January 4, 2021 AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force Teleconference Report

Attendees

Steve Peters, Oris Friesen, Henry Goldberg, Mark Goldstein, Tracey Beal, Andrew Bevington, Melissa Boydston, Kirk Busch, Gene Carl, Michael Cohen, Jerry Crow, Alexandra Dominguez, Terence Ford, Ian Hathcock, Steve Hill, Shereka Jackson, Tarma Liranzo, Sophia Mayberry, Clarence McAllister, Ryan McCaigue, Mala Muralidharan, Lawrie Prickett, Paul Ross, Michelle Simon, Jeff Sobotka, Karen Ziegler

Task Force Recommendations Report, Database, Participants Survey, Funding

Task Force Recommendations Report
Steve Peters noted the task force recommendations report is posted on the task force website report landing page. Steve will send a cover letter today to task force participants that they can use and personalize to send the task force report to their contacts. Steve has revised the press release for the report, and Insight will be working on distributing this in the near future.

Task Force Database of Stakeholders
ATIC/GAZEL has a database of stakeholders such as county managers, economic development directors, school superintendents, and important associations that should be contacted about task force activities and receive the task force recommendations report. However, a number of these contacts are out of date or need to be supplemented, so Steve requests task force participants send him relevant stakeholders' contact information for inclusion in this database.

Task Force Participants Survey
Steve reminded task force participants to fill out the Google Form on the task force website to provide their organizational and contact information so he has up-to-date information for all participants.

Task Force Funding for 2021
Steve has finalized the AZBSN financial support request package for 2021 that he will start distributing to potential funders. ATIC has provided financial support for the operation of the AZBSN in 2020.

Updates: State Broadband Director, AZ State Library, ADE, Mark Goldstein Activities

State Broadband Director Update

Jeff Sobotka, State Broadband Director at the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA), reported on his recent activities.

He has been having meetings with large and small carriers about providing broadband services.

Jeff is looking into various federal government broadband funding programs including EDA grants for which several Arizona communities have applied, the FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund opportunities for Arizona, and how the federal stimulus broadband funding will be allocated.

The state legislative session is starting this month, and Jeff will be looking at the Governor's broadband proposals for this session.

Jeff thanked Steve Peters and Mark Goldstein for their work in managing this task force and preparation of the Arizona Technology Council Public Policy Guide.

Jeff invited task force participants to contact him directly if they wish to discuss any broadband/digital access issues.

Arizona State Library Update

Mala Muralidharan, E-rate Administrator for Public Libraries at the Arizona State Library, reported on her recent activities.

The USAC window to apply for E-rate reimbursements for July 2021 – June 2022 will open January 15th and close March 25th. The E-rate RFP processes have been open for a while and RFPs must be open for at least 28 days before awarding a contract. Mala is working with E-rate applicants on these activities.

The federal government's COVID-19 relief bill provides broadband funding – Mala provided a draft summary of this program in the Appendix1. Mala also provided a summary of a broadband bill proposed by Senators Capito and Klobuchar to close the homework gap (see the Appendix1).

The Arizona State Library has moved their physical office back to the Capitol Building.

Mala applauded the task force on the quality of the task force recommendations report.

ADE Update

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

ADE is waiting for guidance on how the federal government stimulus broadband funding can be spent.

Superintendent Kathy Hoffman shared on social media her thoughts on school openings/closures and the role of distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sophia posted a link in the Appendix Chat to view this.

<u>Mark Goldstein Recent Activities</u>

Mark Goldstein reported he participated in a national panel for Drew Clark's Broadband Breakfast reviewing recent broadband activities and looking to the year ahead especially with the change in administration and new funding. Mark discussed what has been happening in Arizona for this panel. Mark posted a link in the Appendix Chat to view a replay of this panel discussion. Steve Peters remarked that he viewed Mark's presentation for this panel and it was very good so he would like Mark to present this to our task force.

Mark has updated the AZBSN Arizona Broadband Consultants List (see the Appendix Chat), and the Sun Corridor Network has been working with some of these consultants.

Mark authored the state and federal broadband sections of the Arizona Technology Council's 2021 Public Policy Guide, which was recently published. Recently, he prepared an excerpt of the state and federal broadband policy sections included in this guide (see the Appendix Chat). Mark is interested in receiving feedback from task participants on this excerpt.

Mark worked recently on a USDA Community Connect Grant application for a community in Alaska. A great deal of work is required to apply for such USDA grants. He says it will likely be easier for Arizona communities to apply for state block grants if the federal government provides such funding for states to allocate for broadband projects at their own discretion. Such state block broadband grant funding would be the most transformative part of any new federal broadband stimulus funding.

Task Force Implementation of Report Recommendations

Steve Peters stated he will be creating a task force planning committee to move ahead with implementing recommendations that were made in the task force recommendations report that could be worked on by our task force (as opposed to those recommendations that would be implemented by the state government, local communities, or other organizations). Steve asked task force participants to contact him if they would like to participate in this task force planning committee.

Steve would also like inputs on how our task force can build relationships with stakeholders and make its work more beneficial. Jeff Sobotka commented that the task force has had participants primarily from Maricopa and Pima County, and should reach out to other counties and communities in the state. Jeff noted that the task force can publicize the upcoming NTIA workshops in March on getting broadband to rural communities (which he has discussed at pervious task force meetings). Jeff added that it is important for remote communities to be aware of satellite broadband services. Steve responded that he will address all of these things, and getting the task force database of stakeholders updated will be important for this.

Tracey Beal commented that School Connect is looking to establish public/private partnerships to have a greater impact. For example, they are looking to provide 10,000 devices for Maricopa County school districts. Shereka Jackson remarked that there may be overlap in the goals of different organizations and she would like to discuss her Future Stars organization device distribution goals with Tracey. Mala Muralidharan noted the Arizona State Library also distributes devices through their CARES Act funding. Jeff Sobotka commented that effective public/private partnerships should be established to coordinate organizations' donations of devices with the needs for devices in the state and avoid duplication. Steve Peters stated it will

be important for the task force to develop ways to bring such organizations together to work collaboratively this year in most effectively meeting the overall Arizona needs for devices.

Paul Ross asked if the task force has an education subgroup. Steve responded that there was an "Education & Libraries Subcommittee" in the past to develop recommendations for the task force's recommendations report, and it may be appropriate to reconstitute such a committee with the focus now on implementing recommendations.

Steve asked the task force participants how they view task force processes going forward. Henry Goldberg commented it will be important to get specific feedback from stakeholders on the recommendations in the task force's recommendations report – Steve replied that he has gotten some positive feedback on the overall report. Karen Ziegler commented that the chairs of the implementation planning committees should present their work to the overall task force, and Steve responded that this will be done as it was for the subcommittees developing the recommendations last year. Terence Ford commented that the "Call to Action" next steps in the task force recommendations report should be executed and reported on to the task force. Steve asked if we should continue having technology presentations to the task force, and Mark Goldstein and Terence agreed such presentations would continue to be useful.
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Next Steps

The next AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force overall meeting will be held on Monday, January 11th at 7:30 am. The next task force meeting after that will be on January 25th (no meeting on January 18th for the Martin Luther King holiday).

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

Appendix1 : Mala Muralidharan Documents: 1) Draft Summary of Broadband Funding in COVID Stimulus Bill; 2) Broadband Bill for Homework Gap

Draft Summary of Broadband Funding in $900 Billion COVID Stimulus bill

signed into law on Dec. 27, 2020

1. $1 Billion for Dedicated Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant Program
   a. administered by NTIA
2. $3.5 billion for Emergency Broadband Connections
   a. administered by FCC
   b. provides $50/mo. subsidy to low-income households ($75 for Tribal households)
   c. includes funding of $100 per household for Internet-connected device
3. $300 million to Promote Broadband Expansion Grant Program
   a. administered by NTIA
   b. grants will be issued to qualifying partnerships between state and local governments and fixed broadband providers.

   c. priority given to rural areas and those networks that reach the most unserved consumers.
4. $65 million for Broadband Mapping
   a. funding goes to the FCC to carry out the Broadband DATA Act
5. $285 million for Connect Minority Communities
   a. administered by NTIA
   b. funding for minority-serving education institutions, their students and surrounding communities
6. $250 million for COVID-19 Telehealth program
   a. administered by FCC
   b. similar to previous COVID-19 Telehealth program from CARES Act in May 2020
   c. adds provisions to improve transparency and to ensure every state benefits
7. $1.9 billion for Remove and Replace Unsecure Communications Equipment
   a. administered by FCC to reimburse Huawei and ZTel equipment used by communications companies
   b. also called "rip and replace"
8. $767 million for Broadband Loans and Grants for Rural Areas
   a. administered by USDA/Rural Utility Service
   b. funds expansion of grants for Community Connect, Distance Learning and Telemedicine programs and Reconnect pilot program.

Broadband Legislation to Close the Homework Gap - December 20, 2020

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) and Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), both members of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, today introduced the *Every Child Connected Act*—legislation that aims to reduce the digital divide between students with and without internet access, known as the Homework Gap. Specifically, the legislation accomplishes this goal by targeting available funding sources from Federal Trade Commission (FTC) data privacy violations to provide vital connectivity to American students at home.

"While improving broadband accessibility in West Virginia and across rural America has always been a top priority, there's no question that the coronavirus pandemic has underscored the need to address this challenge now more than ever," **Senator Capito said**. "With schools nationwide shifting to digital learning, students and teachers rely heavily on the internet to keep up with their assignments and connect with one another. However, the unfortunate reality is that millions of students do not have the same access to these online tools that some of their classmates do, putting them at a significant disadvantage. The *Every Child Connected Act* aims to address this

problem by redefining the classroom to include learning from home; redirecting funding to make telecommunication services more affordable for schools and communities."

"In order to help close the homework gap and ensure that we connect every child to critical internet services, we must have the funding to do so," **Senator Klobuchar said**. "Our bipartisan legislation will help us get one step closer to closing the digital divide by expanding the Federal Communications Commission's E-rate program to ensure that we can connect K-12 students at home to participate in distance learning."

In an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19, schools across the country have closed or reduced in-person learning, forcing students to turn to the internet to complete their education. According to the Department of Education's most recent data, 14 percent of children ages 3-18— approximately 9.4 million total—do not have internet access at home, putting them at significant risk of falling behind academically.

The *Every Child Connected Act* would:

- Requires the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to redefine the term classroom to include distance learning occurring at the home.
- Redirects funding captured by Section 5 of the FTC act and consent orders from privacy violations at the FTC to the FCC E-Rate program.
- Requires coordination among state and local municipalities and the Department of Education to assure E-Rate is utilized for distance learning taking place at the home.

Appendix2 : Chat from Zoom

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (7:38 AM)
[file: AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force - Arizona Broadband Consultants V02J.docx]

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (7:38 AM)
I've just updated the AZBSN Arizona Broadband Consultants List with 2 new entries, CTC Technology & Energy and Keller Heckman LLP (Jim Baller) for a total of 54 entries as of January 4, 2021. You can find the current version (V02J) posted here and on the AZBSN Resources Page at https://www.arizonatele.org/covid-resources.html FYI.

Sophia Mayberry to Everyone (7:39 AM)
OH SO CUTE

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (7:42 AM)
[file: AZTC State & Federal Broadband Policy Brief 2021.docx]

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (7:42 AM)
The Arizona Technology Council's 2021 Public Policy Guide covering state and federal issues and recommendations was recently released and is available for download at https://www.aztechcouncil.org/public-policy/. I've authored the State broadband sections (among others) for quite some time, but this year I built out a full Federal broadband agenda and recommendations. Over the holidays I prepared a State & Federal Broadband Policy excerpt posted here FYI.

Jeff Sobotka to Everyone (7:44 AM)
Thank you for updating the list Mark. Much appreciated!

Sophia Mayberry to Everyone (7:56 AM)
See the statement under her pinned tweet

Sophia Mayberry to Everyone (7:56 AM)
https://twitter.com/Supt_Hoffman?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor

Tracey Beal to Everyone (7:57 AM)
Sophia I see that educators are in the 1 B group for the vaccine. Any idea of the time frame for this?

Sophia Mayberry to Everyone (7:57 AM)
I certainly hope it is soon but I have not heard a definitive timeline.
If I hear one I can update the group.

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (8:04 AM)
I was on a panel for Drew Clark's Broadband Breakfast reviewing recent broadband activities and looking to the year ahead with especially the change in administration and new funding flows. You can view a streamed replay at http://broadbandbreakfast.com/2020/12/broadband-breakfast-live-online-new-years-party-on-wednesday-december-30-predictions-for-2021/.

Tracey Beal to Everyone (8:16 AM)
I'd be happy to do that steve

Paul Ross to Everyone (8:18 AM)
Do we have an education sub group?

Malavika Muralidharan to Everyone (8:19 AM)
Yes Paul Education and Libraries Sub Committee that I chair with Nicole Umayum

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (8:19 AM)
We had an Education & Library Committee, one of four, during the development of the report and its underlying strategy, but hasn't been active of late. Perhaps time to restart.

Alexandra Dominguez to Everyone (8:28 AM)
Happy to provide whatever support I can for implementation/distribution strategy of the report to state leaders