

October 12, 2020, AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force Teleconference Report

Attendees

Steve Peters, Oris Friesen, Henry Goldberg, Mark Goldstein, Robert Alvarado, Tracey Beal, Andrew Bevington, Kirk Busch, Michael Cohen, Jerry Crow, Alexandra Dominguez, Terence Ford, Ian Hathcock, Holly Henley, Shereka Jackson, Ryan Kelly, Ilana Lowery, Derek Masseth, Sophia Mayberry, Peter Newbegin, Mauricio Orozco, Lawrie Prickett, Tracy Rexroat, Graham Taylor, Karen Ziegler

Updates: Arizona Dept. of Education, Arizona State Library

Steve Peters commented that because today is Columbus Day some representatives from state government agencies (such as Jeff Sobotka) are not present to give their usual updates.

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), reported on recent ADE activities.

ADE has constructed spreadsheets (posted on their website) showing for school districts and charter schools in each county what mode of instruction they are using: in-person learning, distance learning, or hybrid in-person/distance learning. The spreadsheet for school districts provides notations if not all schools in the school district are using the same mode. Some school districts are changing their mode of instruction over time.

Steve Peters asked if school districts are reporting information on Internet access or devices available for students at home, and Sophia responded that the school districts are not currently reporting this. Sophia noted that the ADE conducted a technology survey for school districts at the beginning of the pandemic but the data they received was not good enough to be useful because there were large disparities among school districts on the quality of information they could provide. Sophia added that if every school district could afford to have a Chief Technology Officer they could collect better information.

Sophia provided an update on the ADE Technology Task Force. This task force has five subcommittees, four of which are working on short-term projects and one is working on a long-term project. The short-term topics of the subcommittees are: a white paper on the digital divide in Arizona, a white paper on the digital divide in rural Arizona, a resources toolkit for parents, and digital tools for teachers. The long-term project is a digital divide solutions plan for Arizona, which is expected to provide a report by the summer of 2021, and will likely continue work beyond that. Sophia remarked that this project will not duplicate what is in our task force report.

Legislative actions will likely be required to address the digital divide – ADE will be asking for grants to support digital technology and digital learning.

Sophia was asked about ADE’s relationship with the recently-announced T-Mobile Project 10 Million to get 10 million students nationally connected. Sophia stated that T-Mobile is providing free mobile hotspots (there is a charge for data plans that comes with the hotspots) to each state with 42,000 allocated to Arizona. T-Mobile also provides various computers (e.g. Lenovo laptops, chromebooks, and tablets) at a low cost (under \$200) which school districts can buy and distribute for student use. Sophia commented that the Governor’s Office and the Arizona Dept. of Administration are looking into how to work with T-Mobile on this project. T-Mobile will distribute devices to the school districts, and the school districts are responsible for distributing the hotspots to families. There will be a process to identify the needs of school districts. Ilana Lowery put a link in the Appendix Chat about the T-Mobile project. Steve Peters commented that this project is directed at public schools not charter schools, and Mauricio Orozco remarked that when Will Davin of T-Mobile discussed this project with our task force he indicated it may be possible for non-profit organizations to apply for this (Robert Alvarado of Chicanos Por La Causa is looking into this). Lawrie Prickett asked if this project is affected by the E-rate gift rule, and Sophia responded that she expects it would not be affected because of FCC gift rule waivers. Steve stated he would ask Will Davin to provide further information on the T-Mobile project and would provide Will’s contact information to those interested. Alexandra Dominguez added that the College Board is partnering with T-Mobile and the Public Education Department of New Mexico on donations of devices for students in AP computer science (see the Appendix Chat).

Arizona State Library Update

In the absence of Mala Muralidharan and Nicole Umayam, Holly Henley, State Librarian, provided a brief update on the Arizona State Library activities.

Holly noted that the Connect-Arizona portal is being worked on to be up to date, and the AZ LibTAP technical support service has been able to keep up with tech support requests. The Arizona State Library has funding to continue work on these projects next year. Tracey Beal remarked that Connect-Arizona is working on providing up-to-date information on discounted services available from Internet service providers, which will be valuable until longer-term solutions are available.

Holly added that Mala continues to follow new legislation related to E-rate.

Task Force Recommendations Report

Steve Peters stated that he, Mark Goldstein, and Karen Ziegler have been working on revising the task force recommendations report based on comments received from some task force participants. The report is now about 60 pages. Steve requested that any task force participants who wish to make comments on the report do so by the deadline of tomorrow October 13th. After that, the report content will be finalized and passed over to Insight for preparation for publication in a nice professional-looking format.

Steve briefly overviewed the structure of the report as outlined in the Table of Contents. He noted in particular that the Executive Summary overviews the categories of recommendations in

the report, and that at the suggestion of Terence Ford actionable next steps are included in the “Call to Action”.

Mark Goldstein highlighted some new things that have been added to the report. There is additional information clarifying the terms digital inclusion and digital equity. A paragraph on Cybersecurity and Privacy has been added to indicate its importance as noted on the cover-page diagram on digital access but is not a focus area of the task force committees’ recommendations.

Alexandra Dominguez and Mauricio Orozco suggested that a one-page summary of the report be prepared for policy makers. Steve noted that a cover letter also needs to be prepared for distributing the report.

Alexandra Dominguez and Ilana Lowery asked if organizations involved in the task force will be listed in the report. Mark and Steve responded that this was considered but it was too difficult/confusing to list all organizations involved, so they instead overviewed at a high level in the report the types of organizations involved. Steve stated he would be distributing a Google Form to get up-to-date information on task force participants, and intends to put the resulting information in a spreadsheet that would be posted on the task force website. Karen Ziegler suggested organizations that support the task force activities and recommendations report could put their logos on the task force website, and Oris Friesen supported the importance of doing this.

Ilana Lowery suggested the task force establish a marketing team to consider the best ways to publicize/market the task force recommendations report. Terence Ford offered Insight assistance in marketing and press releases for the report. Steve Peters agreed with these marketing suggestions, and added that task force participants will be asked to distribute the report as well to those they think should receive it. Steve noted the report will be distributed to relevant state government offices, including the Governor’s Office and ADE, as well as local communities’ organizations, and other key stakeholders. Terence Ford remarked that our Arizona task force report is the most extensive and major report from any state he has seen addressing COVID-19 digital access issues. Mark added that he would ensure the report is distributed to national organizations focusing on this topic.

Steve concluded saying after the report is distributed, the task force will consider next steps for implementation of the recommendations and the role the task force should have in this.

Next Steps

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

This week, the Technology subcommittee will not be meeting.

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

Appendix: Chat from Zoom

From Sophia Mayberry She, Her, Hers to Everyone: (7:32 AM)

I'm glad Jeff is taking a break I will hold it down for some of the state agencies this morning.

From Sophia Mayberry She, Her, Hers to Everyone: (7:41 AM)

<https://www.azed.gov/covid-19-guidance>

From Mark Goldstein to Everyone: (7:42 AM)

[file: AZBSN COVID-19 Task Force Report & Recommendations Draft V02C 10_11_20B.pdf]

Here's a PDF snapshot of our draft report as of last evening. Will review a few issues/areas we're still working on this morning, but it's really coming along!

From Ilana Lowery to Everyone: (7:52 AM)

The hot spots aren't free either.

From Ilana Lowery to Everyone: (7:54 AM)

@Sophia, are you sure the hotspots are free? I heard they were not.

From Sophia Mayberry She, Her, Hers to Everyone: (7:57 AM)

I am pretty sure Ilana.

From Ilana Lowery to Everyone: (7:57 AM)

From their website: To that end, T-Mobile announced that with the combined assets of a completed merger with Sprint that will create the New T-Mobile, the future company will create Project 10Million, a program designed to eradicate the homework gap by making a pledge worth \$10 billion over the next five years that will deliver free internet access to 10 million households around the U.S. and Puerto Rico, as well as an additional \$700 million commitment in hardware, which will include mobile hotspots. Additionally, it will offer the option to these same families to purchase select Wi-Fi enabled devices at the company's cost. Thanks, @Sophia!

<https://www.t-mobile.com/news/community/tmobile-launches-project-10million-initiative>

From Ilana Lowery to Everyone: (8:01 AM)

https://www.t-mobile.com/business/education/project-10-million?cmpid=TFB_RAD_P_20TENMM_OU0ZJSRLLM0FYL758187 These are links for more information about the program.

From Alexandra Dominguez to Everyone: (8:11 AM)

Just sharing with FYI: College Board just partnered with T-Mobile and the Public Ed Department in New Mexico on this USED grant: <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-discretionary-grants-support-services/innovation-early-learning/education-innovation-and-research-eir/>

They applied for this grant to expand AP computer science in the state and T-Mobile is matching the grant through in-kind donations of devices for those students.

From Ilana Lowery to Everyone: (8:26 AM)

We should consider media outreach Happy to help with that

From Ilana Lowery to Everyone: (8:28 AM)

Talking points will be helpful so that one-pager is needed for media. Maybe a subcommittee for that?

From Tracey Beal to Everyone: (8:28 AM)

I agree!

From Ilana Lowery to Everyone: (8:29 AM)

If there isn't a plan, there will be a lot of overlap.

From Sophia Mayberry She, Her, Hers to Everyone: (8:36 AM)

Have a good week everyone!

From Tracey Beal to Everyone: (8:38 AM)

I agree. Let's make a concerted marketing effort

From Robert Alvarado to Everyone: (8:39 AM)

Sorry team need to go to next thing. This is amazing so glad to be a part of this. Let me know what you need me to do. I had no idea this was going on so marketing is a great idea. Have a great week.

From Tracey Beal to Everyone: (8:40 AM)

Have to run to the next meeting! Thank you for the discussion!

From Kirk Busch to Everyone: (8:44 AM)

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/jeff-sobotka_cox-commits-60-million-to-close-digital-activity-6720071136304082944-pkAp

From Tracy Rexroat to Everyone: (8:46 AM)

Thank you!