Challenge Accepted: Alaska Airlines Completes Big Task for SPS Students

Carrier expedites shipping 12,000 iPads to Seattle schools

SEATTLE – It took one call from a superintendent to a former governor. Add in a hometown airline and the result was a community coming together to help students. Now, 12,000 iPads will be delivered on time to support our youngest learners in kindergarten through 2nd grade.

Community Celebration – Wednesday, Sept. 2

WHO: Brief remarks from Alaska Airlines CEO Brad Tilden; SPS Superintendent Denise Juneau; SPS School Board President Zachary DeWolf
WHAT: Photo op – Thousands of iPads and the key players
WHEN: Wednesday Sept. 2, 2020, 9:00-9:15am
WHERE: Alaska Airlines Cargo Warehouse
2600 S. 165th St., SeaTac, WA 98158

Background

The Challenge

School is starting in early September, and the Seattle Public Schools Dept. of Technology Services (DoTS) team has supplied tech devices to almost all 53,000 SPS students in order to support remote learning this fall.

- The DoTS team needs 12,000 more devices to support K-2 students.
- The iPad order may be delayed from Apple’s Boston, Mass., warehouse because of logistical reasons.
The Response

SPS Superintendent Denise Juneau contacts former Washington Governor Christine Gregoire, CEO of Challenge Seattle, an organization devoted to bringing forward innovative solutions to the community and leveraging the resources of the business community for the greater good.

- Gov. Gregoire contacts Alaska Airlines CEO Brad Tilden.

The Solution

The Alaska Airlines team flies into action!

- Alaska Airlines uses its transportation to get iPads from Apple’s Boston warehouse to the airport.
- Alaska Airlines flies the iPads to Seattle, to be delivered by SPS to 12,000 students, in time for instruction and the new 2020-21 school year.

The Comments

Former Gov. Chris Gregoire, CEO, Seattle Challenge

- “Making sure our community’s children thrive during this time of uncertainty is up to all of us. I have school-age grandchildren, so I know how challenging this last spring was for so many students, especially when you don’t have a laptop or iPad or computer. With this project, it only made sense to leverage the resources of a great company like Alaska Airlines to get these tech devices to the students who need them. At Challenge Seattle we are committed to public-private partnerships that inspire collective action for the greater good, and it’s this type of project that shows what our community can do. I’m very pleased to be part of making this happen, and I so much appreciate leaders like Brad Tilden, who stepped up to support.”

Diana Birkett Rakow, VP External Relations, Alaska Airlines

- “Beginning a new academic year in the middle of a pandemic is a daunting feat for students, parents, and teachers, especially when not all students have the tools and support to succeed. We’re in awe of the many leaders across the region seeking to close these gaps: technology, internet access, childcare, food, and places to study. When we heard that we could help nearly 12,000 of Seattle’s youngest students connect with a new device, our cargo team jumped in to engage our logistics network, and 12,000 iPads
and cases will arrive from the East Coast to our hometown Seattle this week. We’re honored to support SPS students, teachers, and administrators working hard to enable equity in learning this year. We’re also humbled by how much work there is yet to do to close the digital divide and grateful to all who’re contributing to support these efforts across the entire region.”

Denise Juneau, Superintendent, Seattle Public Schools

- “This is a great example of our community coming together to problem-solve and to provide solutions that have such a positive impact on so many of our students and families. All of us at SPS are very grateful to Governor Gregoire and Challenge Seattle for getting the ball rolling, and for Brad Tilden jumping in with the great team at Alaska Airlines so we can get these iPads to our youngest scholars.”

About SPS DoTS tech distribution: Seattle Public Schools is in the process of supplying 36,600 laptops and 12,000 iPads to its K-12 students. Approximately 5,400 students will voluntarily be using their own devices for the upcoming school year as part of the “bring your own device” program, created after many later grade students indicated personal device preference. Purchase of the district-provided devices is funded through our local education levies. Thank you to our generous voters.

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