



Consolidated Communications Helps Schools and Students Connect and Learn Remotely During COVID-19 Crisis

May 6, 2020

Bandwidth upgrades and connectivity ease the homework gap for students learning from home

MATTOON, Ill., May 06, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- [Consolidated Communications](#) is helping to ease the transition from classroom learning to distance learning for schools and students by increasing bandwidth to boost school hot spots and providing Internet service.

According to the U.S. Census, an estimated 18 percent of students don't have Internet access at home, in what has become known as the "homework gap." For more than a month, Consolidated has assisted thousands of low-income families of students affected by recent school closings by connecting their homes to the Internet.

In Mankato, Minn., the Mankato Area Public Schools' transition to home learning prompted teachers to personally contact families to determine Internet needs. They found seven percent of students in the district of 8,600 students did not have access to the Internet at home.

"Schools can assure a learning experience with safety, security, comfort and good relationships with teachers and peers, but when students are no longer in the school environment, so much of the experience is out of our control," said Marti Sievek, interim director of teaching and learning at the Mankato district. "Partnering with companies like Consolidated Communications provides some continuity and stability to keep learning going for our students."

Sievek said helping families with Internet access during this time helps fill a gap that already exists between students across the country. He cited a family with multiple children that would have used one mobile phone for online learning until they contacted Consolidated for service. "This family never had this type of access in their home and now they are all able to get online. It is amazing to see," he said.

Before some Claremont, N.H. School Administrative Unit #6 students could continue their lessons at home, they needed to secure Internet access. "Initially we were hearing that it would take weeks to get access," said Donna Magoon, assistant superintendent of schools at SAU6. "We were fortunate to work with Consolidated and its employees to install services very quickly to get students online and learning. Making sure all families have internet access was essential to allow all students to work on lessons when it is most convenient for them."

"Our partnership with schools and families in our service areas and very much aligns with our core value of building a stronger community, especially in times of need," said Rob Koester, senior vice president of Consumer Product Management with Consolidated. "During these unsettled times, we are proud to help thousands of students retain as much normalcy as possible as their school work transitioned into the home."

Lamoille North Supervisory Union and School District (LNSU) students living in Belvidere, Vt. faced a unique challenge because the local building's Internet connection was not intended for use by staff and students and driving to another town to access a school hot spot was not an option. "Due to COVID-19, it has been difficult to get connectivity for all our needs now that 97 percent of the organization is working and learning remotely," said Deborah Clark, business manager for LNSU. "We've made a big push to provide adequate connectivity and Consolidated is an integral part of that."

With help from Consolidated, the district was able to increase its bandwidth and move a majority of it to the Belvidere location to provide a closer hot spot for students to participate in remote learning. "Our partnership with Consolidated has been invaluable and they have been phenomenal to work with," said Brian Pena, IT systems manager for LNSU.

As a provider of critical services, Consolidated's customer care, network and field teams are ready to respond. Whether you need increased bandwidth, a second phone line, expanded TV channels, or just have a question, we can help. Contact us at 844.YOUR.CCI or visit our site [online](#) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

More information on the Company response to COVID-19 and how it is helping customers is available at [consolidated.com/covid](#).

About Consolidated Communications

[Consolidated Communications](#) Holdings, Inc. (NASDAQ: CNSL) is a leading broadband and business communications provider serving consumers, businesses, and wireless customers, and wireline carriers across rural and metro communities and in a 23-state service area. Leveraging an advanced fiber network spanning 37,750 fiber route miles, Consolidated Communications offers a wide range of communications solutions, including high-speed Internet, data, phone, security, managed services, cloud services and wholesale, carrier solutions. From our first connection 125 years ago, Consolidated is dedicated to turning technology into solutions, connecting people and enriching how they work and live. Visit [www.consolidated.com](#) for more information.

Media Contact:

Sarah Greider, Consolidated Communications
sarah.greider@consolidated.com
217-234-9955

Jennifer Spaude, Consolidated Communications
jennifer.spaudef@consolidated.com

