

CCSESA FOCUS

A Weekly Update to County Superintendents of Schools

Wednesday, August 20, 2014

Planning for Broadband Infrastructure Improvement Grants (BIIG)

As part of the 2014-15 state budget, \$26.7 million was appropriated to the California Department of Education (CDE) to award grants through the K-12 High Speed Network to improve network connectivity, with first priority given to those school sites that would be unable to administer computer-based assessments. Attached is a brief summary provided by the K-12 High Speed Network (K12HSN) regarding the grant program.

County office of education staff have been contacted to identify schools that meet the criteria for the grants. A list of potential eligible school sites will be posted in early September. School districts and county offices will then have the month of September to nominate other school sites. CCSESA and other groups are working with K12HSN, CDE and the Governor's Office to determine the criteria for scoring and ranking the schools that are nominated. The intent is to fund the top priority projects by the end of this calendar year.

The attached document also describes the planned activities to prepare a report to the Legislature by March 1, 2015 on statewide network connectivity. With regard to both the BIIG grants and the connectivity report, county offices will be expected to provide important assistance. At the end of the attached summary is a description of the role for county offices of education.

An update and discussion of this project is scheduled on the agenda for the September 8 meeting of the CCSESA Board of Directors.

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K12 Network Connectivity Assessment and Grants (SB 852)

California County Superintendents Educational Services Association – August Update

In the past 8 weeks, K12HSN and the California Department of Education (CDE) have been providing information about the Broadband Infrastructure Improvement Grants (BIIG) and the Statewide Network Connectivity report as prescribed by Senate Bill 852. The intent of this message is to provide you with an update on recent developments.

Broadband Infrastructure Improvement Grants (BIIG)

While the goals of SB 852 are unchanged, after seeking additional input from stakeholders and industry experts, we are implementing changes to the grant process in order to improve and maximize the State's investment. Adjustments to the process were necessary to accomplish the following:

- Reduce administrative burden to School Districts required by the application process.
- Remove the burden on School Districts to suggest a technical solution and allows direct support from industry experts to develop solutions that leverage existing network infrastructure.
- Provide equal opportunities to schools sites that do not have any technical or administrative capacity to apply for funds.

For the Broadband Infrastructure Improvement Grants (BIIG), the changes to the process are as follow:

- School sites that are potentially eligible for grant funds are in the process of being identified through existing information sources such as input from County Offices of Education, results from the SBAC field test and the data collection efforts on hardships from K12HSN. K12HSN will produce a School Site Eligibility List (SSEL) containing the sites identified through this process.
- School sites included in the list will go through a validation process to ensure the school sites do not have sufficient network capacity to the Internet to be able to implement testing in the Spring of 2015. The list of potential eligible schools sites will be published online on September 2, 2014 at the K12HSN website (<http://www.k12hsn.org>).
- The Request for Application process will change to a Self-Nomination process. If a School District believes they have one or more school sites that may qualify for the grant funds and are not included in the SSEL, the School District will have an opportunity to self-nominate the school site. The school site will then go through the same validation process as all sites being considered for funding.
- K12HSN with support from the Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California (CENIC), County Offices of Educations, and other strategic partners will identify possible solutions and estimate one-time costs for the sites on the SSEL to make necessary improvements to their broadband connections.

- The school sites on the SSEL will be scored and ranked according to criteria developed by K12HSN and California Department of Education, with input from numerous stakeholder groups to include statewide organizations such as CCSESA, the Governor’s office and State Board of Education.
- Grants will be awarded based on the how sites are ranked. There may be insufficient funding to serve all eligible applicants. If insufficient funds are available to award all applications that receive a qualifying score, a funding priority based on overall score, in descending order, will be applied until all funds are exhausted.

Below is an updated timeline for the Broadband Infrastructure Improvement Grants:

- August 5th – August 29th Develop the School Site Eligibility List (SSEL) in conjunction with County Offices of Education.
- August 25th Release of Official Announcement to the field
- August 18th – October 30th SSEL Site Validation
- September 2nd -30th School District Self-Nomination period (COEs can assist)
- October 1st to 30th Scoring and ranking of schools sites within the SSEL
- September – November Exploration of technical solutions
- November - December Fund projects for schools sites on the SSEL
- November – June Implementation of solutions

Statewide Connectivity Report

The process for the collecting information from school sites remains relatively unchanged.

While the data points are going through some refinements, we envision the process as follows:

- To collect new information for the report, the K12HSN will work with County Offices of Education, Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California (CENIC) and existing consortia to conduct the assessment, which may include site visits to a sampling of locations.
- The report will include information from a sample of schools sites using a 95 percent confidence level with a 4 percent error rate, which will engage approximately 700 sites for the entire State. The school site sample will include very small, small, medium and large schools equitably distributed (based on ADA) throughout the 58 counties in the State. The sample will also solicit information from the range of technically well-provisioned, adequately provisioned, and minimally provisioned sites. Below are a few examples on number of sites per County:

Mendocino:	7 sites
Ventura:	16 sites
San Diego:	54 sites
Santa Clara:	30 sites
Los Angeles:	87 sites (not including LAUSD)

- For purposes of the report, the standard data collection via the needs assessment will consist of analyzing current broadband capacity and the internal network at school sites to determine

what

broadband infrastructure is available. In some cases knowledgeable network staff will be deployed for on-site visits to relieve the problem of LEA's having limited resources (expertise, time) to collect and report accurate information.

- The current survey instrument has approximately 50 questions to be answered. We estimate it could take up to a full day per site to obtain the information (on-site) as a worst case.

The timeline for the Statewide Report is as follows:

- August Finalize the Data Points and collection instrument
Develop agreements with County Offices
- September – November Data Collection from Sample Sites
- December – February Develop Report
- February Share draft report with stakeholders for input
- March 1st, 2015 Report due to the Legislature

Role for County Offices of Education

As expressed in previous communications, the role of County Offices of Education in this work is pivotal, in order to work through the aggressive timelines. Below are the key areas where County Offices of Education can provide assistance:

- **Broadband Infrastructure Improvement Grants**
 - Provide a list of sites that may qualify for the funds, based on their knowledge of school sites that had difficulties in the field test due to poor network capacity. (This work is underway)
 - Validate the sites on the list for their respective County; additional data collection from the sites will be necessary.
 - Provide assistance to K12HSN and CENIC in developing technical solutions and obtaining cost estimates.
- **Statewide Report on Network Capacity**
 - Coordinate the data collection process for the sample sites in the County and upload the information to the data collection tool.
 - Provide input and feedback to the draft report.

We expect to establish agreements with most County Offices where the efforts to produce the work warrant reimbursement of costs for the staffing to support the activities.

In closing, we are not too far from finalizing the list of potentially eligible schools sites for the grants and have yet to hear from 11 County Offices of Education. We would appreciate your support and any insights you can provide on these schools.