



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 9, 2020

Players Coalition Awards \$50,000 to Local Schools to Help Close the Digital Divide

Ector County, TX -- Ector County Independent School District is among the school districts across the country being awarded grants to help close the digital divide, sponsored by Players Coalition. The nonprofit, founded by NFL players Anquan Boldin and Malcolm Jenkins, is donating \$350,000 in grants nationwide to help provide students and schools with the needed technology to set all students up for success with learning from home, despite family income.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated education inequities and the digital divide in our country as millions have struggled to get online amidst the transition to distance learning. Approximately 2 out of 3 (59%) parents from lower income homes reported their children will face obstacles when it comes to remote learning due to a lack of access to computers or internet at home, according to a study out of the [Pew Research Center](#).

Players Coalition partnered with [Chiefs for Change](#) to help identify critical opportunities to ensure connectivity for low-income students in multiple markets across the country.

“In football, plays don’t work unless players get the signal, from the sideline, to the quarterback, to every player on the field,” says Chiefs for Change CEO Mike Magee. “And in today’s world, students can’t do their schoolwork without a signal at home. Millions of children are waiting for that signal—an internet signal so they can learn, whether their classes are happening in person or online. With the generous support of the Players Coalition, we are expanding internet access to more students. This is a critical step—but we need Congress and the FCC to #SendTheSignal to every home in America. Now is the time for universal broadband. Students can’t wait any longer.”

“We are thrilled to receive this support from the Players Coalition,” says Ector County ISD Superintendent of Schools Dr. Scott Muri. ECISD will use the money to install new wireless access points at 25 schools, meaning students nearby will be able to access ECISD’s network. This has the potential to impact some 17,000 students.

“This donation will allow us to strengthen internet connections around our most economically disadvantaged schools. The children and families who need it most will have easier, more reliable access to our school district’s network giving them the ability to stay more engaged in the learning process.”

Almost 20% of high-school age students in the United States are often unable to complete homework assignments because they do not have reliable access to a computer or internet connection at home. Those numbers are even higher for African American and Latino students, according to a recent study by the [Pew Research Center](#).

“We live in a world driven by technology. In order for students to best be set up for success in their classrooms, especially this year, it is vital that they all have access to computers and internet access,” says Kelvin Beachum, Players Coalition Task Force Member and offensive tackle for the Arizona Cardinals. Beachum is a native of Mexia, TX. “The state of Texas has an above-average number of students whose needs are not being met in these areas. 34 percent or 1.8 million K-12 public school students in the state do not have sufficient access to internet at home. We have to do better by our young people.”

Players Coalition hopes that these grants help to bridge that gap. This year’s grant recipients are part of a larger, years-long initiative from the Players Coalition. Since 2019, the PC Charitable Foundation has awarded more than \$675,000 in grant funds to schools throughout the country to address the digital divide by ensuring internet connectivity and access to STEAM education programming and technology.

About Players Coalition

Players Coalition is structured as an independent 501(c)(3) (charity) and 501(c)(4) (advocacy) organization, working with professional athletes, coaches and owners across leagues to improve social justice and racial equality in our country.

About Chiefs for Change

Chiefs for Change is a bipartisan network of diverse state and district education chiefs dedicated to preparing all students for today’s world and tomorrow’s through deeply committed leadership. Chiefs for Change advocates for policies and practices that are making a difference today for students, and builds a pipeline of talented, diverse Future Chiefs ready to lead major school systems.