

Press Clippings 04/10/20 to 04/13/20

---Press Clippings---04/13/2020
There are no U-46 related news stories.

---Press Clippings---04/12/2020
There are no U-46 related news stories.

---Press Clippings---04/11/2020
There are no U-46 related news stories.

---The Courier-News---04/10/20 **U-46 hosts first entirely online meeting**

Plan set to give students 5,000 computers, iPads

By: Rafael Guerrero

About 5,000 more computers and iPads are ready for distribution to District U-46 students in the second round of efforts to make sure all families have at least one device in their home for e-learning, district officials said this week.

The first round of equipment distribution last month provided about 2,700 Chromebook laptop computers to families with middle and high school students and another 5,800 to families with children in grades kindergarten through fourth.

District officials have been trying to gather up every piece of equipment available to give to students who are now doing school work electronically from home in the wake of all schools being ordered closed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The second distribution cycle is of equipment the district was using at schools but had not been assigned to a student, district spokeswoman Mary Fergus said Thursday. Some are new items that were either purchased earlier in the school year or as part of a more recent tech order, she said.

Preschool families will be receiving iPad computer tablets because they are easier for younger students to use and manufacturer Apple has more programs or apps designed for children, said Suzanne Johnson, the district's deputy superintendent of instruction.

"The focus right now will likely be pre-K just pending on having enough numbers of those iPads," Johnson said.

The additional laptops will go to families in which multiple siblings are sharing just one computer, Fergus said.

U-46 School Board members were updated on the computer situation at this week's board meeting, which was held via video conference because large gatherings of 10 or more people are prohibited as part of the state's coronavirus restrictions.

Chief Operations Officer Jeff King said they are now processing orders to purchase more iPads and Chromebook computers.

When they're available, a third wave of device distribution will take place and the district should be able to guarantee every student in the district has one, Fergus said.

The district also is trying to expand internet access for families.

In order to help families who don't currently own computers, the district has set up tutorials in English and Spanish that parents can access on the district's website, Fergus said.

"It's just been amazing what you've accomplished the last few weeks," school board President Sue Kerr told administrators Monday.

Superintendent Tony Sanders told the board that the district has also been working diligently to ensure students have enough food now that meals are not being provided at school.

So far, they provided more than 300,000 meals and 100,000 snacks, which families are picking up free of charge at 26 distribution sites, King said.

"Our first priority is making sure we are filling the bellies of children, making sure that they are full," Sanders said.

Children who are hungry have a harder time concentrating and retaining information at school, which is why feeding students who are not getting enough to eat at home is crucial, experts say.

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