

**All DPSCD Students to Receive Wireless Tablets and Internet Access
Through \$23 Million Investment by Detroit Community and Business Leaders**
Students and Families will have 24/7 Access to Learning Opportunities

DETROIT – April 23, 2020 – Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) along with DTE Energy Foundation, Quicken Loans and the Skillman Foundation announced today an at scale solution to address the historical digital divide through the Connected Futures Project, all enrolled DPSCD students and families will receive wireless tablets and internet access through a \$23 million investment.

“This is an unprecedented investment to immediately address an unprecedented crisis. Inequitable access to resources is one of the root reasons why Detroiters have been disproportionately impacted by COVID19,” said Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent of DPSCD. “As the Governor rightfully shifted learning this year to online learning from traditional face to face instruction, our District experienced another example of inequity in the fact that only 10% of students were accessing the District’s online platform and learning materials. The District needed an at scale, immediate response and the business and non-profit community stepped up as true advocates of children, families, and traditional public education. I do not believe this investment would have happened had the newly formed District not made the improvements it has demonstrated over the last three years. This is not only an investment to address the digital divide so we can more effectively facilitate online learning throughout this shutdown, but it will rapidly accelerate our overall plan and efforts to increase the use of technology and improve student achievement over the next two years.”

The Connected Futures Project will enable 51,000 students and families to receive wireless tablets and internet access for in-home use; and to connect with DPSCD teachers utilizing online learning resources. The project would make LTE (wireless) enabled tablets available for all enrolled DPSCD students before the end of the 2019-2020 school year. These devices will include six months of subsidized LTE data, immediately connecting students without wired internet connections at home, and will be the property of the student and family.

During this global pandemic, DPSCD is transitioning to online distance learning and has already infused more online learning in classrooms over the past three years. All academic resources are currently available online for students and families for grades PreK-12, in addition printed packets that are directly linked to the online lessons are now available for families to pick up at select school locations. In June, the tablets will be delivered to schools.

Students in grades K-12 will benefit from online courses in all core academic areas, including art and physical education. High school students can continue to take dual enrollment courses and SAT prep. Students and teachers will continue to communicate through the Microsoft Teams platform and families will have access to

student grades, progress reports and assignments. Although the District has developed an online platform to provide students and families with access, only 10 percent of families were able to take full advantage of the online learning after school and during the weekends.

“By making our students the priority, we are creating educational opportunities that are unmatched, this is one of our next steps. We are grateful for the ongoing support of our business community,” said Iris Taylor, DPSCD Board President on behalf of the Board of Education.

An organized deployment strategy is planned for June once the devices arrive and will include families signing an agreement to ensure online participation is monitored. During the six months following the initial deployment of devices, the District plans to partner with the City of Detroit and the social enterprise non-profit, Human IT, to help families sign up for low-cost subsidized internet services. During this portion of the program, families will receive technical support on their new device, as well as navigation services that will help them take advantage of internet access.

By the end of the subsidized data period, in December 2020, the District will support DPSCD families who are actively using the services for educational programming and are in socio-economic need of continued internet service. Students will be encouraged to bring their devices to school in the fall to continue the narrowing of the student to device ratio throughout the District. Over the next two years, DPSCD will shift to a one to one student to device ratio where home learning will be required online, and textbooks and workbooks are replaced by laptops and tablets.

About Detroit Public Schools Community District

Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) is Michigan’s largest public education system. It is governed by a locally elected, seven-member board with Dr. Nikolai Vitti serving as superintendent. The District’s mission is to provide every student with a beneficial and rightful educational experience, preparing students to be career and college ready, and qualified to compete in the global market. The District has more than 100 schools and educates 51,000 children. For more information, visit detroitk12.org.

About the DPS Foundation

Launched in 2009, the Detroit Public Schools Foundation is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to supporting DPSCD students, families and educators. Since its inception, the DPS Foundation has raised more than \$21 million to create and enhance educational opportunities for the District. The DPS Foundation, Michigan’s largest public school foundation, serves as a fundraising organization, a grantmaking entity, a facilitator/connector linking schools and programs with supporters and an information source, helping the general public understand the opportunities and resources needed to educate Detroit’s children. Learn more at dpsfdn.org or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

