

Support affordable high-speed home internet for all APS households.

We are a group of 23 retired APS English Learners (EL)/ reading/ primary grade teachers and friends who understand the urgency of internet in the households of low-income EL students.

We call ourselves Abuelitos and began online 1:1 tutoring in late spring. We meet our tutees, usually, on WhatsApp twice a week for 30-60 minutes. WhatsApp is not sufficient nor satisfactory but it's what is possible in households lacking internet. We know how much these students need continuing instruction for academic and life success.

With APS returning to all-virtual instruction in September the EL students will be left behind by the digital divide.

We strongly support Arlington County's Vision to be "a diverse and inclusive world-class urban community...where people unite to form a caring, learning, participating, sustainable community in which each person is important." To achieve equity these students' households require broadband connectivity. We understand that some other jurisdictions in Virginia have formed a broadband authority in line with The Virginia Wireless Service Authority Act.

As Tim Dempsey states "the broadband authority could then be used to build out an open access network that provides fiber-to-the-premises connections to all buildings and residences, starting with the most underserved neighborhoods."

We believe you understand the critical and pressing urgency for internet access, especially for our neediest students. Therefore, we urge you to hear from Mr. Dempsey about the technical requirements and to support this action to ensure internet access for all students.

Sincerely,
Abuelitos