



## [CoSN Digital Equity Toolkit - 2018 update](#)

**September 6, 2018**

At the invitation of Susan Bearden, Chief Innovation Officer at the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) in Washington, D.C., OCC's Bill Vallee, state Broadband Policy Coordinator, along with Doug Casey, Executive Director, Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology (of which the OCC is a statutory board member), provided assistance in support of the CoSN 2018 Digital Equity Toolkit update.

Affordable broadband internet access is a public utility in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Information Age, and it should no longer be treated as a luxury reserved for the affluent, especially in the field of education. The Toolkit notes that access to reliable, robust Internet service and computers is increasingly essential for learning and participation in modern society. The Toolkit details many of the multitude of avenues to pursue in tackling the disadvantages created by the digital divide and the resulting homework gap which negatively affect low-income and rural students, increasing other preexisting inequalities that diminish academic success for millions of US students.

While there is no single way to address these challenges, the 2018 CoSN Digital Equity Toolkit provides a blueprint for addressing efforts over the past two decades to provide America's schools with high speed Internet access. The Toolkit provides best practices and resources to help school officials develop digital equity solutions that work for their communities.

The 2018 CoSN Digital Equity Toolkit concludes by noting:

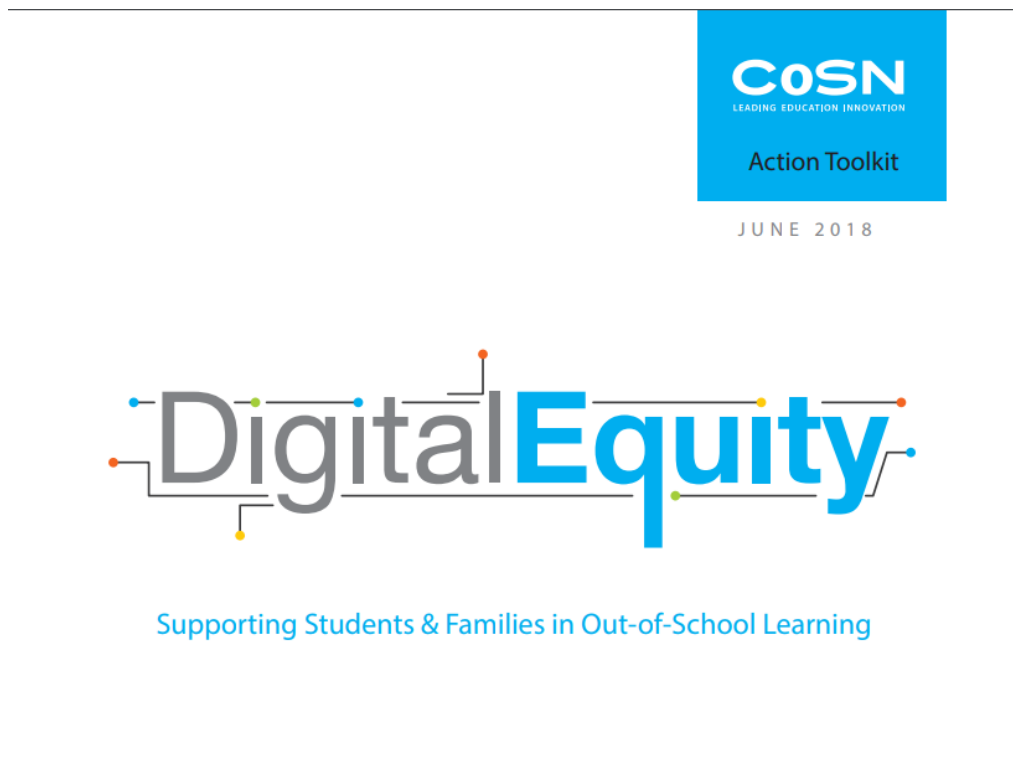
There is no silver bullet, no one-size fits all solution to our nation's digital equity challenges. Every digital equity initiative must be customized to fit the local context; what works in one community may not be the best solution for another. Like other social challenges, the hidden academic and socioeconomic costs that arise from families

lacking Internet access, devices, and digital skills are not always immediately visible.

However, in an age where more than 8 in 10 middle-skill jobs (82 percent) require digital skills<sup>16</sup>, digital equity has become the civil rights issue of our time. Schools and district leaders should include digital equity as an essential aspect of all equity and inclusion initiatives, to provide every child with the high quality education they deserve.

The OCC was delighted to support the efforts of CoSN in developing this excellent resource in the battle to combat the digital divide and thanks CoSN for its invitation to help in this project.

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