

Proposals & Recommendations for the Broadband Access Study Committee's Consideration

BROADBAND – SCHOOLS

Currently, individual school districts contract with providers to procure broadband for their schools, which is subsidized through state funding distributed to the school districts, and E-Rate moneys. The following are recommendations and proposals received from various sources regarding future broadband procurement policies for Idaho public schools:

- (1) Keep the current system where school districts contract with a private provider and receive state reimbursement. Advantages and disadvantages are as follows:
 - Equal access to students;
 - Cost of equal access (rural vs. urban) varied per mb;
 - Lose economy of scale; and
 - Lose private network and quality of service

- (2) State support of schools/local markets for broadband, especially in rural areas:
 - Support for E-Rate filings for individual districts through the Dept. of Education
 - IT support through the Dept. of Education
 - There is no need for enabling legislation, unless to clearly direct the DOE to provide IT and E-Rate support to districts

- (3) Establish a statewide network (like IEN) with dedicated fiber access for all schools, including a private network between the district and schools, the State Department of Education, and other state agencies.

- (4) Next Generation IEN:
 - (a) Internet purchasing – school decision
 - Keep decisions local and competitive
 - Decide what level of managed service is needed – Dept. of Admin vet qualified vendors
 - (b) Intra-district networks – school / Dept. of Education decision
 - Lease, or build, dark fiber between schools in district – Dept. of Admin vet qualified vendors
 - (c) Inter-district networking – Dept. of Education decision
 - Only after bell schedules aligned
 - Only after curriculum established
 - Purchase high performance connections as needed – Dept. of Admin vet qualified vendors

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- (5) Create an agency to support school districts as follows:
- Fund broadband for K-12;
 - Opt-out option;
 - Education and educational technology staff must be key decision makers
- (6) Statewide K-12 network contract with Dept. of Education
- Managed services contract;
 - Opt-in
 - Subsidized through state grant or state funding distributed to the school districts
- (7) Private network structure as follows:
- (a) Structure: establish regional point of presence and a backbone network (N. Idaho, SW Idaho, SE Idaho)
 - (b) Management: state owns and operates key equipment, management by state or independent contract, interchangeable parts = accountability and lower risk
 - (c) Competition: opt-in vs. opt-out; independent circuit awards; relevant service level agreements
- (8) School districts pool resources and purchase as a consortium (regional)
- (9) Repeal Idaho Code Sections 67-4755D and 67-4745E:
- **§67-5745D** establishes the Idaho Education Network as a “statewide telecommunications distribution system for distance learning for each public school....”
 - **§67-5745E** establishes the Idaho Education Network Program and Resource Advisory Council (IPRAC), which is charged with providing administrative oversight for the IEN, and establishes the Idaho Education Network Fund.
- (10) Include, build upon or model after the Idaho Regional Optical Network (IRON), the owner-operated Idaho-centric governance model used by UI, ISU and BSU.

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BROADBAND – STATE AGENCIES:

The Dept. of Admin. is in the process of migrating from an emergency contract to a one-year contract for broadband services to Idaho state agencies. The one-year contract will expire in September 2016. The following is a list of proposals from various sources regarding broadband procurement policies for Idaho state agencies:

- (1) State agency broadband contracts should be purchased, managed, coordinated by the Dept. of Admin. to maximize efficiency and purchasing power, while recognizing the different needs of the departments.
 - Purchasing procedures should be clear, competitive, and statutory
 - Broadband purchasing should consider costs, as well as market influence
 - Partnering or contracting with existing entities may leverage E-Rate support to benefit a more robust broadband network for broader (non-E-Rate) users

- (2) A centrally procured statewide network and a statewide broadband contract with three to five-year terms. Reasons:
 - Easier to manage and better pricing & better performance levels; and
 - Improved long-term relationship to ensure broader services are made available in support of long-term network evolution.

- (3) Secure state contract with multiple providers:
 - Allow agencies to negotiate through the state contract to receive best bandwidth/pricing for specific geographic locations;
 - Extend contract to multiple years to receive lowest price, while giving providers incentive to improve infrastructure;
 - Build resiliency into state broadband network

- (4) DHW proposed a direct connection to it from a broadband provider. Reasons:
 - Reduces unnecessary security threats to sensitive DHW data;
 - Provides resilient alternate path for all state agencies if Dept. of Admin. broadband connection goes down; and
 - Provides uninterrupted, 24/7 broadband service for state hospitals, virtual offices, VoIP phone systems, mobile devices, connections to national verification databases.

- (5) “Dig Once” policy for the Idaho Dept. of Transportation

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GENERAL PROPOSALS & THOUGHTS:

- (1) Public/private partnerships could speed development:
 - Through grants for capital development, tax incentives, or granting monopolies
- (2) Current tax credit for broadband is not helpful enough to drive investment decisions. Tax incentives on infrastructure spending needed.
- (3) The State owns the assets of a broadband system
- (4) No contracts that require a single provider be used. Require competition.
- (5) Microwave as a good connectivity option, especially in more rural communities
- (6) Include libraries in any system/contract
- (7) Develop a resolution containing the following language:
 - That the Legislature recognizes “broadband” as a utility for modern life.
 - That it is the intent of the Legislature that all citizens of the state have telecommunication access necessary for 21st century education, healthcare, public safety and commerce.
 - That it is an appropriate role of the Legislature and State government to push for modern telecommunications access for its citizens and businesses.
 - That state agencies, when designing and bidding projects, take into consideration telecomm needs of our communities and rural citizens (similar to the “open once” philosophy for roads)
 - That the Public Utilities Commission house and continually improve the capability to map broadband access (LinkIDAHO) and provide information to the Legislature and Governor on progress towards achieving the goal of universal access.
 - That there be developed a steering committee or board that is charged with reaching the goal of ubiquitous broadband access. This group should be composed of both public and private members knowledgeable about the technology and uses of broadband, and focused on developing options for the State and its communities to pursue. These options may include financial incentives for the Legislature to consider, aggregation and purchasing strategies, even situations (like Ammon) that would benefit from more direct intervention. This group shall work with the PUC and present annually to the legislature.
 - That the Legislature and Governor recognize that there will be an opportunity to use federal and other grant money in the pursuit of this goal, but that there will likely be an opportunity to use State funds (instead of putting everything on roads or into reserves)