Many students in my school don't have internet access. How can you help me?

The digital divide is an important issue schools are facing due to the COVID-19 crisis. According to a recent 2020 study on the digital divide from **Common Sense Media and Boston Consulting Group**, "15 to 16 million students are without an internet connection or device adequate for distance learning at home." In rural areas and urban households without a high-speed internet connection and other digital devices, many schools were left with limited choices and options, like equipping buses with Wi-Fi to provide hotspots. However, the critical driver to remote learning doesn't have to center only on access to the Internet. The ability to mail home learning packets and modules to students is an option that school districts can incorporate into their program. It might even be welcomed by parents and those students who tend to prefer more tactile, structured assignments. Hopefully, every back-to-school plan for 2020-2021 includes a strategic plan to use and scale the capabilities of an existing district mailroom.

What are some distance learning strategies for special education students and those with special accessibility needs?

This is an important question because the quick move to remote learning has really impacted students with special needs in a big way. And it's not a small population of students. A little more than **7 million children** enrolled in U.S. public schools, about 14 percent of total public school population, receive special education and related services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These students and their parents or guardians are used to working with a network of support staff. In addition, while some students may thrive in an all-digital environment, other students may find online learning distracting or have difficulty focusing. In many cases, some students simply do better with the familiar routine and one-on-one attention. We put together a list of **online resources** that support alternative methods for distance learning on our site. As special education teachers, your situation is unique, and that's why we think printed, hard-copy packets and other modifications that you can mail home is essential. If you agree please **contact us here** so we can help.

How does Quadient help schools send classwork and other learning materials?

We are honored when we get to help facilitate the process for school districts so they can provide the tools and resources teachers needed, especially for districts that did not have immediate access to standarized digital learning technology for all students. We provide technologies for teachers that let them easily and efficiently prep, print, and send out printed learning materials. We also help school districts enable teachers to send out the necessary learning materials that allowed students to continue their distance learning at their own pace, creating an accessible alternative.

Can we send science experiment materials to students?

Absolutely! You can send science kits and other unconventional learning materials in addition to packets and paper! While there are some hazardous materials that can't be mailed through the U.S. postal service, most K-8 science kits are safe to send through the mail. Reach out to your mailroom director with your idea. We're sure you'll get his or her support. You can even package up some generic science materials or math manipulatives in zipper bags for an upcoming lesson with your students. Imagine if every student in your class got some magnets, rubber bands, a pack of Mentos, or 100 centimeter cubes. We think you'd get full attendance for your lesson or demo and really grab your students' attention! If you give students some time, they may even be able to get the materials for an experiment, like baking soda and vinegar, on their own. Then you can prep the directions, scientific method, worksheets and other printables and send them home to each student in a packet to build background and excitement. Sounds like fun! (Just to be safe, here's **a list of materials classified as hazardous** by the USPS.)

Can you help us get Chromebooks and hot spots to students who need them?

While we don't have solutions that support this component of distance learning, we can recommend you visit **Google** for more on how they are supporting K-12 schools as well as the **Keep Americans Connected** initiative for resources and state-by-state information on service providers that have signed a connectivity pledge. They may be able to provide connectivity to your student population. We also recommend visiting the **Verizon Innovative Learning** program, **Comcast Internet Essentials**, **Spectrum**, and other internet service providers for information on assistance for communities in need. Prior to COVID-19, organizations like **The On It Foundation** and **Computers with Causes** were an option. So, if you only have a few students in your class or grade level that need laptops, this might be a good place to start. We hope that helps!

The use of mailing technologies is a management decision in my district. Can Quadient reach out to individual districts to offer solutions?

We know that it's often teachers that know best. You want to get the resources needed to help your distance learning planning be the best it can be, but much of the big decision making is out of your reach. The good news is we have experts in your area that you can reach out to with the contact information for your administration or district leaders. That way, we can contact them directly to create a connection and start a conversation about the affordable solutions your district could benefit from this coming school year.

Sources:
Closing the K-12 Digital Divide in the Age of Distance Learning. **Common Sense Media and BCG**. **National Center for Education Statistics**.

About Quadient®
Quadient is the driving force behind the world's most meaningful customer experiences. By focusing on four key solution areas including Mail-Related Solutions, Customer Experience Management (CXM), Business Process Automation (BPA), and Parcel Locker Solutions; Quadient helps simplify the connection between people and what matters. Quadient supports hundreds of thousands of customers worldwide in their quest to create relevant, personalized connections and achieve customer experience excellence. Quadient is currently listed as Neopost in compartment A of Euronext Paris and belongs to the SBF 120 index.

For more information about Quadient, visit Quadient.com