COVID-19 & UTAH'S DIGITAL DIVIDE

Educational Leaders' Response to the Need for Equitable Home Technology Access

This study explored how educational leaders in rural, urban, and suburban communities addressed the digital divide specific to equitable home access and what lessons they learned as they worked to provide the infrastructure necessary to employ digital home learning plans during the COVID-19 school dismissal.

RESEARCH THEMES

COVD-19 and Utah's Digital Divide: Major Research Themes

Level/Region	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5
All Data	Broadband	Solutions	Challenges	Digital Skills & Usage	Devices
State	Solutions	Data	Funding	Broadband	Challenges Community Partnerships
LEA	Broadband	Solutions	Digital Skills & Usage	Devices	Challenges
School	Broadband	Challenges	Devices Digital Skills & Usage	Solutions	
Urban	Digital Skills & Usage	Broadband	Challenges	Devices	Solutions
Suburban	Broadband	Solutions	Equity	Devices Challenges	
Rural	Broadband	Solutions	Challenges	Community Partnerships	Emotional Response

STATE RESPONSE

- Compiled and published resources
- Home Broadband Program
- Personal Mobile Hotspots for Public Libraries

LEA RESPONSE

- Chromebooks were the device of choice for take-home
- School-based vs take-home one-to-one models
- Extended LAN to parking lots & establishment of "drive-by Wifi"
- Personal mobile hotspots proved to be disappointing

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Equitable access means home access
2. Not all broadband is equal
3. Balance between state, telco, and LEA leadership is needed in order to supply equitable access to home broadband

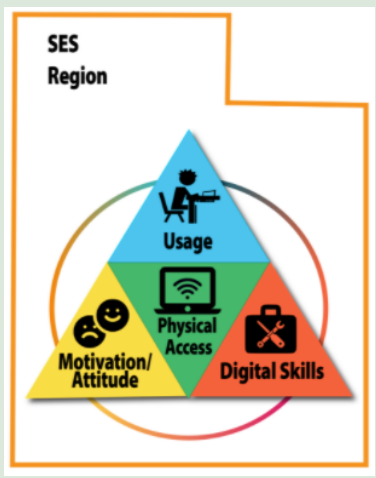
MODEL OF EQUITABLE TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

This model is intended to aid educational leaders in evaluating technology access and understanding what happens when pieces of that access are missing. When all four components of the model work together, whether across an entire LEA or within an individual teacher's classroom, equitable access is achieved.

Motivation/Attitude	Physical Access	Digital Skills	Usage	=	Equitable Access
Motivation/Attitude	Physical Access	Digital Skills	Missing	=	Disengagement
Motivation/Attitude	Physical Access	Missing	Usage	=	Anxiety
Motivation/Attitude	Missing	Digital Skills	Usage	=	Detachment
Missing	Physical Access	Digital Skills	Usage	=	Resistance

UTAH EQUITABLE ACCESS OF THE DIGITAL DIVIDE FRAMEWORK

Movitation/Attidude, Physical Access, Digital Skills, and Usage are deeply intertwined, and when changing any of these components, all others must be reanalyzed and revised.



NEW DEFINITION OF EQUITABLE TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

One take-home device and robust home broadband access for every individual student.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continuation of Utah's Digital Teaching and Learning Grant Program
- Chromebooks as the preferred student take-home devices
- Funding and policy related to broadband disparity in Utah should not be prescriptive