



MEDIA RELEASE

March 8, 2022

919 N Broad Street • Brooksville, FL 34601

School buses receiving WiFi

Brooksville - The installation of wifi routers on Hernando County school buses is now underway. The project includes placing wifi vehicle routers on 142 buses, and will be completed in two phases. This first phase will place wifi devices on 85 buses and should be completed by the end of this week. The second phase will include the installation on the remaining buses (including any newly-purchased buses), expected to be completed before the end of the school year.

The intent of the wifi project is to assist Hernando's disadvantaged students, including both financially disadvantaged as well as those who live in areas where wifi is not available. Students will have the opportunity to use the mobile wifi for classwork during their bus commute to and from school. This mobile wifi will provide the same limited internet access that is currently available in schools, with the same security measures for sites and channels approved by the Hernando School District.

Work is being done by Premier Wireless, and the project will cost just under \$200,000 and is funded through ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) grant funds. These federal ESSER funds were provided to the state and distributed to school districts to go toward safe operation of schools, and includes expanding opportunities for students who need it most, particularly those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Although we never hope to experience school closure again, during that period, it became clear that quite a few of our students didn't have the same access to digital learning options from home," said Joe Amato, Director of Technology Information Services for the district. "Hopefully, wifi on buses will help, and make student travel time a little more productive."

Once installation is complete, the routers will not only provide wifi access to students during their daily commute, but can also be utilized during community emergencies, providing mobile wifi resources at community locations during hurricanes and other states of emergency.

"The addition of internet to our buses is certainly a game changer for many of our students without internet at home, but these mobile hotspots will also be a tremendous resource for the community in the event of a significant weather event such as a hurricane," Superintendent John Stratton said.

