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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lancaster ISD and the City of Lancaster Unite to Provide Free Internet Access to Students

Lancaster, TX/Lancaster ISD – In an effort to bridge the ‘digital divide,’ Lancaster ISD has partnered with the City of Lancaster and the Lancaster Veterans Memorial Library to offer free mobile hotspot device access to Lancaster ISD students and parents.

The library will have 30 free mobile hotspot devices available for check-out to Lancaster Veterans Memorial Library card holders to provide internet access to families. One is allotted for check out per household for up to 14 days.



“In ongoing discussions between the City of Lancaster and the Lancaster ISD over the years, one of the recurring themes has been the need for technological improvements/connectivity for students and citizens Citywide,” City of Lancaster Managing Director of Quality of Life & Cultural Services Sean Johnson said. “We then created a mobile hotspot policy that allows these devices to be added to the circulation for library card holders to check out.”

According to a Pew Research Center report, approximately 5 million school-aged children lack internet access at home, while 70 percent of homework assignments requires internet access to complete them. Low-income households account for a large portion of the 5 million.

“Eighty-six percent of Lancaster ISD students qualify for free or reduced lunches based on family income,” Lancaster ISD’s Deputy Superintendent of Governmental Relations and Student Affairs Dr. Lamont Smith said. “We understand that means that some of our students do not have access to the internet at home. The city recognized that the library and school campuses are only open a certain period of time.”

Many lower-income households rely primarily on their smartphone for internet access which means that students in those homes without high-speed internet are not able to complete tasks that are more suitable for a computer or device with a larger screens.

“Access to technology is more than just a cellphone,” Dr. Smith said. “A phone will not allow you to do the adequate type of research that students need to do as far as speed and saving data that wi-fi will provide.”

This program’s launch is another partnership project between the district and the city in support of the Village 2020 Joint Strategic Plan—a collaborative show of solidarity initiated to unite both entities and therefore the community.

Lancaster ISD's mission is to ignite learning that translates to sustainable success for all students in collaboration with parents and communities. This partnership with the city will support and engage in furthering that mission and help close the gap in the local digital divide.

“What really is the driving force is the vision for the city to be wireless, where all students and all residents will have internet access,” Dr. Smith said.

The Lancaster Veterans Memorial Library card holding students and parents can check out hot spots now. For more information, call the library at 972-227-1080.