PRESS RELEASE

KET and KDE to pilot service for at-home learners

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KET has announced a partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education to pilot datacasting technology to help school districts more efficiently and effectively support students who lack home internet access.

The extended home learning brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the challenges of providing and receiving instructional materials to the homes of students, a need that is also prevalent during weather-based and other closures. KET's statewide transmission network can support teachers and students by delivering classroom resources – such as worksheets, presentations, tests, images and even video – to computers in households without broadband internet.

The pilot program, funded in part by the Kentucky Department of Education and set to begin in January, will use datacasting technology to securely send learning materials through KET's existing broadcast network to small receiver boxes in homes. KET previously used datacasting to send emergency, public safety, and weather information, as well as training for first responders, state and local agencies.

"KET was founded on the belief that every Kentuckian should have equal access to educational resources," said KET Executive Director and CEO Shae Hopkins. "This project has the potential to deliver much-needed classroom materials to students without broadband internet. And it does so in a more convenient and timely manner for students and teachers by utilizing KET's statewide infrastructure."

"I am thankful that Kentucky Department of Education and KET are working together to find another way to reach students who have been struggling during this period of distance learning," said Jason E. Glass, Commissioner of Education and Chief Learner. "While Kentucky has been a pioneer and national leader in most aspects of K-12 education technology for students, teachers and leaders for the past 25 years, there is a small percentage of students that still have no internet accessibility. Through diligent work with our districts and our

partners, we are closing the digital divide for our students to ensure that learning can happen anytime, anywhere. This initiative brings us significantly closer to reaching that goal."

Households participating in the pilot will be provided a receiver box and antenna, and teachers will be trained how to upload their curriculum into the datacasting system. Information, materials, and content are encrypted, and the transmission via datacasting does not interfere with KET's programming services enjoyed by viewers across the Commonwealth.

The use of datacasting to support at-home learning has emerged as a promising new path for school districts seeking cost-effective and efficient solutions for delivering educational materials to students lacking internet access at home. Public television stations in South Carolina, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota have also begun similar pilot projects.

KET is Kentucky's largest classroom, where learning comes to life for more than one million people each week via television, online and mobile. Learn more about Kentucky's preeminent public media organization at KET.org, on Twitter @KET and at facebook.com/KET.

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