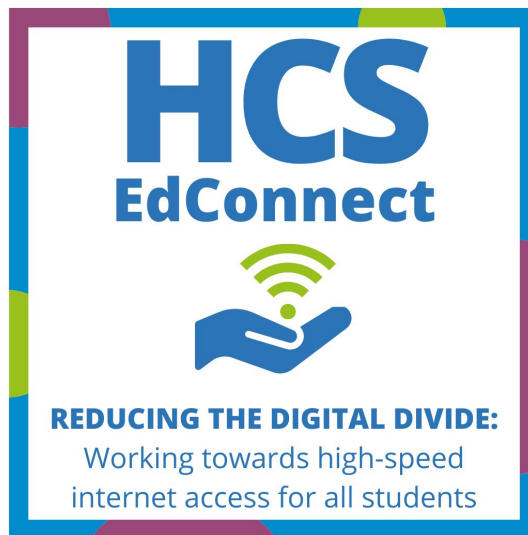


HCS EdConnect Messaging & Anticipated Questions



Overview

EdConnect is a partnership between HCS, Hamilton County & the City of Chattanooga, the Enterprise Center, and a variety of local funders to provide free EPB broadband internet access to HCS families who qualify. Broadband internet is the type of internet connection that will allow students to access remote learning tools (such as zoom, iReady, pre-recorded youtube videos, Canvas, etc.) without interruption.

*** Please share this with *any staff* at your school who communicate directly with families. We need everyone to be knowledgeable about this program and be able to answer questions. Encourage any family who calls about the EdConnect program to update their contact information in PowerSchool. We are working on a simplified FAQ doc for you to share with your families. If you have any other questions, email Rachel Emond: emond_rachel@hcde.org ***

How do families opt-in to the program?

- Families need to make sure their information in PowerSchool is up-to-date!
- Families will first receive an **EMAIL** from the district, which went out on Thursday, August 6, explaining the program and providing them with access to a 2-question survey (1. Do you want to enroll in this program? 2. Can we share your contact information with EPB to schedule installation?)
- **24 hours after responding to the email survey**, families need to **CONTACT the EPB Call Center at (423) 648-1372** to schedule their installation. This information was shared with families when they completed the survey.
- **The original email survey closed Monday, August 17 at noon.**
- Families who received this original email survey but did not respond will receive a **text message survey** on **Monday, August 17** (as long as their information is correct in PowerSchool).

- Families who didn't receive the original email survey, will receive an email survey on Monday, August 17, which will close after one week, on Monday, August 24th at noon. Anyone who doesn't respond to this email, will receive a text message survey on Monday, August 24th.
- **24 hours after responding to the text survey**, families can begin to **CONTACT the EPB Call Center at (423) 648-1372** to schedule their installation.
- After the text surveys close, the district will turn over outreach responsibility to the individual school level. Principals will receive a list of all of the students who have been contacted but have not responded. Principals have autonomy to decide how to communicate with these families (more on this below).
- School-level staff will manually update their school-specific spreadsheet with the family's survey responses, and should instruct families to contact the EPB call center at **(423) 648-1372** after 24 hours to schedule their installation date.

Who qualifies & what if families have questions about their eligibility?

- Families will qualify for this program if they qualify for free & reduced lunch or if they qualify for SNAP benefits. At CEP schools where every family is receiving free & reduced lunch, every family will receive the opportunity to opt in. However, they should not opt in if they are not economically disadvantaged (and this is stated on the survey).
 - These eligibility requirements were established based on limitations of our funds for this program. We are working towards a goal of making sure all of our students are connected to high speed internet and are doing the best to meet the needs of all of our families.
- **If families have not received the survey either via email, text, or phone from the district or their Principal, then they are not on our eligibility list or their PowerSchool information is not up-to-date.** If they believe they should be on the eligibility list, first, instruct them to update their information in PowerSchool, then a school staff person should contact Rachel Emond (contact info above) with the student's name so that we can check on their eligibility status.

When can families expect installation service?

- This process **will** take months. Please help us manage the expectations of our families by being honest with them:
 - EPB is currently working to reach as many people as possible as quickly as possible.
 - Some families will be connected right away, but due to a high volume of need in our community, it will likely take several months to install broadband internet access into the home of every HCS family who needs it. 17,700 households is a lot to get to, but EPB is committed to serving every family.
 - Families can begin contacting EPB 24 hours after responding to the Hamilton County Schools survey to schedule their installation date. EPB is receiving an updated list of names and addresses every day, but there are limits to the number of households they can visit each week.
 - If the family says they received the survey and responded to it, but say they haven't heard when their installation will be, please remind them that **families MUST contact EPB for installation, EPB will not call them.**
 - **EPB Call Center: (423) 648-1372**
- If families need immediate assistance to support their child's at home learning, refer them to:
 - The EPB Quick Connect hotspots map <https://www.techgoeshomecha.org/epb.html>

- And the map of free public wifi spots
<https://igtlab.maps.arcgis.com/apps/LocalPerspective/index.html?appid=2d971c1ff3f04260bd758d59433274f0>
- We recognize these maps are not the perfect solution for everyone, and we are working diligently to provide every family with access as quickly as we can.

What about families who qualify but live outside EPB's service range?

- The district is actively working to provide another form of internet service to families who live outside EPB's radius of service or in apartment complexes where EPB is not currently an established provider. None of these families will be turned away from this program, please help us reassure them that the EdConnect program will provide them with free internet access. This will particularly impact families at the far-north ends of the county in the Sale Creek, Birchwood, Ooltewah, and Harrison areas, as well as families living in certain apartment complexes in various downtown locations.
- Families should go ahead and fill out the survey (if they believe they qualify, but they haven't received the survey, please follow the same steps as identified above), and should also go ahead and contact EPB after 24 hours of responding so that we can make sure these families are on EPB's radar as "needing service". Additionally, some families may find that they are no longer out of EPB's service range. Regardless of the outcome, all eligible families who have enrolled through the survey **will** receive internet access at no-cost, it just may take us some more time to service their homes.

Help your families avoid scams/fraud:

- Please PLEASE inform your families that EPB will not call them and ask for any form of personal information. At this time, the only way for your families to enroll in this program is to respond to the email and text survey from Hamilton County Schools and then to call EPB themselves. They should not, under any circumstances, give out personal/private information over the phone unless they called EPB themselves.
- We will also work to communicate this information from the district level.
- If at any point the process to enroll changes so that EPB is calling your families first, we will work with you to communicate how families can identify the legitimacy of the caller.

School level outreach:

- Once the district wide text and email surveys have closed (in two weeks), outreach will be turned over to the school level. Principals will receive a spreadsheet that shows: a summary of the response rate from their eligible students, students who have requested service, and students who have not responded. **To be clear: Principals can delegate outreach to any staff they feel comfortable delegating this task to.**
- It will be the school's responsibility to do outreach to the students who have not responded.
- Once contact has been made, school staff can manually enter the family's response into their school-based tracking spreadsheet.
- Possible outreach tactics:
 - School Messenger phone survey
 - You can hand select students to send a survey to over the phone via School Messenger; we will share instructions for how to do this
 - Email directly from Principal, teacher, or other staff member
 - Paper form

- We will provide a paper permission form that you can send home with your students
- For students who need communication translated in something other than English or Spanish, this will be the best mode of communication. We will work with Bridge Refugee Services to get this form translated into any language necessary