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CLAYTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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School Board Approves Acceleration of CCPS 1-to-1 Student Initiative

Approval allows CCPS to lease 38,000 New Devices for Students in 2020-2021 SY

JONESBORO - The Clayton County Board of Education unanimously voted, today, May 4, 2020, to approve a proposal to accelerate the district’s Extending Learning Beyond the Classroom initiative for the 2020-2021 school year. Proposed by Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Morcease J. Beasley, during the combined Regular Board Meeting and Work Session Meeting held via video conference, the program’s acceleration will allow the district to lease 38,000 new Chromebooks for students in 3rd through 12th grades. This initiative, coupled with recently approved Digital Learning grant funding from the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), federal funds provided via the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, support from the local government, nonprofits and community partners will assist Clayton County Public Schools in closing the digital gap for all students. Each device will be equipped with Chromebook Management software, asset tracking software, CIPA Compliant Content Filtering software (cloud-based web filter), technical support access, and device cases.

“Although very few individuals could have foreseen the impact of the Coronavirus, we are thankful that through this global phenomenon, we are afforded the opportunity to address access shortfalls in our device availability for our students moving forward,” said Superintendent Beasley. “I am proud that our Board of Education views the facilitation of this proposal as a necessity in the work of providing our students continued access in the event we experience future circumstances that require distance learning,” he added.

Clayton County Public Schools originally began its Extending Learning Beyond the Classroom initiative in 2018, by issuing devices to students at four pilot schools. The Extending Learning Beyond the Classroom program was designed to be phased-in over a four-year time frame contingent upon the availability of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) VI funds to complete and sustain the initiative. Currently, each participating school has two grade levels using Chromebooks to support learning beyond the classroom.

While the approved proposal sets forth a five-year investment totaling \$36,822,219.00, the district’s Department of Technology will work over the summer to ensure student devices are ready by the end of September 2020. “We currently have about 40,000 students in grades three through 12,” said Mr. Rod Smith, CCPS Chief Technology Officer, “Through the use of a newly approved Title I waiver, in collaboration with the Department of Federal Programs, we can use our current inventory of devices to assign all K-2 teachers with a Chromebook cart for students. These devices will be assigned to students for regular in-class use and can be sent home with students to access school work via the Google

Classroom solution. I am extremely excited as this approval from the Board of Education is a game-changer for our school system as we close the digital gap with a goal to improve scholastic achievement,” he concluded.

As CCPS works to secure the devices for the 2020-2021 school year, the school system will focus additional funds from external organizations toward acquiring wifi devices for students without internet access. Additional funding and supporters include but are not limited to the CARES Act (\$17,458,566.00 in allocated funds to offset expenditures due to COVID-19), the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) Digital Learning Grant (\$2.3 million in potential funding), and United Way of Greater Atlanta (\$125,000 donated to the Clayton County Public Schools Foundation). It is important to note that all aforementioned funds will not be allocated for this purpose as funds provided by the CARES Act allocation can be utilized for supporting at-risk student populations, supplemental learning, school meals, facilities and equipment, professional development, continuity of core staff and services, mental and physical health services and distance/remote learning as outlined by GADOE (<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/Attachment.aspx?S=1262&AID=1149305&MID=85503>).

“This is absolutely a step in the right direction for our district and our students,” added Superintendent Beasley. “I am very proud of our leadership team, the State Department of Education, and our community partners for their work to ensure this is a reality for our school system,” he concluded.

About Clayton County Public Schools

Clayton County Public Schools (CCPS) is fully accredited by AdvancED – Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement. The district offers a focused world-class program based on a challenging curriculum which is taught from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. Serving over 55,000 students, Clayton County Public Schools is ranked among the 100 largest school districts in the U.S. and is the fifth largest school system in Georgia.

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