PNC Provides $250,000 To Equip Students With Virtual Learning Tools

Computer Equipment, Tutors, Internet Access Will Help Bridge Digital Divide

CLEVELAND, Sept. 21, 2020 – PNC Bank and the PNC Foundation are providing $250,000 to the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio, East Cleveland City Schools and Breakthrough Public Schools to help them furnish students with digital learning resources, such as computer equipment, tutors and internet connectivity, that will enable remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The pandemic has presented unique challenges to all schools, but especially those districts that may have fewer resources, such as those serving low- to moderate-income families,” said Pat Pastore, PNC regional president for Cleveland. “We worked closely with our community partners to understand the specific needs of schools and families, and how we can best support them. By providing technology and wrap-around support, such as tutoring, we can help the schools make an immediate impact.”

The funding will be split between the four entities. The Cleveland Metropolitan School District, East Cleveland City Schools and Breakthrough Public Schools will receive funding to support the purchase of digital devices and connectivity, while Boys & Girls Clubs will receive funding to support its remote learning efforts.

Specifically, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District will receive $100,000 to help purchase digital connectivity and related equipment for students who do not have the needed tools for remote learning.

“The Cleveland Metropolitan School District is working to ensure that every student has access to a device and every family has access to reliable, high-speed internet for remote learning,” District CEO Eric Gordon said. “We are grateful to have generous community partners such as PNC in this critical effort.”

PNC also will provide $100,000 to Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio to help support their ClubSmart Learning Centers, which will focus on guided and supervised remote learning for students ages 6 to 18.

Breakthrough Public Schools will receive $25,000 to help provide students with internet hotspots and computer equipment for remote learning. Breakthrough has also established remote learning centers for students whose families cannot facilitate at-home learning.

PNC will provide $25,000 to help East Cleveland schools purchase laptop computers, internet hotspots for families without access, and video cameras that will enable teachers to record lessons that students can access online.

Additional Support Through PNC Fairfax Connection

In addition to the $250,000 provided to support virtual learning, PNC worked with CMSD to identify students who do not have digital connectivity at home. Those students are invited to the PNC Fairfax Connection, where they are provided with socially distanced workspaces, technology and tutors so that they can participate in their school's online learning efforts. Each student also will receive a backpack full of school supplies and a daily boxed lunch.

"For the past seven years, PNC Fairfax Connection has provided free community resources, such as resume writing, technology courses and job readiness programs to all, and we're still offering many of those programs online," Pastore said. "But as the pandemic continues, it is important to provide educational resources to students so they can make the most of this school year."

Brian Williams, executive director of the PNC Fairfax Connection, said offering options for Cleveland students to learn remotely helps level the playing field with their peers in other school districts.

"The circumstances of our current environment are challenging and unprecedented but students should still have access to a quiet learning space and proper educational support," Williams said. "As a community resource center, the PNC Fairfax Connection has opened its doors to help fill those gaps for some students while they are learning outside the classroom during this pandemic."

The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group, actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The foundation focuses its philanthropic mission on early childhood education and community and economic development, which includes the arts and culture. Through Grow Up Great®, its signature cause that began in 2004, PNC has created a bilingual $500 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.

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