

# VERNON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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## Vernon Schools Works to Ensure Students Have Reliable Internet Access at Home

**VERNON, Connecticut** – Since the spring, Vernon Public Schools staff have worked hard to ensure all students have laptop computers and reliable access to the internet so that they can fully participate in virtual and hybrid learning.

School staff have stayed in contact with families to troubleshoot any issues and have become aware that some students are struggling with spotty internet access and other issues. It's a problem that school officials are ready to help families address.

"It is crucial that children have reliable internet connections so that they can fully participate in their classes," Vernon Assistant Superintendent of Schools Robert Testa said. "We have had a lot of success addressing technology needs, but we understand that situations change. We want to hear from anyone who is having trouble because we can help."

It is Cynthia Zingler's team in the district's Family School and Community Partnerships Center that is on the leading edge of helping school families and breaking down barriers to learning, including spotty internet access.

"Families should contact their principal or school social worker if they are having internet access difficulties," said Zingler, Director of Family School and Community Partnerships. Families can also reach out directly to Zingler at [czingler@vernon-ct.gov](mailto:czingler@vernon-ct.gov).

*The Vernon Public Schools, in partnership with family and community, is committed to provide a quality education, with high expectations, in a safe environment where all students become independent learners and productive contributors to society.*

Internet access is just one of the many ways the Family School and Community Partnerships Center helps children and families. For many families, the Center is their first point of contact with Vernon Schools because it is where they register their children for school.

The Center also offers playgroups for preschoolers to build relationships between parents and the school system, and provides families with tools and strategies for at home learning. The Center also helps connect families with community services, including basic needs such as food and clothing. There's really no problem or issue Zingler and her team won't try to address.

"When anyone has a need, we look for a way to help," Zingler said. "By having relationships with service organizations and state and local agencies, we can usually figure out a way to get a family the assistance it needs."

The Center's goal is to engage families with the school system early and to eliminate all barriers to a child's success in school.

"Food and housing-insecurity are barriers that can interfere with a child's ability to learn and thrive in school," Zingler said. "It makes sense for the school system to take an active role in helping families through difficult times. If we can help keep a child focused on school and learning, the whole community benefits."

Research shows that when schools, parents, families and communities work together, students earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school and are more motivated.

"All of this work is about building trust and relationships," Zingler said. "When we work together, we set high standards for all students, in all classrooms, and work with parents to help their children meet those standards. And that's good for everybody."

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