# Superintendent’s Memo #079-20


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: March 27, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Public Notice, Waivers, and Special COVID-19 Internet and Mobile Carrier Offerings

On March 23, 2020, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a [Public Notice](https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-20-324A1.pdf) to clarify that schools may allow their Wi-Fi networks to be used by the community without losing funding. Wi-Fi signals can be accessed in school parking lots during building closures.

The FCC leaves it to schools to establish their own policies regarding the use of their Wi-Fi networks during closures, including hours of use. And schools are reminded to follow any health and safety guidelines as set forth by federal, state, and local authorities.

In addition, on March 18, 2020, the FCC released a waiver of the [E-rate Gift Rules](https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-363137A1.pdf) until September 30, 2020 to enable service providers to offer E-rate program participants to solicit and accept, improved connections or additional equipment for remote learning. Schools can now accept improved capacity, Wi-Fi hotspots, networking equipment, or other equipment or services to support teachers and students.

School divisions should also be aware that Internet Service Providers (ISP) and major wireless carriers have released special COVID-19 offerings to help keep people connected. Divisions are encouraged to check with their local ISP’s and mobile carriers for special offers. And the Coronavirus Information and Resources, [Frequently Asked Questions](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/index.shtml) section of the VDOE home page for more details about specific offerings. Since mobile hotspots are in high demand right now, most companies are reporting back-order due to low inventory.

Please direct any questions about this information to Dr. Susan M. Clair, Learning Infrastructure Coordinator, at susan.clair@doe.virginia.gov or 804-786-9281.

JFL/dm/smc