SOUTHINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT_____

Good evening SPS families,

Lately, the district has received an influx of requests from parents and staff for hot spots. Currently the district inventory of hotspots is nearly depleted. While the district is working to place another order, costs and availability are a factor the district must contend with when considering such requests. Otherwise, the district could be going down a black hole with purchases and distribution of hot spots.

To get a better handle on the true necessity behind each request, the district must first troubleshoot connectivity issues in the home before making the decision whether a hotspot would rectify a connectivity issue. Families experiencing technology issues should first go to [Technical Support for Students](), review some of the fixes within that page, or scroll to the bottom and click on the Support Ticket for your level (elementary, middle or high school). Families unable to submit a ticket may also call the technology office at 860-628-3200 ext.10360 and you will be assisted by a SPS Technology Department staff member. There may be other underlying issues preventing strong connectivity and a hotspot request may not be the immediate default or go to strategy to resolve. Additionally, mobile carrier signals to the hotspots may be weak in certain areas of Southington or even within a home itself and in such instances a hotspot might also fail to resolve the issue (i.e. working in a basement or internal room of a home).

To better address this, the district has developed a process where families experiencing connectivity issues or requesting a hotspot will be contacted by a SPS technology department staff member and run through a 10 Step Connectivity Audit.

The 10 Step Connectivity Audit will include the following questions/investigations:

1. Do you currently have Internet service in your home provided by a local cable or telephone provider?

2. If so, who is the internet service provider and what level of service are you purchasing? There are different tiered levels of Internet service and in some cases, families may be unaware that what they are paying for does not meet the demands or requirements of the household.

3. How many devices are being utilized simultaneously within the home including: desktops, laptops, cell phones, tablets/iPads, gaming systems i.e Xbox, Switch, PlayStation, Smart TV's, Smart speakers i.e. Alexa, Google and Amazon *(All of these devices utilize bandwidth and or tap into a Wi-Fi signal into the home and can place a strain on a home network)*

4. Is the household trying to access virtual lessons via a district provided device or a personal device?

5. If on a personal device, what type of device is it and what are the specs for that device?

6. Has a speed test been conducted on the device being utilized to connect to streaming classes?

7. Is there any software or instance where you notice connectivity issues occurring most? (we know temporarily shutting off a camera for a brief moment to allow the LMS to load resolves that issue)

8. Have you done anything to improve connectivity in your home? If so, please explain.

9. Is the household using any range extenders to try and increase signal coverage across the home?

10. Where is the home modem, router located in relationship to where a child may be trying to access their classes on a device? (For example, if the device is on the main level and a child is trying to access instruction on a device in an upstairs bedroom there may be limited signal which compromises streaming quality or connectivity.)

As you can see from above, there may be many underlying reasons families may be experiencing connectivity issues and we must do our due diligence before defaulting directly to a hotspot in order to better assist families experiencing such issues.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we continue to navigate through these unprecedented times,

Steven Madancy

A graduate of the Southington Public Schools will be college or career ready and prepared for life beyond by mastering the knowledge and demonstrating the skills to communicate effectively, think creatively and critically, and contribute to the global community.