



October 25, 2021

I am writing to share some vital information about the impact of the SEPTA strike on the C. B. Community and our plan of action moving forward. As you know, the current contract for Transport Workers Union Local 234 expired on Sunday, October 31, 2021, and a new contract agreement may be unlikely. A SEPTA strike could occur beginning Monday, November 1, 2021. We understand a SEPTA strike will impact the operation of our school and the ability of some students to attend school at C. B. for in-person learning.

During the SEPTA strike, C.B. Community School will keep our doors open and continue to meet our resilient students' social, emotional, and academic needs. We are committed to providing a safe and engaging environment for students who courageously face increasing gun violence, the COVID-19 pandemic, and many other traumas. It is critically important we all remain informed and begin to plan. We have already started exploring our options to provide continuity of education and student support services for our students and families in the event of a SEPTA strike.

Here's what we know so far:

- **Student Transportation Impact:** Nearly 60,000 Philadelphia students rely on SEPTA to get to and from school. During a national driver shortage that is already disrupting our school bus and private van service operations, C.B.'s ability to provide student transportation support to all students who need it during a SEPTA strike would not be an option.
- **Continuity of Learning:** We are fully committed to ensuring that learning continues for all students in the event of a SEPTA strike. We plan to maintain in-person education for all students and offer live streaming learning (virtual) for those students with transportation challenges due to the SEPTA strike.
- **Student Supports** – We are also committed to maintaining vital supports for our students and families and staying connected with the SEL team as needed.

What You Should Do Now

- I ask for your patience as we thoughtfully work out the details.
 - If your student needs a Chromebook, be sure that they notify their advisor for information and details about tech support.
 - See the attached list of Internet Access Options for Families if you need information about no- or low-cost internet access.

Dr. Smart and the C.B.Team

Options from Commercial Providers

Comcast

- Comcast is offering sixty (60) days of free **Comcast Internet Essentials** to new customers with limited means, *regardless of previous debt to Comcast*. This information is available in multiple languages; see the listing to the right.
- See their website for **eligibility requirements and more details**. The application is available in seven (7) languages. A social security number is not required to apply for Internet Essentials. Comcast accepts 28 different kinds of documents, including PHL City IDs. A full list can be found at <https://internetessentials.com/get-help>.
- Comcast has increased speeds of Internet Essentials from 15/2 Mbps to 25/3 Mbps for all customers at no charge. This will remain the base speed of Internet Essentials moving forward.
- Comcast also offers **laptops for \$150** to Internet Essential customers.
- The simplest, fastest, and easiest way to apply for the program is from a mobile device at www.InternetEssentials.com. Call **1-855-8-INTERNET (1-855-846-8376)** for English or **1-855-765-6995** for Spanish if you are having trouble signing up or don't have access to an Internet-connected device. Note that Comcast call centers are experiencing heavy volume at this time. Please mention that you are a parent or guardian of a student in the School District.
- Xfinity WiFi Hotspots across the country will be available for free to anyone who needs them, including non-Xfinity Internet subscribers, through May 2020. For a map of Xfinity WiFi Hotspots, visit www.xfinity.com/wifi. Once connected to a Hotspot, consumers should select the "xfinitywifi" network name from the list of available networks, and then launch a browser. The duration of free use of Xfinity WiFi Hotspots will vary and may be restricted to a limited number of hours per day or month. Please contact Comcast directly for further details.
- For more information, visit <https://corporate.comcast.com/covid-19>.

Verizon

- Verizon will now offer low-cost Internet access through its Lifeline program to individuals who qualify. Limitations apply. For program details, visit their [Lifeline webpage](#).
- Verizon will waive overage charges and late fees for customers who may be financially affected by the COVID-19 crisis through June 30.
- Verizon will provide two months of waived Internet and voice service charges for current Lifeline customers through June 30.
- Verizon will add 15GB of high-speed data for wireless consumers and small business customers.
- Consumer and small business Fios and DSL broadband Internet plans will have no data caps.
- For more information, visit <https://www.verizon.com/about/news/our-response-coronavirus>.

AT&T and Cricket

- AT&T will not terminate the service of any wireless, home phone or broadband residential or small business customer because of their inability to pay their bill.
- AT&T will waive wireless plan overage charges for data, voice or text. AT&T will also waive any late payment fees that any wireless, home phone or broadband residential or small business customer may incur because of economic hardship related to the coronavirus pandemic. [Click here](#) to submit a waiver request.
- AT&T will keep its [public WiFi Hotspots](#) open for anyone who needs them.
- For new and existing [Cricket Customers](#), starting March 27, Cricket is offering a new unlimited \$15 plan with 2GB of data and unlimited talk and text for a limited time with no activation fee.
- For more information from AT&T, visit <https://www.att.com/shop/internet/access/>.

T-Mobile and Metro

- **T-Mobile Connect** is a new program offering a \$15 per month plan for unlimited talk and text plus 2GB of high-speed smartphone data.
- New and current Metro customers with any voice line can also get a free 8" tablet (via rebate redemption) with a \$15 unlimited tablet data plan (plus sales tax and activation fee. Requires new line of tablet service).
- T-Mobile has removed smartphone data caps for ALL customers for the next 60 days.
- T-Mobile has added 20GB Hotspot/tethering service for customers for the next 60 days.
- MetroSmart Hotspot devices will be 50% off, and the \$35 per month data plan will include 20GB—double the normal monthly data—for the next 60 days.
- All current T-Mobile and Metro by T-Mobile customers who have legacy plans without unlimited high-speed data will get unlimited smartphone data for the next 60 days.

T-Mobile and Metro by T-Mobile customers on smartphone plans with Hotspot data will get an additional 10GB per bill cycle for the next 60 days for each voice line (T-Mobile Connect excluded).

- T-Mobile is working with its Lifeline partners to provide customers extra free data up to 5GB of data per month through May 13, 2020.
- For more information, visit
<https://www.t-mobile.com/news/t-mobile-update-on-covid-19-response>.

Sprint and Boost Mobile

- For the next 60 days, Sprint will not terminate service and will waive late fees if customers are unable to pay their Sprint bill because of the coronavirus.
- Customers with metered data plans will receive unlimited data per month for 60 days (a minimum of two bill cycles) at no extra cost.
- Sprint will provide customers with an additional 20GB of mobile Hotspot data per month for 60 days (a minimum of two bill cycles) at no extra cost.
- Sprint customers with mobile hotspot-capable handsets who don't have a mobile hotspot today will now get 20GB as well per month for 60 days (a minimum of two bill cycles) at no extra cost.
- For more information from Sprint, visit
<https://www.sprint.com/en/landings/covid-19.html>.
- For more information from Boost Mobile, visit
<https://www.boostmobile.com/about/covid-19-response.html>.



Other Options for Free/Low-Cost Internet Access

PHLConnectED

PHLConnectED is the City of Philadelphia's program to connect pre-K-12 families in need to free internet for digital learning through summer 2022.

PHLConnectED is available for families who:

- do not have an internet connection in the home;
- are only connected with a mobile phone;
- are experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity; or
- have students who participate in remote learning in locations without internet access.

Families with internet access are also eligible if they:

- participate in public benefit programs with income qualifications like Medicaid;
- have students designated as English learners; or
- have students who receive special education services.

If you think you may be eligible, call the PHLConnectED hotline. Just dial 2-1-1 to hear how you may qualify for the program. For language services, press 8.

Additional Options:

- WiFi access at all Free Library of Philadelphia locations will remain active while the library branches are closed. An active library card number and PIN are needed to access the location's WiFi. For more information and instructions on how to access free WiFi at any public library branch, visit the [Free Library website](#).
- [Charter Spectrum](#) has a coverage map of WiFi hotspots searchable by address.
- The [National Free WiFi map](#) provides free WiFi hotspots at businesses and restaurants that is searchable by address. Most locations are in Northeast and Northwest Philadelphia. Many locations may be closed at this time but have active WiFi service.
- The [Federal Lifeline Program](#) is one of the four federal Universal Service programs that lowers the monthly cost of phone or Internet for low-income households. Eligible customers can receive up to \$9.25 toward their monthly bill.