



ConnectED NY to Provide No-Cost Internet Access for Students in Economically Disadvantaged School Districts Across New York State

Digital Promise to Manage Program Supported by Schmidt Futures and the Ford Foundation in Partnership with New York State

March 19, 2021 – Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the Reimagine New York Commission today announced the launch of ConnectED NY, an emergency fund to provide approximately 50,000 students in economically disadvantaged school districts with free internet access through June 2022. Funding will be provided by Schmidt Futures and the Ford Foundation and the program will be managed by Digital Promise.

The ConnectED NY fund will help close the connectivity gap by providing free mobile hotspots and monthly data plans to approximately 50,000 students in economically disadvantaged school districts from May 2021 through June 2022. In unique circumstances where students cannot access reliable internet service through a mobile hotspot, fixed internet options will be made available.

“The past year has proven that without consistent and strong internet access, young people can’t engage in learning at the level that’s needed for success in today’s world,” said Jean-Claude Brizard, President and CEO of Digital Promise. “We applaud the coming together of this public-private partnership to address inequity for New York’s children and youth.”

The program will serve students in the most economically disadvantaged school districts, defined as school districts where the percent of students that are economically disadvantaged exceeds the state average.

School districts will work with Digital Promise, AT&T, and other internet service providers as needed to identify eligible students who either do not have at-home internet access or do not have access to sufficient broadband speeds to participate in remote learning. Hotspots and data plans will be purchased directly by the ConnectED NY fund from AT&T, so there is no financial obligation for students and their families. In circumstances where

fixed internet is required, the Program will work with districts and fixed internet service providers to ensure there is no cost to students and their families.

Lydia Logan, who leads a national network of 1:1 Title I schools managed by Digital Promise, said, “We have the experience collaborating with school districts and internet service providers to ensure we get mobile hotspots in student homes quickly and provide needed data plans for the coming school year through June 2022.”

ConnectED NY is a sponsored project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.

An informational webinar will take place on Monday, March 22, from 2 to 3 p.m. School districts can find more information about applying at <https://connectedny.digitalpromise.org> or by contacting Digital Promise at connectedny@digitalpromise.org.

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About Digital Promise

Digital Promise is a nonprofit organization that builds powerful networks and takes on grand challenges by working at the intersection of researchers, entrepreneurs, and educators. Our vision is that all people, at every stage of their lives, have access to learning experiences that help them acquire the knowledge and skills they need to thrive and continuously learn in an ever-changing world. For more information, visit the [Digital Promise website](#) and follow [@digitalpromise](#) for updates.