

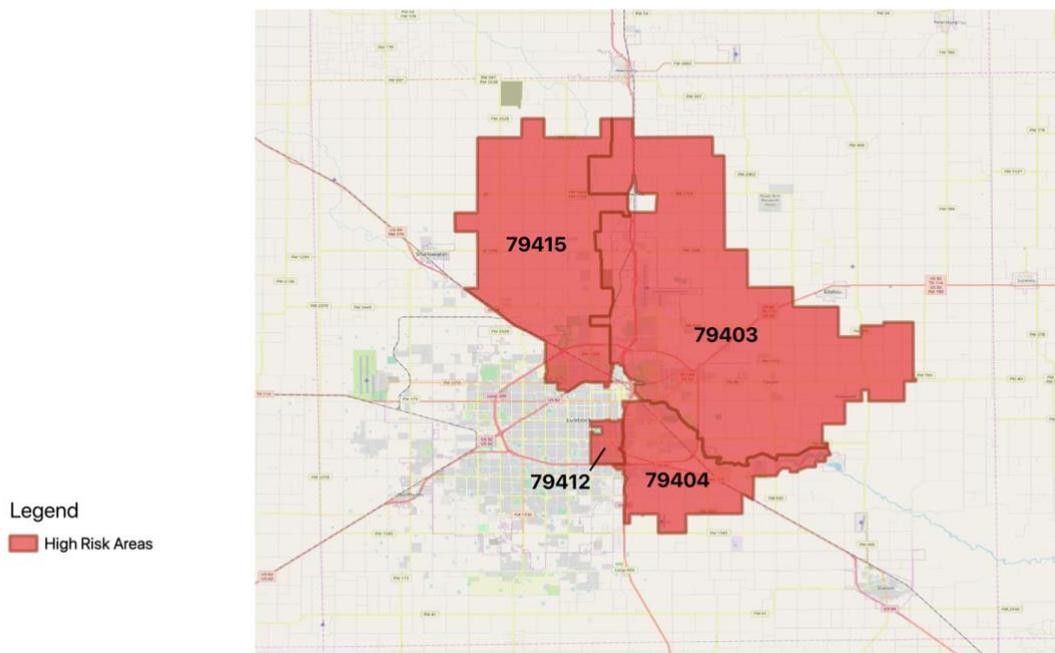
## Access to Continuous Education in Public Schools during COVID: Offline Learners in Lubbock County

### Offline Learners in Lubbock County

School districts across the country are now relying on students' access to technology and high speed internet to remotely deliver lessons and keep students and teachers connected. Some families, communities, and schools are better connected than others. For example, many students in Lubbock County lack access to high-speed internet or the equipment needed to participate in online learning.

While many Texas schools have done an incredible amount of work to make at-home, computer-based learning a viable option, we must not forget that millions of Texan households still lack access to high-speed Internet. The Offline Learner Maps created by CHILDREN AT RISK highlight areas that have multiple barriers facing children and families attempting to adjust and learn in this new reality. This analysis shows neighborhoods in Lubbock County that are of concern due to a convergence of factors: Zip Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs)<sup>1</sup> 79403, 79404, 79412, and 79415 had the highest concentration of child poverty, lack of access to online learning, and low-performing schools in Lubbock County. Efforts made to better quantify and remedy the lack of access to computers and the internet among families should continue to include attention to these areas served by Idalou ISD, La Joya ISD, Lubbock ISD, New Deal ISD, and Roosevelt ISD.

### Offline Learners, Lubbock County



#### Interpreting This Map

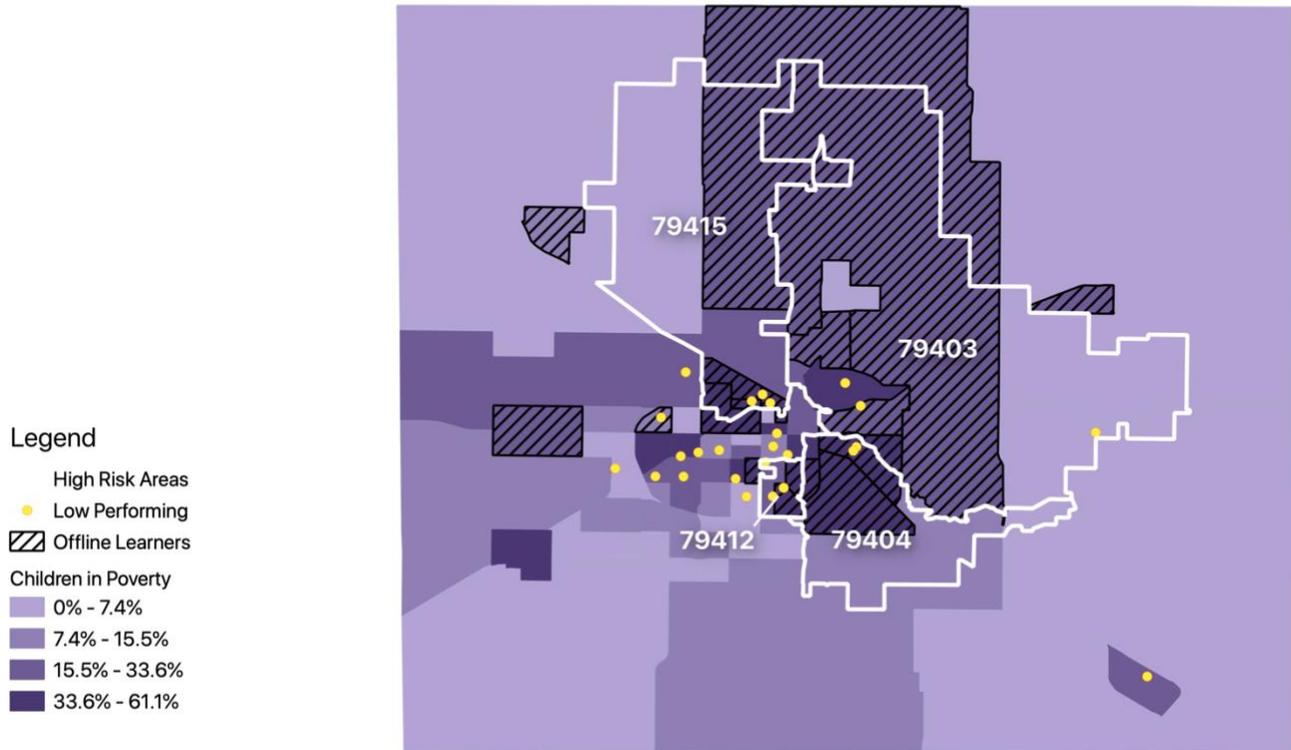
The purple map shows the level of child poverty in Lubbock County, with the darkest purple indicating areas of highest child poverty. Darkest purple is the top quartile (1/4) of percentage of children living below the poverty line. "Lack of Access to Online Learning" is

---

<sup>1</sup> ZIP Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs) are generalized territorial representations of United States Postal Service (USPS) ZIP Code service areas. ZIP Codes identify the individual post office or metropolitan area delivery station associated with mailing addresses. USPS ZIP Codes are not actually territorial features but a collection of mail delivery routes. The term ZCTA was created to differentiate between this entity and true USPS ZIP Codes. ZCTAs are used in mapping Census data. ZCTA is a trademark of the U.S. Census Bureau; ZIP Code is a trademark of the U.S. Postal Service.

defined as the percentage of children with no access to a computer or no internet subscription, including broadband, dial up, or wifi. The **black dashed areas** are the areas with the lowest level of access to online learning. The **yellow points** show the presence of low-performing schools based on the 2018-19 C@R School Rankings.

## Identifying Offline Learners, Lubbock County



### Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to exacerbate existing educational gaps that exist between children growing up in high poverty populations and those growing up in wealthier neighborhoods. Children with fewer resources stand to fall further behind as continuous learning is accomplished more easily in better connected communities. This suggests greater differences in student performance and the related accountability ratings in the future. Policy makers should account for the effects of the pandemic on accountability ratings when making decisions.

How can we ensure children in high-risk areas can access the resources they need? Across the state, communities are working tirelessly to help bridge these opportunity gaps. Some districts are providing hot spots, ensuring hard copy delivery of materials, or even partnering with television services to deliver educational programming. Direct service providers and corporate donors are supporting school districts as they work to find ways to improve access to online learning for all kids, and especially in these identified neighborhoods. While many in the education community are innovating and going-above and beyond to help students stay connected, they cannot be expected to weather the transition to online learning alone and without robust state guidance and support. A significant portion of Texas students lack access to technology or internet infrastructure they need to learn online. Districts and schools located in the identified high-risk areas will need more support than ever before. And ultimately, the state needs to ensure that all districts are tracking and reporting student participation so that we can begin to understand who is being left out.

### Data

This analysis used 2018-19 CHILDREN AT RISK school rankings data, and American Family Survey data from 2018 5-Year Aggregate data.