



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**June 1, 2021**

### **ACCESS wins \$200,000 in BroadbandOhio connectivity grant award for local school district.**

The Area Cooperative Computerized Educational Service System (ACCESS), on behalf of one of its member districts, received news that they are the recipient of a grant award equaling \$200,000 to increase broadband access and connectivity to a local school. The grant funds were secured in cooperation with United Local Schools and made available by BroadbandOhio. A proof of concept project will be funded and completed using the grant award. The project will extend the ACCESS fiber network at United Local Schools connecting to a Private LTE (pLTE) network installed in Hanoverton to serve the neighborhood of students attending United Local Schools. The pLTE network will provide low-cost, broadband access and equipment to families living in the area. If the project is successful, the pLTE model can be expanded to other school districts and communities throughout the ACCESS territory covering Mahoning and Columbiana counties. ACCESS expects construction on the LTE network to begin soon with a hopeful completion date prior to the start of the 2021-22 school year.

Located in Boardman, ACCESS is one of 18 governmental computer service organizations serving more than 1000 educational entities and over 1.5 million students in the state of Ohio. These service organizations, known as Information Technology Centers (ITCs), and their users make up the Ohio Education Computer Network (OECN). Such sites, in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), comprise a statewide delivery system to provide comprehensive, cost-efficient accounting and other administrative and instructional computer services for participating Ohio entities. ACCESS serves local schools in Mahoning and Columbiana counties and is active in local, regional, and state work groups designed to make services for schools better, less costly, and more efficient. <http://www.access-k12.org>

Located in Hanoverton, United Local Schools is a rural district serving approximately 1100 students from their K-12 campus. Services received from ACCESS include Internet; student, fiscal, and library application services; Voice-over-IP phone services; and managed wireless services. <http://www.united.k12.oh.us/>

#### Quote from Lisa Smith, Executive Director

“At ACCESS, our mission is to provide Internet connectivity and application services over the ACCESS Fiber Network to the schools we serve in Mahoning and Columbiana counties. In light of the Pandemic and need for remote education, the lack of broadband availability in many communities has been identified. This project will provide a means to extend student learning options beyond the school district and its schedule. We look forward to a successful

implementation that can be replicated across our region to help support our schools in educating students.”

Quote from Lance Hostetler, Superintendent of United Local Schools

“The Pandemic showed us that many of our families had limited to no broadband connection in their residence. It also showed that learning does not just take place in a classroom and we are excited to help provide these needed resources for some of our students. We want to thank Lisa Smith and ACCESS for working to advocate for rural schools in our area and our hope is that these programs are expanded so that all students have access to quality broadband in the future.”

Lisa Smith, ACCESS, Executive Director  
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Lance Hostetler, Superintendent, United Local School District  
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