



## Governor Announces \$40 Million In Funding To Expand Student Internet Connectivity

Elizabeth Yelverton | NCASA Legal Affairs & Policy Manager

Governor Roy Cooper announced Wednesday nearly \$40 million in funding will be provided to expand internet connectivity options for students participating in remote learning. The new funding will be given to NC Student Connect, a new partnership formed across various areas of state government, such as the Department of Information Technology (DIT) and the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR), to close remote learning barriers for NC students. “NC Student Connect will make critical investments in high speed internet access and remote learning that will help students, health care, and businesses in our state,” said Governor Cooper in a [press release](#). The Governor’s office included the following information on how the funds will be distributed:

- **\$30 million to distribute 100,000 wireless high speed hot spots** for students to connect with their remote learning classes;
- **\$8 million to create accessible sites in convenient locations** across the state such as school parking lots, municipal areas, and state parks, museums, and historic sites. These NC Student Connect sites will provide free high-speed internet for students to connect to the Internet to download lessons and complete assignments offline; and
- **\$2 million for educator professional development, parent training and student involvement** in a spectrum of activities that go into effective remote learning.

In creating the NC Student Connect Program, the Governor’s office relied on feedback from superintendents and other school leaders, who estimated at least 100,000 students still lacked reliable home internet access when most schools resumed in August. The NC Association of School Administrators (NCASA) and other education stakeholders also frequently highlighted the importance of expanding internet connectivity in discussions with state legislators, resulting in an additional \$10 million provided to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to improve Internet connectivity for students in the state’s [latest coronavirus relief package](#). According to the Governor’s office, DNCR and Hometown Strong, an initiative focused on meeting the needs of rural communities, will be reaching out to districts to find out how many additional hot spots are needed. As of last week, DNCR had purchased approximately 10,000 hot spots from vendors and shipped them directly to school districts.

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