Greater Arizona Educational Leadership
AZBSN Arizona Broadband Stakeholder Network
Arizona Telecommunications and Information Council

August 17, 2020 AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force Teleconference Report

Attendees

Steve Peters, Oris Friesen, Henry Goldberg, Mark Goldstein, Kristen Adams,Tracey Beal, Amanda Bruno, Kirk Busch, Michael Cohen, Jerry Crow, Steve Daurio,Terence Ford, Ian Hathcock, Holly Henley, John Kelly, Tarma Liranzo, Ilana Lowery, Derek Masseth, Sophia Mayberry, Jennifer Mellor, Mala Muralidharan, Mauricio Orozco, Lawrie Prickett, Jeff Sobotka, Nicole Umayam, Karen Ziegler

Updates: Arizona Dept. of Education, Arizona State Library

Arizona Dept. of Education Update

Sophia Mayberry, Project Manager in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at the Arizona Dept. of Education (ADE), reviewed ADE recent activities.

The on-site services process for the Governor's Executive Order begins today. ADE is doing everything it can to work with the schools on that, and revising its guidance as needed.

The ADE Technology Task Force is hearing about a national perspective on the Digital Divide.

Arizona State Library Update

Mala Muralidharan, E-rate Administrator for Public Libraries at the Arizona State Library, reported on Arizona State Library activities. Mala stated she is working on reviews of 2020 E-rate applications. About 54% of E-rate applications funds have been committed. There is currently a flurry of tribal E-rate applications training.

Nicole Umayam, Digital Inclusion Library Consultant at the Arizona State Library, continues to work on the Digital Access Resource Portal. Tracey Beal commented a flyer has been created for this and they are continuing to disseminate information about this. Ilana Lowery stated a packet including a press release with the flyer has been sent to a number of organizations including media companies, identified by Tracey Beal, Ilana, and the State Library. Tracey added that they are thinking creatively about future organizations to contact such as law enforcement, food banks, and the Dept. of Economic Security (DES).   Jeff Sobotka stated he could help with contacts at DES and DPS. Suggestions for other organizations to contact should be sent to Tracey or Ilana. Kirk Busch mentioned he is reaching out to Chief Mentoring Officers to provide SSIDs of Wi-Fi networks at educational institutions (as discussed at the last meeting). Mark Goldstein added he has communicated with Jeremy Babendure of the SciTech

Institute about our task force and the potential of working with their Chief Science Officers at schools program.

Nicole reported she is also working with libraries on providing kits for delivering online programs. The libraries also help schools with distance education.

Holly Henley, State Librarian, reported that the Arizona State Library is continuing to work on projects related to their CARES Act funding (reported at previous task force meetings) partnering with libraries, museums, and workforce training. The last round of CARES Act funding will be announced next week.

Computers 2 Kids Presentation

Steve Peters stated he was introduced to Computers 2 Kids by Tracey Beal.

Kristen Adams, Lead Program Coordinator for Computers 2 Kids in Arizona, provided an overview presentation on this organization. Computers 2 Kids is a non-profit organization that receives donated computers from individuals and corporations, refurbishes them, and makes them available to low-to-moderate income families at a low cost. For example, they are now providing Lenova Yoga computers including Windows 10, Microsoft Office, anti-virus software and 1 year free tech support, for $100. They also hold events about their products for low-income communities and publicize Cox's discounted Internet service for $9.95 per month. Kristen commented she would be happy to publicize the Arizona Free Wi-Fi Map Portal at these events.

Kristen noted that Computers 2 Kids has been operating in San Diego for 16 years, and is fairly new to Arizona. Steve Peters commented Computers 2 Kids provides computers directly to families whereas AZ StRUT provides computers to schools. Steve noted he will add Computers 2 Kids as a technology resource in the task force recommendations document. Tracey Beal noted Computers 2 Kids provides a long-term computer solution for families whereas schools that give out computers to students take them back. Kristen noted she determines which families qualify as low-to-moderate income for their computers by considering the families' annual income and the number of family members in the household.

Technology Subcommittee

John Kelly, co-leader of the Technology Subcommittee, reported that at the subcommittee's meeting on August 11th Vivek Ragavan, CEO of AirVine Scientific (a startup company in the San Francisco Bay Area), presented on their Wave Tunnel product that enables high-speed wireless networks connecting Wi-Fi access points within buildings, which can replace wireline local area networks in buildings reducing cable installation costs and providing flexible deployments of devices. The AirVine presentation will be posted on the task force website.

John stated that the Technology Subcommittee meeting on August 18th will not have a presentation.

John and Mark Goldstein have been working on a menu of broadband access technology options for different geographies with options for combining technologies, including features and pros & cons, for inclusion in the task force recommendations document. It includes information on technologies presented at the various subcommittee presentations. The goal of this menu is to be comprehensive but brief. Steve Peters noted he will include this menu as an Appendix in the task force recommendations document.

Discussion on Affordability of Internet Access and ADOT RFI

Steve Peters stated there are a lot of Internet access technology options available but they may not be affordable for families. Nicole Umayam commented that data at the national level show affordability is the major reason why people are not connected, and that the FCC needs to compile data on Internet access costs in different areas. Steve added that Cox and CenturyLink provide services for many homes in the Tucson area, but a lot of families are not connected because they can't afford the services. Tracey Beal noted there are large problems with Internet access in rural and tribal areas.

Steve asked if the task force could work on creating a fund to pay for students to have Internet access. Mark Goldstein responded that though there is a need for such support, our task force does not have the resources to administer this.

Mala Muralidharan commented that E-rate costs have come down substantially because the State Master Contract allows small service providers to only provide service in a given area and there are partnerships between schools and libraries on E-rate applications. E-rate approvals are going faster under the pandemic, but they have not addressed the issue of affordability for students' Internet access from homes.

Mark Goldstein noted that the ADOT RFI on public-private partnerships and business models for fiber middle-mile infrastructure to rural communities will help with affordability of Internet access for rural communities over the longer term because it will lead to more options for commercial service providers to serve these communities. Mark added that the ADOT RFI deadline has been extended to August 24th. John Kelly asked if the responses to this RFI will be confidential. Mark Goldstein responded that he expects the specific submittals will be confidential, but that ADOT will likely provide an analysis of the responses such as business models possible. Jeff Sobotka stated he will check with Brad Burgess of ADOT about this issue, but the intent is for ADOT to issue an RFP later. Jeff added that streamlined permitting processes from the State Land Department and federal government, as well as encouraging small service providers to compete, will also improve affordability. Steve asked about including a recommendation on middle-mile fiber infrastructure in the task force recommendations document, and Mark Goldstein responded that Steve could use language for this included in his broadband section of the Arizona Technology Council Public Policy Guide.

Mark added that the Western Governors Association Broadband Connectivity Policy Resolution document has a number of recommendations, and the Pima Association of Governments is in the midst of a broadband strategy (see the Appendix Chat).

Steve stated he intends to add a section on affordability to the task force recommendations document.

Next Steps

The next AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force overall meeting will be held on Monday, August 24th at 7:30 am.

Steve is continuing work on the task force preliminary (Phase One) recommendations document. He will send out a Doodle poll to schedule a meeting of a core group to discuss the editing of this document.

This week, the Technology subcommittee will meet on Tuesday August 18th at 9:30 am. There will be no meetings this week of the Education and Libraries and Funding and Resources subcommittees.

Henry Goldberg and Oris Friesen will write up a summary report of today's task force meeting.

Appendix: Chat from Zoom

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (7:36 AM)

[file: AZTC State Broadband Policy Brief 2021 V01A.docx]
  Here's my draft of the Arizona Technology Council's State Broadband Policy Brief for the 2021 Policy Guide. Appreciate and feedback or suggestions.

From Kirk Busch to Everyone: (7:38 AM)
  Thanks Mark

From Mauricio Orozco to Everyone: (7:44 AM)
  COVID-19 Child Care Provider Grants TIME SENSITIVE
https://gn.ecivis.com/GO/gn_redir/T/1lc0ibksc8i7y

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (7:45 AM)

[file: PAG Advanced Communications Infrastructure Draft Report 08_20.pdf]

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (7:45 AM)
  Pima Association of Government has issues a draft broadband assessment and plan for review. Attaching that for your info and consideration.

From Mauricio Orozco to Everyone: (7:47 AM)
  For questions regarding the Child Care COVID-19 Grant program, please email ChildCareGrants@azdes.gov

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (7:47 AM)

[file: Western Governors Association - Broadband Connectivity Policy Resolution 2020.pdf]
  The Western Governors Association's issued a Broadband Connectivity Policy Resolution attached here FYI.

From Nicole Umayam to Everyone: (8:15 AM)
  Promotional materials about Connect Arizona and the public wifi map:
https://tinyurl.com/azlibtap

From Nicole Umayam to Everyone: (8:15 AM)
  Feel free to share widely

From Tracey Beal to Everyone: (8:17 AM)
  Thanks for posting this, Nicole! These are all of the flyers, fact sheets and media release that we are sending out. We would love to have you share!

From Nicole Umayam to Everyone: (8:22 AM)
  Can individuals without school-aged children purchase devices?

From Jennifer Mellor to Everyone: (8:26 AM)
  This is great Kristen. We would love to add to our website at phoenixchamber.com/laptop. Could you reach out to me at jmellor@phoenixchamber.com and we can figure out the best way to move forward?