

FILLING OUT THE BULK ORDER FORM:

1. Where can I locate the bulk order form?

The bulk order form / survey has been sent to all superintendents. You will need to coordinate with your superintendent to get the link. The form will not be posted on the TEA website due to the negotiated device and service rates included in the survey.

2. Is there a soft copy of all the survey questions posted anywhere?

A PDF of all survey questions has been sent to all superintendents. Please coordinate with your superintendent to get this document. If you have any issues, please reach out to the operationconnectivity@tea.texas.gov inbox and we can provide a copy of the survey questions.

3. Are the materials from the webinar or webinar recording posted anywhere for us to reference?

The materials (presentation and recording) from the webinar have been sent to all superintendents. Please coordinate with your superintendent to gain access to these materials. If you have any issues, please reach out to the operationconnectivity@tea.texas.gov inbox and we can provide the materials.

4. If we have already purchased devices and are interested in the reimbursement program, do we just skip the question on the survey regarding number of devices needed?

Please enter a "0" for the number of devices needed.

5. Will we have the opportunity to change our delivery address prior to orders being placed?

Yes, final order logistics will be confirmed with the individual completing the request form before the order is placed.

6. What constitutes an e-learning device?

A desktop, laptop, Chromebook, or tablet are considered e-learning devices. Smartphones are not considered an adequate e-learning device.

7. What is considered high speed internet access?

Fixed broadband (cable, fiber, DSL), wireless broadband, or satellite are considered high speed internet mediums. Internet access solely through a cellular data plan is not considered adequate connectivity.

8. What if we do not yet have an accurate count for the number of students who will be remaining under virtual learning models?

While we understand that many LEAs will not have detailed estimates for the number of students they expect to remain under virtual learning models, we will need your requested number of devices in order to include your order in the bulk purchase.

9. Will we receive confirmation of final pricing, models, quantity, and delivery timing before the actual orders are placed?

Each LEA will receive confirmation forms on their allocated quantities, provider / manufacturer, & models in addition to their required fund contribution prior to the final order being placed. Please consider your completion of this form as a commitment to purchase (at 1:1 matching of funds) the full quantities you have listed in the form; however, due to supply chain complexities, we are not able to guarantee that the exact quantities you have requested will be available through our bulk purchase. We will confirm the available quantity for your LEA as soon as we have confirmation from respective vendors.

10. When can we expect to receive this confirmation?

The confirmation of these details will be based on conversations with various providers and manufacturers. While we are not able to provide exact timing, we expect to confirmation to be provided by the week of July 27, 2020.

11. What happens if I under / overestimate my quantity needs?

Please consider your completion of this form as a commitment to purchase (at 1:1 matching of funds) the full quantities you have listed in the form; however, due to supply chain complexities, we are not able to guarantee the exact quantities you have requested will be available through our bulk purchase. We will confirm the available quantity for your LEA as soon as we have confirmation from respective vendors. Unfortunately, at this time, we are not planning an additional bulk procurement process, so any understated quantities would need to be sourced through LEA-level procurement.

12. Are devices related to teacher connectivity eligible to be included in our order?

Yes, hotspots / devices related to teacher connectivity are also eligible for the bulk order program.

13. How were the specs included here determined?

We leveraged input from a variety of technology practitioners (LEA CIOs, CTOs, etc.) on the Operation Connectivity taskforce in addition to research on technical requirements for various learning management systems and instructional learning platforms.

14. What if a provider / manufacturer I would like to purchase through are not included on this list?

At this time, our negotiated terms only exist for these providers / manufacturers. For procurement of devices / hotspots from other providers / manufacturers, these would need to go through LEA-level procurement.

15. For amounts spent on devices, hotspots, data plans, should we be including recurring contractual spends that have been committed (i.e. monthly warranty, service costs, etc.)?
Yes, there is a specific question for this in the survey. Only include committed contractual costs through SY 2020-2021.

16. For our hotspots spend, should we also be including costs related to web filtering, asset tagging, etc.?
Yes. These costs should be included within your enumerated hotspot spends.

17. Should we be including costs related to increased IT support, device maintenance, etc.?
Spends on device maintenance should be included in your enumerated numbers. Increased costs related to IT support related should not as they will not be eligible for reimbursement.

18. If the survey has already been submitted, will LEAs have a chance to make corrections?
If you need to update to your survey submission, please email the operationconnectivity@tea.texas.gov inbox, and we can provide you with an updated survey link to edit.

BULK ORDER PROCESS:

19. What is the process and timeline for LEA payment of the bulk orders?
After receiving and approving their allotment confirmation form, LEAs will receive an invoice for their portion of the payment for the bulk purchase. Upon receiving the invoice, LEAs are expected to immediately submit payment.

20. When can we expect to receive our specific quantities of hotspots / devices?
Due to supply chain limitations, we are unable to guarantee exact delivery timelines, however, you can expect a delivery timeline of four – ten weeks. However, this timing will depend on the level of demand from other purchases across the county.

21. Can private schools be part of the bulk purchasing?
Currently, our bulk purchase and reimbursement programs do not apply to private schools. However, we encourage private schools to use the negotiated rates listed in the survey to inform the procurement efforts they are engaged in with vendors and obtain best available pricing for their students.

22. Do the devices include licensing?
The high end of the price ranges provided assumes inclusion of licensing fees for Microsoft or Google operating systems. The Operation Connectivity team is working to finalize negotiations with manufacturers, as well as software and service providers. The low end of the price range provided reflects cost of the devices without operating system licenses, with hope we might negotiate an exemption or rebate on behalf of Texas LEAs.

23. Do the devices included on this bulk purchase list meet the requirements for STAAR online?

Yes, minimum system requirements for online STAAR were consulted in order to define minimum specifications for devices. LEAs will have to provide students with headphones, as they are not included in bulk purchase.

24. Are there any iPads without keyboards available for bulk purchase?

Yes. The same iPad listed in the survey can be purchased without the keyboard for \$294.

25. If we started an order and it has not been executed, should we cancel and use this platform?

We are proud of the prices we have negotiated, and we encourage all LEAs to order through this bulk purchase if the devices and hotspot solutions offered meet your LEA's needs. We are confident that our order will be prioritized in the supply chain, given the combined scale of Texas LEAs. However, please consider all relevant criteria impacting your district and pursue the best option of your situation.

26. Will there be an opportunity for supplemental bulk purchases after the Sunday deadline?

No; at this time, this is the only bulk order that we are planning for. However, we are working to secure broader rate card pricing that LEAs will be able to use for procurement in the future.

27. Will we be able to order customizable device models through bulk order?

No, the negotiated rates we have secured are for the specs listed in the order form only.

28. Is T-Mobile able to offer the same hotspot and data plan for 1 year instead of 2 years for same price?

Yes, they are willing to offer the same hotspot and data plan for 1 year instead of 2 years.

NEW
7/28/2020

29. Are schools required to follow regular purchasing requirements when paying for technology devices through Operation Connectivity? Can the formal bidding process be bypassed? Is board approval required for purchases over \$50,000?

LEAs and their schools are not required to go through a formal bidding process before participating in the bulk order program. As it pertains to board approval for purchase amounts, this is a local level decision that should be discussed with each LEA's local school board.

NEW
7/28/2020

30. Can remote locations with internet access be set up for students that live far out in the district and do not have internet access? If we are able to set up wifi zones at churches around town and out in the rural areas of our school, will this suffice for internet access for the students?

TEA is researching long term solutions, one of which is wifi zones. If LEAs are setting up wifi zones, LEAs should test to see if wifi zones provide the service needed for virtual learning.

NEW
7/28/2020

31. Are these purchases of chromebooks, etc., being made mostly through EMAT?

No. The purchase of these devices will be done centrally through our direct contracts with Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), then shipped to LEAs based on their confirmed shipping information. The TEA bulk purchase program is utilizing the \$200 Million CARES Act funding.

NEW
7/28/2020

32. Will TEA prioritize the deployment of devices to schools starting earlier first?

Through our negotiations with providers / OEMs, we are confident that our bulk orders will be prioritized in the vendors' overall supply chain. However, due to ongoing changes in LEA start of school plans, we are unable to prioritize LEA orders based on their current school start dates or plans.

NEW
7/28/2020

33. If you can accommodate all students with connectivity and devices but parents want to send their students to school, do you have to have in-person setting during the transition period?

Districts that provide remote, online instructional access to all of their students are not required to offer on-campus instruction for the first four weeks of the transition period. For more information on the start-of-school transition period and on-campus instruction requirements, please refer to the SY20-21 Attendance and Enrollment FAQ on the TEA Coronavirus (COVID-19) Support and Guidance website under [Waivers, Finance & Grants](#).

NEW
7/28/2020

34. How do we provide internet to rural homes where there aren't towers so hotspots will not work?

The Operation Connectivity taskforce is currently working on identifying longer-term solutions that can address the broadband availability issue that exists in various LEAs in our state. In the meantime, we encourage LEAs to work with their ESCs and local providers to identify solutions that can bridge the gap in the short-term (e.g. meshed networks, Cell on Wheels, etc.)

NEW
7/28/2020

35. What is the timeline for distribution of all devices ordered?

Due to supply chain limitations, we are unable to guarantee exact delivery timing, however, you can expect a delivery timeline of four – ten weeks. The timing will depend on the level of demand from other purchases across the county.

NEW
7/28/2020

36. We bought the hotspots in the spring, but there are additional costs to renew the data past July 31. Is there a way for assistance for the data component?

Costs for data plans are an eligible expense for the state's reimbursement program. Further details regarding the application process for possible reimbursements will be issued later.

NEW
7/28/2020

37. Could you cover the reimbursement aspect of the connectivity plan?

The full details regarding the state's possible reimbursement plan have not been communicated at this time. We are working internally to finalize details regarding the eligibility guidelines and application process and will communicate formally once we have the process finalized.

NEW
7/28/2020

38. What is the deadline for reimbursable expenditures under Operation Connectivity?

The full details regarding the state’s possible reimbursement plan have not been communicated at this time. We are working internally to finalize details regarding the eligibility guidelines and application process and will communicate formally once we have the process finalized.

NEW
7/28/2020

39. Will there be any increase in the state's support of digital connectivity if the surveys reveal that there is an even greater need than previously thought? Further, if COVID-19 continues to linger and remote learning becomes the primary form of instructional delivery, will there be additional grants or funding opportunities from the state/TEA for the ISDs?

At this time, the funding committed to Operation Connectivity is \$200M. If need is greater than initially thought, TEA will communicate the need to state leadership. TEA is currently monitoring federal legislation for additional grants or funding opportunities should remote learning become the primary form of instructional delivery.