education Board. (2015). Retrieved 7 April 2020, from <https://www.sreb.org/publication/making-connection>

