

September 14, 2010

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Mr. Zac Katz
Legal Advisor to Chairman Genachowski
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: **Ex Parte Communication - Docket Nos. 02-6 and 09-51**

Dear Mr. Katz:

As you requested, ePals hereby submits the enclosed brochure which discusses the NYC Connected Learning program. The program's goal is to enhance educational outcomes for middle school students in the highest need communities across the city through the creation of a broadband-rich home learning environment for participating students and their families, and the enhancement of instruction at participating schools. The program is supported by a major broadband stimulus grant.

ePals thanks the Commission for its time and consideration of this information.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Jennifer L. Richter

Jennifer L. Richter
Counsel to ePals

NYC Connected Learning Connecting Students, Families, Teachers and Schools

"As a principal of a NYC middle school, I have seen firsthand the significant impact of increased parental involvement through intensive family learning training along with a new home computer. This combined with all the components of NYC Connected Learning provide a unique opportunity to improve student engagement and educational outcomes by expanding access to all of the educational resources available in school and at home."

-- Chrystina Russell, Principal, Global Technology Preparatory School, Harlem NY

Overview

NYC Connected Learning is an innovative initiative designed to enhance educational outcomes for middle school students in the highest need communities across the city through the **creation of a rich home learning environment for participating students and their families** and the **enhancement of instruction at participating schools**.

The Division of Instruction and Information Technology (DIIT) is working in partnership with the Division of School Support and Instruction (DSSI), New York City's Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT), and a host of external partners to deliver this program to NYC middle schools. The **NYC Connected Learning** program is highly subsidized by one of the largest US Department of Commerce broadband grants awarded nationally. New York City was given one of two grants totaling over \$20 million.



The **NYC Connected Learning** program will provide participating students and their families with a wealth of educational resources to enrich the home learning environment, while also making key investments in participating schools to empower educators in using the home learning environment to enhance student learning and strengthen the connections between teachers, parents and students. As part of this program, 18,500 sixth grade students and their families will receive free desktop computers, pre-loaded with educational software, to be used their homes. All participating families will also be eligible to purchase a significantly discounted

broadband connection. The approximately 100 middle schools selected for this program will be provided 65 days of on-site professional development and instructional coaching services as well as tech support resources for their classrooms. This program presents a unique opportunity for school leaders and teachers to leverage the home learning environment and on-line learning to further support their students' academic and personal success.

Program Goals

- **Raise Student Achievement:** Math, ELA, Writing and 21st Century Skills
- **Extend Learning Beyond the School Day** through the creation of a rich home learning environment
- **Help Parents Become Learning Partners** to their children through training and support
- **Bridge the Digital Divide** with free or discounted access to technology

Program Delivered by Computers for Youth and Other Experienced DOE Partners

The DOE is partnering with Computers for Youth, AUSSIE, Teaching Matters, MOUSE and CUNY, to deliver this comprehensive program to NYC middle schools citywide.

NYC Connected Learning Connecting Students, Families, Teachers and Schools

Participant	NYC Connected Learning Provides
Student and Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computers For Youth (CFY) will provide each of your sixth grade students with a desktop computer for their home, along with a variety of educational software and the opportunity to buy significantly discounted broadband service.* • Students and their families will receive Family Learning and Digital Literacy training (delivered by CFY), both of which are available in Spanish as well as English. The training will help the families use the technology suite they receive as a learning tool in their homes. • A bilingual tech support help desk (managed by CFY) will be available, 24 hours, 7 days a week
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AUSSIE or Teaching Matters will provide ongoing on-site professional development and instructional coaching for you, your leadership team and classroom teachers for a total of 65 on-site days over the course of 2 years. • With a dedicated, in-school Instructional Technology Coach, all of your participating teachers will have access to in-depth expert training and support to extend learning into students' homes and to incorporate digital curricula and online learning tools into their instructional practice.
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The on-site instructional technology coach will also serve as an advisor to school leaders and the primary point of contact for the entire program. • MOUSE will help your school to create a MOUSE squad, a team of students to help ensure that your classroom technology stays up and running. For the participating MOUSE students, MOUSE also provides learning opportunities for college and career while engaging their knowledge and interests beyond the classroom. • CUNY will staff a tech support Intern, trained by DIIT, which will provide 15 hours of on-site tech support for your classroom technology and in-school network each week during the school year. • CFY will donate up to two free desktop computers to your school with the pre-loaded educational software being used by your students and their families in the home. • NYC Connected Learning will also provide an on-line community for sharing best practices and educator-created materials among the approximately 100 NYC Connected Learning schools.

* Note: Families will be expected to cover the cost of broadband service, which will be under \$20 a month. Families are still eligible to receive a computer even if they cannot afford broadband.

School Community Commitments

Participating schools will be responsible for less than 10% of the total program cost and, on average, will receive more than \$210,000 computer equipment and services over the two years of the program.

- Schools must contribute \$5,000 + \$60 per sixth grade student on roster for **each year of this two year** program.
- Schools may need to allocate resources (such as per session) to support the work of a school-based NYC Connected Learning Team.
- Schools must commit to hosting Family Learning Workshops on the weekends for their students and families

NYC Connected Learning

Connecting Students, Families, Teachers and Schools

and possibly for students and families from another school.

- Students and families are required to attend a Family Learning Workshop in order to receive the free home computer and the opportunity to purchase a significantly discounted broadband connection.

NYC Connected Learning Team

To implement the NYC Connected Learning initiative, schools must assemble a team to help support the program. The principal must be the lead advocate for this program in the school community, with a demonstrated vision for the role of home learning and blended online learning to enhance education.

School Based Commitments

- **Project Manager** - Manages NYC Connected Learning team at school (must be Assistant Principal or member of the school leadership team); Supervises CUNY Intern (or delegates that responsibility to the "Technology Leader").
- **Family Outreach Leader** - Manages parent outreach and communication for the Family Learning Workshops (often a Parent Coordinator or School Aide).
- **Technology Leader** - Ensures school technology is operational and easily accessed by teachers; assists in the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning; Will also assist with the Family Learning Workshops.
- **MOUSE Squad Coordinator** - Leads implementation of a youth-led school technology help desk and runs the MOUSE squad after-school program (often the "Technology Leader").
- **Sixth and Seventh Grade Teachers** - Work with the Instructional Technology Coach and the school program team to plan and implement the integration of NYC Connected Learning program resources and online resources into their curriculum, instruction, and home learning activities; Two sixth or seventh grade teachers will be selected to serve as teacher advocates and assist with Family Learning Workshops.

It is strongly recommended that you discuss this program with your sixth and seventh grade teachers as well as school family representatives.

The Opportunity

Research confirms the importance of a rich home learning environment in support of school-based learning:

Opportunity	Research
Students spend the majority of their time in the home environment.	By the time children turn 18, they have spent only 13% of their waking lives in the classroom. (Source: Gibbs, Nancy 2005).
The home learning environment is especially important in the middle school years.	The strength of the home learning environment was one of the strongest predictors of achievement in reading and math for 10 and 11 years olds (Source: University of London Research).
Parent Involvement can make a significant difference in student achievement.	Parenting practices can account for as much as 25% of the achievement differences between higher- and lower-performing students (Source: Epstein, J. L., 1993).

For More Information: ConnectedLearning@schools.nyc.gov