



J. STOREY CHARBONNET
RONALD J. FRENCH, MD
CHARLES W. GOODYEAR
STEPHEN W. HALES, MD
JOHN E. KOERNER III
H. MERRITT LANE III
PRENTISS C. PATRICK
ALAN H. PHILIPSON
EDWIN R. RODRIGUEZ, JR.
STEPHEN C. SHERRILL
ST. DENIS J. VILLERE III

Pro Bono Publico Foundation Announces Special Technology Grant

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New Orleans, LA --

Pro Bono Publico Foundation (PBPF,) the Rex Organization's public education philanthropy association, has announced the establishment of a special Covid-19 Investment Fund with an initial grant of \$50,000 to help provide needed laptops, smart tablets and home internet connectivity for public school children.

Foundation officials said the funding grant will go to the New Orleans Technology Access Fund to specifically support school-based distance learning objectives as school children remain home during the current Coronavirus pandemic crisis.

PBPF's technology grant will support efforts already underway by NOLA Public Schools to purchase thousands of laptops and facilitate placement in student homes across the community. The school system partnered with New Schools for New Orleans (NSNO) to create the Technology Access Fund to increase investment in computer hardware and to accelerate distance learning content development and sharing across the New Orleans public schools' landscape.

PBPF has donated more than \$8 million since 2007, including more than \$1 million annually for the past five years, to support New Orleans public school education, primarily charter schools, charter management organizations and school support entities like NSNO and Teach for America. Most of the Foundation's philanthropic funds are raised from annual donations from members of the city's Rex Organization.

"We understand clearly how the current health crisis and closed schools mandate have left public education officials searching for ways to support the 'new world' of distance learning for all students,"

commented PBPF Chairman Storey Charbonnet. “A major focus has been to add home-based technology capacity, an obvious challenge for many students who lack computer access and connectivity in their homes to begin with.”

“We are really gratified to partner with NOLA Public Schools and NSNO in this technology endeavor, because we know the money will be used for the right purposes for those who really need the assistance right now. We encourage others – individuals, corporations and foundations – to join us in offering support to our young learners.”

NOLA Public Schools Supt. Dr. Henderson Lewis commented: “It is imperative that all of our children have the technology they need to continue their high-quality learning. NOLA-PS truly appreciates the support of the Pro Bono Publico Foundation, as we could not do this work without our close partnerships and ties to the community of New Orleans.”

NSNO CEO Patrick Dobard echoed Lewis’ view that technology is the indispensable factor for student learning in today’s unprecedented times, and that partnership support from private entities is essential. “PBPF has been the example of what local foundations can do when they come together and share a true mission and vision for education excellence for all children,” he said. “With this grant funding, along with funding from other local and national funders, NOLA-PS will have additional resources to provide children the technology they deserve.”

Contact:

(PBPF) King Logan , klogan@loganbrand.com, (504) 296-5111
(NSNO), Rebecca Maught, rmaught@nsno.org (504) 390-2187