CTEDTECH
Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology

55 Farmington Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105
(860) 622-2224
www.ct.gov/ctedtech

Infrastructure Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

February 15, 2017

Attendees

- Colleen Bailie — CET Member, West Haven Public Library
- Doug Casey — CET
- Tom Dillon — CET Member
- Kerri Kearney — Manchester Public Schools
- Bethany Silver — Bloomfield Public Schools
- Rob Wilson — Somers Public Schools

Agenda

- **Introductions**

- **Digital Equity Priorities**
  - Identify Shortfalls in Coverage
  - Promote Existing Programs – Link to People and Institutions
  - Create or Support New Programs

- **Identifying Shortfalls – Data Collection**
  - What: Outcomes in the form of better data, stronger ability to define needs, etc.
  - Why: Value to stakeholders, such as ability to argue for funding, tie-ins to digital learning, etc.
  - How: Mechanisms and partners to accomplish the data gathering

- **Existing Research and Resources**
  - CERC Survey
  - Speak Up!
  - Census
  - Pew
  - District Data
  - Other?

CTEDTECH
Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology

55 Farmington Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105
(860) 622-2224
www.ct.gov/ctedtech

- **Survey and "Toolkit" Components**
  - Promotional Materials
  - Survey Instrument(s)
  - Outreach to Anchor Institutions
  - Definition of Existing Models (e.g., Wi-Fi on Busses, Community Hotspot Map, Mesh Networking, etc.)

- **Next Steps**

Meeting Notes
NOTE: The points below represent an assimilation of ideas rather than a verbatim or chronological record of points shared.

Doug opened the meeting with thanks to everyone in attendance and a summary of its intent. At the November 30, 2016 meeting (notes available through the Commission Web site), participants agreed that a smaller gathering of Advisory Council members would make sense to develop a "toolkit" for communities to gauge Internet access among learners by leveraging access to students and families through schools, libraries, and other anchor institutions.

The meeting began with a discussion around existing initiatives and programs. Colleen Bailie shared that the Connecticut Library Consortium (CLC) has a contract with Sprint to lease access points that library patrons can borrow. From the K – 12 side, Kerri Kearney stated that Manchester Public Schools identifies students with a need for broadband access at home and provides T-Mobile SIM cards for use in school-issued Chromebooks at a cost of $8 per month. Manchester uses InfoSnap at the beginning of the school year to ask families whether they have Internet access at home, a model other towns such as Somers use.

Toolkit Overview and Components
In discussions around what a "toolkit" for schools, libraries, and anchor institutions would include, the group discussed the need to appeal to a variety of audiences using the toolkit and the types of individuals providing information about Internet access:

- Parents
- School Librarians
- Public Librarians
- School Administrators and Teachers

Meeting attendees agreed that getting dependable data — either for entire subgroups (e.g., elementary students) or significant percentages of the entire community population — would benefit most stakeholders, including businesses interested in

55 Farmington Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105
(860) 622-2224
www.ct.gov/ctedtech

providing broadband access to families of every income level. The group agreed to work collaboratively to design this Toolkit, a document or set of resources with the following components:

- Introduction and Background: This section would frame the work and explain why connecting learners outside of school remains a priority.
- Existing Services: The document would provide a list of common carriers by region or ZIP, as well as any grants or programs for qualifying individuals and families.
- Data Collection: This section would include a short list of questions that schools and libraries could pose, striking a balance between brevity — to help ensure a high response rate — and substance — to ensure the collection of accurate and actionable data. The Data Collection portion of the Toolkit would also include ideas about how to collect this information (e.g., upon school registration, at library circulation desks, etc.). Specific messaging suggestions would accompany the survey questions. Other resources would include ways to leverage existing technology systems and assets to identify families without home Internet access (e.g., list of computers sent home with students that show no network activity at night).
- Other Solutions: The Toolkit would include suggestions on how to get students and families online, including how to develop a community hotspot map, resources for enabling wireless access on busses, mesh networking, etc.
- Digital Literacy Resources: While not the focus of the Toolkit, the document would help answer the question of, "We are online — now what?" Many high-quality digital and media literacy resources exist, and the group proposed including a list of Web sites and other tools to help students and families make effective and safe use of online sites and tools.

Planning and Supports

The following paragraphs include other ideas and resources that would either reside in the Toolkit or inform its development.

- Identifying the Need: A section in the Toolkit providing advice on how to identify needy students or patrons would help users of the document. Formal data collection can help at a community, district, or school level, but leveraging the relationships that staff (e.g., guidance counselors, school library media specialists, etc.) have with students, families, and patrons will help to connect those in need with programs and resources to get them online and support their use of digital learning.
- Existing Data and Resources: Planning the Toolkit should include tapping all available resources for broadband (Internet) access, including the following:
    - State Broadband Office
    - Connecticut Data Collaborative
    - Connecticut Economic Resource Center
    - Department of Economic and Community Development

55 Farmington Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105
(860) 622-2224
www.ct.gov/ctedtech

  - Researchers or programs at institutions of higher education
  - Town, region, or national survey data
  - Private operator information or government relations specialists

- Possible Data Collection through State Reporting: School districts already collect and share student data with the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE). Doug will pursue adding to the Public School Information System (PSIS) report a question along the lines of "Does the student have Internet access outside school?" Granted, many families would not respond, but placing this question into the collection would allow for a single store of data around home Internet access.

- State-Level Sharing: In the absence of a single data store through the SDE, the Toolkit design should include a means by which communities can share, and the Commission can aggregate and publish, aggregate Internet access information.

- National Best Practices or Exemplars: A question arose about what we can leverage and learn from other states and regions. Doug everyone to look into other successful models and promised to reach out to national groups such as the State Education Technology Directors Association (SETDA) and the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN).

- Peer Network: In order to support equity programs (data gathering, outreach to families, grant applications, technology management), districts would benefit from peer-to-peer sharing. Doug mentioned that the Commission will likely soon roll out a platform to support product and service comparisons (pricing, efficacy, etc.) among K – 12 technology professionals as well as teachers.

- General Methodology: Regardless of the survey instruments used at the community, district, school, or library level, the Toolkit should address creative ways to go about data collection. Bethany suggested, for example, that asking all families or patrons about Internet access would provide one way to filter respondents, allowing local leaders to target non-respondents and potentially tie these subgroups to other data stores (known free and reduced-lunch families, list of parents who do not access student grading portals, etc.). One question will likely not get communities the data they need to identify families and patrons who lack Internet access. We need to encourage them to think creatively, using the systems, processes, relationships, and data stores they already have.

- Data Collection – Survey
  - Messaging: The group agreed to include specific language to appeal to different audiences. For example, explaining to families that they might be eligible for free or reduced Internet access might increase their likelihood to share their level of home connectivity, information they might see as sensitive and not otherwise offer.

55 Farmington Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105
(860) 622-2224
www.ct.gov/ctedtech

  - Multiple Languages: Survey questions should include at least Spanish translations and, ideally several language options.
  - Target Audiences: Bethany encouraged the group to address ways to reach groups likely to respond to an Internet access survey. She noted the high response rate (84 percent) of mothers from to national K – 12 Speak Up! survey that Doug shared prior to the meeting. The Toolkit should include recommendations for how to reach different sets of respondents (e.g., parent-teacher organizations, non-profits, etc.).
  - Communication Channels: These recommendations should also include communication and social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Patch.com, district-based apps, etc.). Many districts and towns can also leverage data collection through automated phone systems that include simple survey functionalities (e.g., "press '1' if you have Internet access, '2' if you do not) that can reach hundreds or thousands of families.

- Community Pilot: Bethany Silver introduced the idea of a community pilot in the form of a school district working in partnership with its local library to collect information about home Internet access and use. The results from this effort would inform and improve the guidance and resources in the Toolkit. The group welcomed this idea and suggested that multiple pilots across different communities with a diversity of geographic and socioeconomic makeup would yield the most useful results. Bethany agreed to develop a brief to share with the group and, potentially, for use in garnering financial support through grants or other resources.

The meeting concluded with the group agreeing to collaborate online on a draft Toolkit.