

GOING THE DISTANCE TO BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

*Strategies for implementation and instruction when distance
learning is the new normal*



TODAY'S PRESENTERS

- George Neely, Lodi Unified School District, Board Member
- Sunne McPeak, California Emerging Technology Fund, President and CEO
- Karen Rosenkilde-Bayne, Woodland Joint Unified School District, Board Member
- Troy Flint, CSBA, Chief Information Officer
- David DeLuz, CSBA, Director of Strategic Initiatives & Development

ACCESS TO BROADBAND AND INTERNET-CAPABLE DEVICES AMONG STUDENTS

As indicated by survey results from CSBA



BACKGROUND

- 4/2/2020- CSBA completed a survey measuring the level of access California public school students have to broadband internet and internet-capable devices in the home.
- Survey was distributed to CSBA's nearly 1,000-member school districts, county offices of education and regional occupation programs that collectively educate **99.6% of all California students**

BACKGROUND

- 270 local educational agencies (LEAs) responded to the survey, which sought to determine:
 - How common it is for students to have broadband internet in the home
 - How common it is for families to have multiple internet-capable devices in the home
 - The percentage of students who have smart phones
 - The ability of LEAs to provide students with internet-capable devices
 - The LEAs with the least access to broadband and internet capable devices
 - The percentage of staff who have both broadband access and computers in the home
 - The quality of cell service in communities where students live
 - The dominant cable and satellite providers in areas served by schools
 - What forms of support LEAs are seeking in order to increase technology access

RESPONSES (PART 1)

- One-third of respondents (33%) indicated that “less than half” or “a small minority/none” of students have broadband home internet access or similar. Two-thirds of participants (66%) reported that most or all of their students have broadband access in the home.
- Exactly half of all respondents (50%) indicated that “less than half” or “a small minority/none” of their students have access to multiple internet-capable devices at home

RESPONSES (PART 2)

- A slight minority of respondents (45%) indicated that “less than half” or a “small minority/none” of their student body has smart phones
- Just under one-fifth (19%) of respondents described cell phone service in their community as “poor or nonexistent” although less than 1 percent selected the “nonexistent option.”

RESPONSES (PART 3)

- More than one-third of school districts and county offices of education (39%) report that “less than half” or a “small minority/none” of their students have laptops courtesy of a school or a school partner.
- The great majority of respondents (86%) indicated that “all/vast majority” or “most” of their staff have access to broadband and laptops in the home with just 13% stating otherwise.

ASSESSMENT

- The need for additional funding, infrastructure, hardware and professional development support to facilitate effective distance learning is enormous.
- Given the depth of the need, it is difficult to reach a quantitative determination of which LEAs should be prioritized.

DIGITAL DIVIDE IMPACT: WOODLAND JOINT USD

PK-12 & Adult Education District
10,000+ students



NO INTERNET = NO SCHOOL

- When people think about the digital divide:
 - Most assume its *simple*: Fund laptops & hotspots and all will have access
- Unfortunately, this issue is far more complex
 - Especially in rural areas
 - Lack of access is not necessarily the result of lack of family income
- Possibility for fall 2020:
 - Part or all distance learning
- With the onset of COVID-19, the digital divide has become one of the most glaring forms of inequity in our state.

WJUSD'S CURRENT SITUATION

➤ Laptops:

- Decided to implement **1:1 Chromebooks** to all students 7 years ago
- **Now:** all students K-12 have a district-issued Chromebook
 - K-3: used in-class only (until COVID-19)
 - 4th grade & up: can take home nightly
 - 7th grade: issued one Chromebook until HS graduation, keep year-round

➤ Connectivity:

➤ Hotspots

- **65%** students qualify for **Free & Reduced-price Meals (FRM)**

➤ The Gap

- Income too high for FRM (hotspots) & too low to afford internet

- **WJUSD's Immediate Fix:** WiFi to the street edge of school parking lots

CURRENT AND FUTURE ISSUES

- Lack of internet infrastructure in rural areas
- Consistent & reliable electricity
- Device repairs
- Teacher training for distance learning

SOLUTION

- State or federal government *must* fix these issues
 - It must do more than simply allocate funds
 - Rural areas = no internet b/c there is no profit for companies to lay fiber
 - There aren't enough customers/population for profit
 - Very expensive b/c of terrain
 - Government must ensure rural areas receive access to the internet
 - Incentives?
 - Subsidizing?
 - Some other option?

INEQUALITIES CREATED BY DIGITAL DIVIDE

- Have been left to the internet companies and local communities to manage
- Districts could decide how, or even if, to address those inequities
- Now, the inequities of the digital divide are at the center of our lives
- We must put people, and the education of our children, over company profits
- **No Internet = No School**

DIGITAL DIVIDE IMPACT: LODI USD



LODI UNIFIED STATISTICS

- 28,000 Students
- 1,500 Teachers
- 4,000 Employees
- 52 Sites
- 355 Square Miles
- Network with 32,000 + users
- 4 Comprehensive HS
- 2 Continuation HS
- 1 Middle College HS
- 2 CTE Academies
- 1 Independence HS
- 6 Middle Schools
- 3 K-8 Schools
- 32 K-6 Schools

LODI UNIFIED FINANCIALS

- Revenues ~ \$375 million
- Reserves ~ \$64 million
- 72% Unduplicated
- 70% Free and Reduced

LUSD CONNECTIVITY ISSUES

- Large disparity in Internet access
- Language barriers
- Unfamiliarity with distant learning concepts
- Poverty
- Number of children in a household

LUSD CONNECTIVITY ACTIONS

- One size does not fit all
 - Identify and Solve
 - Hotspots
 - Working with providers
 - Increased range for school WiFi
 - Smaller downloads
 - Jump drives

LUSD CONNECTIVITY ACTIONS

- Make it work
 - This is not a build it and they will come
 - Educate Administrators
 - Educate Teachers
 - Educate Students
 - Educate Parents
- Don't wait
 - Implement now and adjust as you go

CALIFORNIA EMERGING TECHNOLOGY FUND (CETF) AND THE DIGITAL DIVIDE



CETF'S SCHOOL2HOME INITIATIVE

- CETF is a statewide nonprofit
 - CETF's mission is to close the digital divide
 - CETF believes assisting schools and equity are vital to their mission
- CETF launched their School2Home initiative
 - Implemented in 30 schools in 12 districts, reaching 969 teachers and more than 19,879 students and their parents
 - Worked with school districts of varying sizes statewide
 - Tailored to local community and local issues
- Responses from 2,228 students to the 2015 annual School2Home Student Survey showed the following improvements since 2011-12:
 - 85% increased computer and Internet access at home to support learning, up from 73%;
 - 84% use the technology for writing assignments, up from 60%; 90% access the internet for research related to schoolwork, up from 68%.

CA INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGE

- No one ever anticipated or designed a system that could support simultaneously:
 - 6.2M K-12 students and 300,000 teachers
 - 4M students and instructors for higher education
 - Millions of adults working from home
- The infrastructure challenge needs to be addressed in terms of:
 - Unserved rural and remote households and communities
 - Underserved communities, which are predominantly in low-income neighborhoods and communities where the market mechanisms have not attracted capital investments for network upgrades to provide sufficient bandwidth.
- CETF approaches closing the digital divide and achieving digital equity by driving progress with performance-based goals and objectives coupled with aggressive strategies

HOW CETF IS APPROACHING THE CHALLENGE

- CETF is providing input to state and federal education policy based on the success of [School2Home](#)
 - Encouraging CPUC to use the existing \$303M in the CASF infrastructure grant account to prioritize larger-scale deployment projects to reach last-mile unserved households
 - CETF has been prompting ISPs to work with the broadband regional consortia to identify all anchor institutions along the pathway of deployment to last-mile unserved larger-scale
 - Urging the legislature to extend collections for another 5 years beyond current statute
 - CETF has been promoting the distribution of information about the interim free and affordable offers by the ISPs given that only 30% of households eligible for affordable offers know about them.

CONVERSATIONS WITH CABLE AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES



CSBA COVID-19 RESOURCES

csba

Updates Resources Ask Questions FAQ Advocacy Surveys CSBA

COVID-19 News and Resources

Updates Resources Ask Questions FAQ Advocacy

CSBA would like to commend California's education leaders for confronting the challenges presented by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). We understand these are demanding times with innumerable questions and few easy answers. As the organization representing nearly 1,000 school districts and county offices of education, we hope to provide — to the extent possible — clarity, resources and relief. Thank you for sharing your knowledge, passion and concern; these are some of the greatest assets we have as we care for and educate California's 6.2 million public school students during a time of profound crisis.

Recent Updates

April

- 4/27/20: U.S. Dept. of Ed. News Release: Secretary DeVos Reiterates Learning Must Continue for All Students, Declines to Seek Congressional Waivers to FAPE, LRE Requirements of IDEA
- 4/27/20: U.S. Dept. of Ed. News Release: Secretary DeVos Launches New Grant Competition to Spark Student-Centered, Agile Learning Opportunities to Support Recovery from National Emergency
- 4/27/20: On the CSBA blog: Board member electronic communications in the virtual world of COVID-19
- 4/24/20: On the CSBA blog: New report projects significant learning loss due to COVID-19 school

COVID-19 Webinar Series

Governance and Guidance in the Age of COVID-19
Examination and interpretation of state and federal guidance related to COVID-19
[Watch Now](#)

Open Board Meetings in a World of School Closures
How to lawfully and effectively hold virtual school board meetings
May 1 at 1:00 p.m. | [Register Now](#)

www.csba.org/coronavirus

COVID-19 WEBINAR SERIES

- **Special Education in Extraordinary Times**

May 13, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.

Serving students with disabilities during a pandemic

- **Supporting Student Well-Being from Afar**

May 20, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.

Caring for students' mental and physical health during school closures

Please visit www.csba.org/coronavirus for registration information, links to past presentations and slide decks.

**THANK YOU FOR JOINING US
TODAY.**

