

Bullet list for Broadband Access Study Committee provided by SDE

The SDE is currently managing the Broadband Reimbursement Program for education. Our focus is on Supporting Schools and Students to Achieve. To this end, we believe that schools need fully funded, quality, efficient, equitable, and sustainable broadband services for all students.

- School districts are some of the largest anchor tenants in the community broadband space (320,000+ users).
- The broadband needs of school districts are different than the needs of corporations, agencies, or higher education.
- Equitable broadband access is a necessity for **ALL** Idaho students, not just 9th - 12th grade students.
- Market pricing is not fully equitable from community to community and from school to school.
- The nuances of school broadband needs are best identified/served by the State Department of Education in collaboration with education stakeholders.
- LEAs must leverage E-rate to its maximum potential to fund needed infrastructure and reduce impact on Idaho taxpayers.
- E-rateable services need to be carefully segregated from non E-rateable services.
- The current Broadband Reimbursement Program has introduced competition amongst providers and greatly driven the price per Mbps down (from ~\$95/Mbps to ~\$10/Mbps) in just a few months' time while providing greater local control.

- **Recommendations**
 - Allow competition, provide guidance and stability for districts to sign long-term contracts which could drive costs down further.
 - Continue the reimbursement program that has been implemented with some guidelines, expansions, and minor changes to improve efficiency and oversight.
 - Expand the program to cover **all** Idaho K-12 public school students enrolled in a physical Idaho public school.
 - Make this an ongoing program so that districts are not afraid to sign long-term contracts. This could reduce the costs.
 - Provide services that the LEAs can opt in to receive such as:
 - E-rate support/guidance/training
 - Procurement guidance (ITB/RFP Templates, etc.)
 - Technical specification guidance to help them select vendors/providers that can meet their needs (SLAs, etc.)
 - Reimbursement services
 - Technical support of existing IVC equipment for those districts that desire to continue using it
 - Work in conjunction with IETA to develop standards that LEAs need to meet to receive reimbursement without removing the ability of LEAs to make local decisions to best meet their own needs.
 - Security
 - Technology

- Bandwidth needs (min/max)
- Etc.
- Base bandwidth needs on utilization needs of the districts.
 - While general standards need to be set as a baseline, some schools will need more or less than an average standard and flexibility needs to exist to meet the educational needs of the students without over or under provisioning bandwidth.
 - Keep in place the ability to do a cost/benefit analysis to meet the educational needs of the students.
- Require (rather than encourage) LEAs to apply for E-rate on their broadband connection and continue to reimburse the non-E-rate portion.
 - Provide guidelines to districts on how to properly apply for E-rate.
 - If an LEA does not file for E-rate, only reimburse the minimum amount that any LEA would have received if they had applied and been approved.
 - If an LEA applies for E-rate and does not receive funding due to a program violation (invalid procurement, contracting, etc...), only reimburse the non-E-rate portion based on what they would have received if they had followed the rules properly.
 - If an LEA files for E-rate and does not receive funding (through no fault of the district), reimburse the entire bandwidth cost.
- Provide financial flexibility to pay for the non E-rate portion of fiber installations or one-time costs for rural districts needing additional support to get adequate connectivity if such expenditures would exceed appropriation. Additionally, provide flexibility if funding requests were greater than the annual appropriation.
 - Create a Broadband Equalization Fund by re-appropriating a portion of the FY2016 broadband program revision in a fund which could be used to pay these larger one-time costs for these districts or cover unexpected costs.
 - PESF?
- Encourage/Incentivize providers to build quality peering relationships with each other. This would allow districts to receive some benefits of a private network without the expense.
- Transfer ownership of the existing IVC equipment:
 - Transfer ownership of projectors and document cameras to the LEAs
 - For those LEAs that want to continue using the IVC equipment, transfer ownership of their IVC units to the LEA.
 - For those LEAs that do not want to continue using IVC equipment, transfer ownership of those IVC units to the SDE to use as maintenance equipment for those that are still using them or expansion for those requesting additional service. Provide funding to remove this equipment from schools that no longer want them.