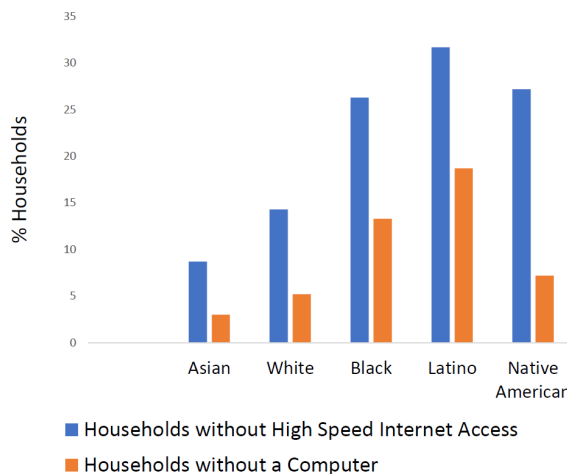


WSPTA recognizes that to be successful in the 21st century, ALL students must have access to communication tools and technology to facilitate K-12 learning and post-secondary opportunities.

Background

- Even before COVID-19, there was a digital divide in Washington: more than 280,000 children in Washington had no broadband at home, and more than 117,000 had no computers. This digital divide is widespread, affecting 15% of metropolitan and 26% of rural households. Overall, 68% of districts report that at least some of their students had no access to broadband or smartphone data.¹
- Native American, Black, and Latinx students are twice as likely to lack access to computers and broadband at home.¹
- A survey conducted in spring 2020 revealed that engagement of students and families with schools during remote learning could be enhanced by increasing access to technology, including online translation tools to reduce linguistic barriers; leveraging community partnerships to facilitate technology networks; and training for both teachers and families on the technology being used in remote learning classrooms.²



Proposed Solutions

Washington State PTA shall support legislation, policies, and funding that ensure equitable digital inclusion and access for all students, families, and staff, including:

- Appropriate technology:
 - o Robust, up-to-date, universal broadband infrastructure
 - o Affordable broadband internet service
 - o Developmentally appropriate internet-enabled devices
- Effective engagement in online learning:
 - o District-wide consistency in learning platforms
 - o Professional development for educational staff including social emotional learning, equity and social justice in online environments
 - o Leveraging community partnerships, especially those that serve marginalized communities
 - o Training and technical support for families and caregivers, that are accessible and delivered in a culturally competent context
 - o Consideration for personal privacy issues and adherence to data privacy laws
 - o Identification of and support for sharing of best practices among districts

For More Information

Lizzy Sebring, WSPTA Advocacy Director
ptaadvocacydir@wastatepta.org

Marie Sullivan, WSPTA Legislative Consultant
legconsultant@wastatepta.org

For more information on the WSPTA advocacy program, please visit our website (www.wastatepta.org).



Citations

1. Alliance for Excellent Education. [Students of Color Caught in the Homework Gap](https://futureready.org/homework-gap/) (July 2020)
2. The National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement. [Survey: Family Engagement During the COVID-19 Pandemic](https://cdn.ymaws.com/nafsce.org/resource/resmgr/COVID_19_Survey_Summary_of_K.pdf) (July 2020)