

# Computer devices to begin arriving in school districts in October

### Press Release

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) announced today the first batch of computer devices ordered through the Mississippi Connects digital learning plan will arrive in school districts next week, ready for students' immediate use.

The first districts scheduled to receive devices are West Point and Tate County. All other districts that ordered devices through MDE's bulk purchasing system will receive computers for their students and teachers throughout October and early November. Districts will follow their own processes for distributing their devices.

"We are thrilled how quickly our Mississippi Connects plan is able to get computer devices into the hands of students and teachers to facilitate learning," said Dr. Carey Wright, state superintendent of education. "Mississippi's coordinated strategy to purchase devices in bulk on behalf of districts has pushed our students to the front of the line."

The Mississippi Legislature allocated \$200 million for Mississippi Connects through two laws, the Equity in Distance Learning Act (SB 3044) and the Mississippi Pandemic Response Broadband Availability Act (HB 1788). The goal is for every student to receive the technology needed to learn

at school and at home. These tools will enable students to continue making academic progress.

Districts have placed orders to purchase 320,000 computer devices through Mississippi Connects. An additional 70,000 devices were ordered outside of the program.

Also, the Mississippi State Board of Education (SBE) approved the methodology to distribute \$50 million to districts through HB 1788, which provides grants to Mississippi school districts, independent schools and Native American tribal schools to expand broadband access in unserved areas of the state. Funds have been allocated to districts based on FCC data of homes without broadband access and the districts' population of students receiving free or reduced lunch.

HB 1788 will provide broadband access support to 75% of public-school households and more than 20,000 independent school and tribal school households. Districts and schools determine how to best use the funds to increase broadband access. Strategies may include the purchase of hotspots, cell towers and equipment to strengthen broadband power in schools or other community access points.

The MDE has already begun providing virtual learning professional development to educators and will

continue to work with school districts to sustain digital learning over the long term.

"The unexpected need for distance learning provided Mississippi with an opportunity to reimagine the digital learning experience and create an innovative approach to getting students what

they need to learn, whether in a classroom or at home," Wright said. "We are excited to move ahead with the next phases of Mississippi Connects, which will ensure all students have access to high-quality instruction."

Mississippi Connects components:

- Laptops or tablets for students and teachers to use at home or school. Districts select Chromebooks, Windows

laptops, MacBooks and/or iPads.

- High-quality instructional materials, learning management systems and other online learning tools. All software, security and support features come pre-loaded and configured for immediate use.

- Enhanced internet connectivity in areas of the state where students do not have broadband service. Districts

will use funds to purchase services such as data plans and hotspots or to expand broadband access in community locations accessible to students.

- Professional development and technology support for teachers and students to implement distance learning.

Student access to telehealth and teletherapy services for their physical, social and emotional health.

# Peewee Trojans end season with 3-3 record

### Staff Report

The Pee Wee Trojans football team faced the 2020 football season with many obstacles.

Having brought back only three starters from last year's team and adding several new players, not know-

ing if they were going to play because of COVID-19, and having only one week's practice before the first game, the team played exceptionally well.

The Central Holmes team finished its season with a resounding win against a

strong Indianola Academy team with a score of 44-6. They finished the season with a 3-3 record, including two shutout wins against Benton Academy, 26-0, Benton Academy and Carroll Academy; and the aforementioned win against Indianola Academy.


The Pee Wee team's record includes: Canton Academy, 12-20; Washington School, 0-20; Carroll Academy, 28-0; Benton Academy, 26-0; Winona Christian School, 8-14; and Indianola Academy, 44-6.



Pictured above (first row from left): Braxton Horn, J. T. Cheek, Chance Langford, Austin Ashley, Dalton Ledbetter, Brice Robinson, Brooks Kuhn and Conley Bryant; Second row (from left): John Carter Humphries, Aiden Cheek, Bradley Goss, John Franklin Johnson, Braydon Rigby, Austin Horn, Wilkes Rutledge and Jackson Schuler; Third row (from left): Coach Chuck Edwards and Coach Brannon Ledbetter. (Photo by Lamb's Photography)

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