

## ISBE - COVID-19 Update & Free Internet Access Opportunities

March 19, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

I want to be sure you are aware of the free internet access opportunities from AT&T, Spectrum, and Comcast. ISBE has listed these opportunities at [www.isbe.net/keeplearning](http://www.isbe.net/keeplearning). Please share them with your students, staff, and communities. We need to be prepared to continue remote teaching and learning both online and off, potentially beyond March 30.

Belleville Township High School District 201 has also taken a creative approach to ensuring all students have access to the internet. According to [WILL](#), the district “is deploying four school buses equipped with WiFi to serve as Wi-Fi hotspots throughout the community. Drivers park the buses next to seven different parks scattered throughout the community and Belleville’s downtown YMCA, depending on the day of the week, between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. every Monday through Friday.”

Wow. I can’t say this enough: I’m so grateful for the way teachers, administrators, and families are helping students adapt to this unexpected crisis.

Today, we also saw staff and volunteers in Libertyville District 70 preparing and distributing Chromebooks and iPads for drive-through pickup, so students can keep learning. We saw Mrs. Latka, a choir director at Forest Ridge, sing a special song to her students via the internet. We saw about a dozen teachers from Goodrich School in Woodbridge using YouTube to lead students through physical exercise. And we saw educators who support students who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, blind, or low vision provide resources, accommodation options, and collaboration avenues for educators and families through email and social media.

That’s just a few of the amazing things teachers are doing. If you can take the time to share these stories via Twitter with #ILSchoolsStepUp, please do. Those posts inspire others and show your staff how much they and their efforts matter.

It's easy to get stuck in a crisis mindset. As leaders, it is important now more than ever show appreciation for the added hours, the volunteering, and the extra mile. This praise and recognition will be the fuel your teachers and staff need to keep going for as long as the school closure is necessary.

Please keep preparing to educate students at home and to ensure their nutritional needs are met in the event the closure extends beyond March 30. And please keep taking the time to tell each other and your teachers and staff, thank you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala  
State Superintendent of Education  
Illinois State Board of Education