

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 10, 2015

CONTACT: Valerie Martinez

Juliette Funes

(909) 445-1001

Sprint Provides \$500,000 in Broadband Service to Help Bridge Digital Divide for Pomona Students

POMONA – Approximately 300 students at the School of Extended Educational Options (SEEO) will be able to access the Internet from home thanks to Sprint, which has committed to providing free broadband high-speed service – valued at \$576,000 – for the next four years to help students stay connected at home.

The announcement was made prior to Back to School activities on Sept. 3, when representatives from Sprint and the Pomona Unified School District provided SEEO students and their parents with WiFi hot-spot devices.

“Our students at SEEO thrive in an environment that fosters independence and individualized instruction, and this invaluable partnership provides our students with the resources needed to succeed in school and at home,” said Board of Education President Andrew Wong. “Pomona Unified and Sprint are both committed to closing the digital divide in low-income communities and we are excited about the opportunity to do so at SEEO.”

Last year, Sprint pledged to provide wireless broadband connectivity for 50,000 low-income K-12 students across the U.S. as part of the White House initiative, ConnectED, a public and private effort to get technology into classrooms and into the hands of teachers and students to help bridge the digital divide. SEEO is the first Pomona Unified school to partner with Sprint.

SEEO, a charter school for seventh- through 12th-grade students, applied for the grant as a majority of its students do not have access to the Internet at home, thereby limiting their opportunities to complete homework assignments, research next-level learning and apply for jobs. About 55 percent of the students qualify for free and reduced lunches and 25 percent of students are English learners.

“SEEO is extremely grateful for Sprint’s generosity and for this opportunity to give our students the digital access they desperately need,” SEEO Principal Tom Sweeney said. “These services provide our students with an enhanced educational experience and a foundation for greater opportunities when they leave this school and pursue careers.”

The ConnectED initiative was launched by President Obama to prepare students for the digital economy of the future and to enrich K-12 education to bolster academic rigor and provide learning resources to all students.

“This partnership with Sprint is a novel approach to ensuring that the learning that takes place in the classrooms continues at home by making technology and the Internet accessible to our unconnected students,” said Pomona Unified School District Superintendent Richard Martinez, who has been recognized by the White House for being a trailblazer in the world of digital education. “I want to thank Sprint for partnering with Pomona Unified to help us reach our goal of supporting student learning through innovative strategies.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

SEEO1: School of Extended Educational Options (SEEO) teacher Robert Riebeth works with students on their high-tech devices on Sept. 3. *(Photo Courtesy Of Sprint)*

SEEO2: School of Extended Educational students receive their WiFi hot-spot devices from Sprint, which committed to providing free broadband high-speed service – valued at \$576,000 – for the next four years to help students stay connected at home. *(Photo Courtesy Of Sprint)*

###

