



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Jill Bourne

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: May 5, 2020

Approved

Date

5/5/20

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON DIGITAL ACCESS AND INCLUSION FOR SCHOOLS
DURING COVID-19**

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) Accept the staff report on expanding digital inclusion to households of school-aged students through various partnerships.
- (b) Approve a letter for signature by Council and distribution to internet service providers serving San José to take the following actions in light of the continuing COVID-19 emergency:
 - (1) Extend the interim free service at least through July 31, 2020;
 - (2) Sign up households who qualify for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) without requiring a letter from the school at this time because they are closed and unable to provide verification of eligibility until later in 2020;
 - (3) Establish a process to designate all families in schools with a high percentage of NSLP students to be eligible for the program by “auto-enrolling” the school.

OUTCOME

City Council will have an updated understanding of the City’s efforts to improve student access to digital tools and connectivity that facilitate their continued learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures, including opportunities for immediate and longer term engagement. The City will formally request that telecommunications companies reduce barriers to access and extend the interim free service through July 31, 2020, and implement more inclusive enrollment practices.

BACKGROUND

On April 21, 2020, staff offered an update on digital access and inclusion efforts, specifically related to the need to assist schools and students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

After a discussion of recommended approaches, City Council provided direction to staff to pursue the following intervention opportunities to enhance digital inclusion:

- Coordinate with Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) as lead for school districts serving San José;
- Explore Community Wi-Fi expansion;
- Work with Telecommunications industry and other private partners; and
- Leverage the Digital Inclusion Fund.

Progress has been made to better understand and identify viable solutions to this complex issue. This report is intended to provide the City Council with an update on staff's efforts and awareness of potential engagement options as this work continues.

ANALYSIS

Following the April 21, 2020, City Council discussion regarding digital access and inclusion for schools in COVID-19, a new team dedicated to the immediate facilitation of distance learning was established within the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) structure. This Digital Inclusion branch brings together key staff from the Office of Civic Innovation and the Library's Education and Digital Literacy team, as well as the Department of Information Technology (IT), in strong partnership with the SCCOE and California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF).

Coordination with SCCOE

Quantifying Student Need in San José

Working with each school district, SCCOE estimates that approximately 8,574 lack connectivity and need either in-home internet or a wi-fi hotspot to enable distance learning. In addition, 11,600 students need devices suitable for distance learning. These estimates are specific to the need in San José.

The SCCOE provided list of devices with the technical capabilities suitable for distance learning are outlined in Attachment B, and include:

- Chromebooks with camera and microphone
- 10-inch 7th Generation iPads with or without LTE
- 13-inch MacBook Air
- Laptops running Windows 10

Identifying Connectivity Gaps

Staff is working to identify where the gaps in connectivity are and whether the gaps are caused by (1) low network coverage where additional infrastructure may be needed, and/or (2)

households that have not subscribed to in-home broadband services. Staff is coordinating with SCCOE to develop a map that visualizes several datasets to support this work; including, school sites, school district boundaries, the attendance areas for the community wi-fi project, SJ Learns grantee school districts, the City's existing 4G and 5G small cell deployment sites, and demographic data on poverty, and households without internet and a computer. A comprehensive dataset on network connectivity by telecommunications providers is not available. However, staff will utilize the latest available data on network connectivity which the telecommunications providers report to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the State.

This map will continue to be refined as additional information becomes available about the needs of students and where gaps in connectivity exist. The map will inform the City's approach to partnering with SCCOE, the telecommunication providers, CETF, and others to eliminate the digital divide for our students.

Exploring Immediate Connectivity Solutions at Schools, Parks, Libraries, etc.

One of the smart city solutions that was identified through the partnership between the City and AT&T's telecommunication agreement, was to provide smart controllers at 12 parks located adjacent to community centers. These smart controllers primarily focused on providing the City with a park lighting management system as well as community wi-fi capabilities. An initial pilot was completed at Seven Trees Community Center.

After further evaluation of the City's infrastructure, seven of the 12 parks have existing City fiber backhaul that can be used to connect these smart controllers and expand the wi-fi access into the park areas. Similar to the Seven Trees, the following parks that have fiber backhaul are: Southside, Roosevelt, Berryessa, Hank Lopez, Camden and Almaden community centers and parks.

Similar to the pilot that was done at Seven Trees Community Center, it can be further explored if access points can be installed on school buildings near parking lots or library buildings near parks that can be connected to the fiber backhaul of the existing school network to provide reliable wi-fi access for the students and community.

Exploring Reimbursable/Alternate Funding Streams

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Funding

On March 27, 2020, Congress passed, and the President signed into law, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, a \$2.2 trillion economic relief package aimed at assisting workers, businesses, and governments impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Several elements of CARES funding have been made available to the City for specific uses, including:

- Coronavirus Relief Fund - \$178 million
- Airport - \$66 million

- Housing and Urban Development (HUD) - \$8 million
- Public Safety - \$.9 million
- Firefighter Assistance - \$(TBD)
- Library - \$(TBD)

Within the CARES Act, Congress set aside approximately \$13 billion to establish the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSERF). Funds have been allocated to each state in the same proportion as each state received under part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in the most recent fiscal year. California is anticipated to receive \$1.482 billion to be distributed to school districts by the State Office of Education.

While the funding formula for the granting of these funds has not yet been finalized, the identified potential uses of the funds include:

- Purchasing educational technology for students, including one-on-one devices and internet connectivity;
- Providing resources necessary to address the needs of individual schools, including purchasing computers and hot spot devices for online learning; and
- Other activities necessary to maintain the operation of and continuity of services.

CARES Act funding presents an opportunity to make an investment in digital and distance learning needs of students. Though the City has already received funding, the school district allocation is still in process and is unlikely to be distributed prior to July 2020.

To facilitate the most relevant and timely use of CARES Act funding for digital inclusion, staff proposes to work with SCCOE and consultant Witt O'Brien to expedite the school districts' ability to access ESSERF funds. Further discussion about the use of CARES Act funding or ESSERF funding for digital inclusion will be brought forward for future City Council discussion.

San José Learns

First introduced in 2015, the San José Learns Initiative ("SJ Learns") is an ongoing partnership program that aims to bolster academic achievement by expanding promising and innovative out of school programs for San José students in transitional kindergarten through third grade. SJ Learns provides school districts with resources that leverage their own out-of-school time budget as well as that of the program provider it selects to ensure learning outcomes and increase the number of at-risk children who attend high-quality programs that extend school learning outside of the school day. Additionally, this funding aims to facilitate learning among partners and the broader learning community to inform best practice and shape policy. The following grantees have been awarded funding in the total amount of \$1.4 million for 2020 and 2021:

- Alum Rock Union Elementary School District
- Campbell Union School District

- Franklin-McKinley School District
- Luther Burbank School District
- Mt. Pleasant Elementary School District

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City recognizes that grantee school districts will be unable to convene group programs on school sites as designed prior to the implementation of current school closure, shelter-at-home, and distance learning requirements. In response to these realities, the City will collaborate with current grantees to consider an emergency restructuring of program expectations, with a focus on empowering school districts to invest in device access and connectivity solutions for their students.

Staff will report back regarding the revised uses of any SJ Learns funding, the intended outcomes, and impact of these investments on the overall outstanding distance learning need in San José.

Community Wi-Fi Expansion

In October 2017, the City of San José successfully completed the installation of Community Wi-Fi at James Lick attendance area providing wi-fi access to both students and the community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the construction of Community Wi-Fi systems (Access East Side) for the Overfelt attendance area will continue and will be completed by summer 2020. Design and construction of the Yerba Buena attendance area community wi-fi network will continue, but the completion timeline was planned to be completed summer 2021, due largely to the timeline associated with meeting the federal procurement requirements in selecting a network solution provider when utilizing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.

Since the April 21, 2020, City Council discussion, staff have identified an alternate approach that could help expedite the process for the design and construction of the Yerba Buena attendance area by approximately four to six months, thereby reaching substantial completion by January 2021. This alternate approach requires that: (1) the Housing Department confirm a potential alternate site that meets CDBG funding eligibility and (2) the City work with the ESUHSD to confirm additional funding. Staff continues to explore the feasibility of this approach.

The estimated cost for implementing each community wi-fi network within an attendance area is approximately \$1.5 million. This amount includes cost for design and construction of access points on 200 street lights, permits and operations and maintenance for 5 years.

Work with the Telecommunications Industry and Other Partners

Letters to Internet Service Providers

On April 27, 2020, a letter, signed by Mayor Liccardo, Superintendent Dr. Mary Ann Dewan, Dr. Lisa Andrew (CEO, Silicon Valley Education Foundation), and City Manager Dave Sykes, was sent to AT&T Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Randall Stephenson. On May 1, 2020, Rhonda Johnson (President, AT&T California) responded with the following commitments:

- Extension of “two months free” offer for Access program until May 23, 2020;
- Acceptance of a self-certification letter from parents indicating their child participates in National School Lunch Program (NSLP) for schools that are unable to provide an NSLP award letter due to current closures; and
- Acceptance of blanket award letters from schools whose entire student base qualifies for NSLP.

AT&T has responded to the initial letter with commitments to expand and streamline enrollment processes and to continue to meet with the City to discuss opportunities to support residents and students during this time.

A similar letter was sent to Comcast Regional Vice President John Gauder on April 27, 2020, requesting an extension of Comcast’s services in support of low-income families. The letter recommended for approval and Council signature today is intended to reinforce the Council’s request for telecommunication companies’ support in closing the digital divide.

Public Private Partnership Agreements

Connected devices have become a necessity; essential to flattening the curve by enabling school, work, healthcare, services and entertainment to be safely accessed from home. However, according to 2015 American Community Survey data, nearly 95,000 San Jose residents do not have home broadband internet. The COVID-19 emergency has brought into fuller focus the existing, urgent need to close the digital divide and to meet the demand for more connected devices, higher data volumes, and increased speed to meet customer needs.

Prior to COVID-19, the City had begun work to stem the digital divide. On November 13, 2017, Council approved the Digital Inclusion and Broadband Strategy and directed the City Manager to engage in value exchange agreements to accelerate broadband deployments in San José with the goals of economic development, digital inclusion, and support for Smart Cities and the Internet of Things. On May 1, 2018, Council directed the City Manager to create within the General Fund a “Digital Inclusion Program Fund”, which is to be used to support efforts to close the digital divide for the residents of San Jose, with a focus on low-income youth and other vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and disabled.

To implement the City’s Digital Inclusion and Broadband Strategy, the City has agreements with AT&T, Verizon, and Mobilitie (on behalf of Sprint) to invest in the deployment of

approximately 4,200 small cell wireless network antennas on City-owned streetlight poles. Small cells “densify” the wireless network and offer enhanced voice and data capacity, improve emergency communication capability, and pave the way for the equitable deployment of 5G broadband technology throughout the city at a reasonable cost. In addition, the City receives lease income from the telecommunication companies for each streetlight pole with a small cell. All income received from the small cell streetlight pole lease revenue is allocated to the Digital Inclusion Program Fund.

This robust broadband connectivity infrastructure layer is key to meeting needs during the COVID-19 emergency, closing the digital divide, and the overall quality of life for San Jose residents, businesses, and guests. Staff recommends seeking collaboration with the telecommunications providers, through the small cell agreements, to prioritize and accelerate small cell deployment in the areas identified as unserved and underserved. While the agreements provide an opportunity for the City to seek deployment in specific areas of the city, the telecommunications providers have the discretion to decide. Therefore, staff may return with updated recommendations to fulfill this area of need.

Leverage the Digital Inclusion Fund

On February 25, 2020, Council unanimously approved the City’s implementation partner, the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF), to issue \$1,000,000 to fund the first round of Digital Inclusion Fund (DIF) grants to 23 San José community-based organizations.

Current Grantees Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-2021

Grant funds have been distributed and CETF is working closely with the grantees with education-related participant goals to maximize their efforts to provide access to devices and connectivity for households that include students in San José. The following grantees are preparing to implement their funded programs, with a total goal of achieving 1,600 adoptions, within the next calendar year:

GRANTEE	GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS	FUNDING AMOUNT	TOTAL ADOPTIONS
ACE Charter Schools	Council Districts 5 & 6	\$50,000	200
Alum Rock Union School District	Council District 5	\$125,000	500
Cristo Rey San Jose High School	Council Districts 3 & 5	\$25,000	100
Rocketship Public Schools	All Districts	\$25,000	100
San Jose Library Foundation	All Districts	\$150,000	600
Hoover PTA	Council District 6	\$25,000	100

Digital Inclusion Fund – Emergency Response Process

Addressing the urgent need for digital device access and connectivity that has been exacerbated by COVID-19, staff will coordinate closely with CETF to expedite the allocation of DIF resources that are raised specifically in response to the current emergency. An emergency response process will serve to accelerate the receipt, review, allocation, and delivery of funds to school districts to assist in filling an immediate, specified need. Streamlined reporting requirements will ensure that the DIF uses are documented and measured, while allowing schools to focus their capacities on immediate implementation.

CONCLUSION

Working with the SCCOE, the City and its partners have identified/developed several mechanisms for delivering direct support to school districts to meet the digital learning needs of their students.

Staff has been working to improve student access to digital tools and connectivity that facilitate their continued learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures, including opportunities for immediate and long-term engagement. With the attached letter, the City will formally request that telecommunication companies reduce barriers to access and extend the interim free service through July 31, 2020, and implement more inclusive enrollment practices.

Staff will coordinate with SCCOE and consultant Witt O'Brien to try to expedite the school districts' ability to access ESSERF funds. Staff will return to City Council for discussion regarding the potential uses of these funds.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

As detailed in the staff report, staff will continue to coordinate with SCCOE and CETF to implement elements of the overall plan to expand digital access for San José students. Staff may report back to City Council via informational updates as part of the Report of the City Manager under Agenda Item 3.1 on immediate issues and return to Council later with more comprehensive implementation data.

CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSE

The recommendation in this memo has no effect on Climate Smart San José energy, water, or mobility goals.

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

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PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Council Agenda website for the April 21, 2020 Council Meeting.

COORDINATION

This memorandum was coordinated with the City Manager's Office of Civic Innovation, the City Attorney's Office, and the City Manager's Budget Office.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

No commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT

This recommendation aligns with:

- Council Policy 0-30; the City's Education Policy; and
- Broadband and Digital Inclusion strategy approved by the City Council in November 2017, the creation of the Digital Inclusion Fund in May 2018, and Council's approval of the first round of grant funds in February 2020.

CEQA

Not a Project, File No. PP17-009, Staff Reports, Assessments, Annual Reports, and Informational Memos that involve no approvals of any City action. (City Manager)

/s/
JILL BOURNE
Director, Library Department

For questions, please contact Ann Grabowski, Library Department Chief of Staff, at ann.grabowski@sjlibrary.org.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Letter to Comcast
- B. Devices Suitable for Distance Learning

Attachment A

Tuesday May 5, 2020

Mr. John Gauder
Regional Senior Vice President
Comcast California
Livermore, California 94551

Ms. Beth Hester
Vice President of External Affairs
Comcast California
Livermore, California 94551

Dear Mr. Gauder and Ms. Hester:

We, members of the San José City Council, are writing to thank you and commend Comcast for stepping up to respond to the COVID-19 crisis by expanding the availability of Internet access.

We write to request that you adjust your offerings to ensure that the most digitally-disadvantaged households in San José are able to continue their education through distance learning, to sustain remote work, and to continue receiving essential medical care from home.

We in San José also are stepping up to address the Digital Divide, with an intensified focus during this emergency. We recently awarded \$1 million in grants to non-profit community-based organizations to assist residents to become digitally proficient, acquire devices, and sign up for affordable home Internet service. We are joining forces with all school districts and a wide range of other civic leaders to accelerate efforts to deploy advanced networks and get all residents online. In this regard, we are very grateful that Comcast is represented by Ms. Lennies Gutierrez on the San José Digital Inclusion Advisory Board to advise the Digital Inclusion Partnership.

We greatly appreciate that Comcast pioneered the concept of affordable offers with Internet Essentials and has expanded eligibility over time as well as providing interim free Internet service to new customers through June 30, 2020. We also commend the Comcast school “auto-enroll” process. And, we also know from experience that the Comcast customer call center does a very good job of helping low-income households. However, our residents are facing continued economic dislocations and hardships, in addition to remote schooling that for many will continue into the summer and possibly into the fall. Thus, we are respectfully requesting that you:

- Extend the interim free service at least through July 31, 2020.
- Allow all existing Comcast customers now eligible for Internet Essentials to take advantage of the interim free service and immediately sign up without having to drop service for 90 days.
- Sign up households who qualify for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) without requiring a letter from the school at this time because they are closed and unable to provide verification of eligibility until later in 2020.

We are approaching all Internet Service Providers (ISPs) with similar requests. Attached are recommendations from the California Emerging Technology Fund filed with the California Public Utilities Commission for all ISPs to consider.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our requests. We look forward to continuing the conversation on how to close the Digital Divide together.

Sincerely,

Sam Liccardo
Mayor
City of San José

[Additional signature blocks]

C: Lennies Gutierrez

Attachment B

Chromebook

- Models with an [Auto-Policy date](#) that expires no earlier than 4 years from deployment
- Intel® Celeron™ N4000 Processor (2 Core, 2.6GHz, 4M cache, 6W)
- 2 USB Typ e-C, 2 USB 3.1
- 4GB 2400MHz LPDDR4 Non-ECC
- 32GB eMMC Hard Drive
- 11.6" HD (1366 x 768) Anti-Glare Non-Touch
- Camera & Microphone
- US English Keyboard, non-backlit No Mouse
- Dual Band Wireless AC + Bluetooth 5.0
- Primary 3-Cell 42Whr Battery
- 65W AC Adapter US 125V, 1M

Chromebook Management License

1. *Include Google Chrome Management Console License with every Chromebook.*
2. *Est. \$25 to \$35 per device street cost.*

Apple

iPad w/ LTE (7th Generation)

10.2-inch iPad Wi-Fi + Cellular 32GB - Space Gray

Product Number: MW6W2LL/A

iPad w/o LTE (7th Generation)

10.2-inch iPad Wi-Fi 32GB - Space Gray

Product Number: MW742LL/A

iPad Case

STM Dux Plus Duo for 10.2-inch iPad (7th generation) with built-in holder for Apple Pencil - Black

Product Number: HNU02ZM/A

MacBook

13-inch MacBook Air - Space Gray

Retina display with True Tone

1.1GHz quad-core 10th-generation Intel Core i5 processor, Turbo Boost up to 3.5GHz

16GB 3733MHz LPDDR4X memory

512GB SSD storage

Intel Iris Plus Graphics

Backlit Magic Keyboard - US English

Touch ID

Force Touch trackpad

Two Thunderbolt 3 ports

Windows

Laptop

Windows 10

Intel® Celeron™ N4100

Minimum 11.6" Screen

1.1GHz dual-core 10th-generation Intel Core i3 processor

8GB memory

128 GB Storage

Dual-Band Wireless AC

3-Cell, 42Whr Battery