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**

- 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

**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.

**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

**UTAH EQUITABLE ACCESS OF THE DIGITAL DIVIDE FRAMEWORK**

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

**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

**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