Broadband Infrastructure Grant and Needs Assessment

K-12 **H**igh **S**peed **N**etwork

Business and Administration Steering Committee

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Today's Presentation

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Background

Included in Senate Bill 852, are **one-time funds** to assist school districts in enhancing their network connectivity, specifically the "last mile" connection in order for them to be *successful during the 2014–15 computer assessments*. To accomplish this work, the Broadband Infrastructure Grant program will be established.

A second component of the work calls for a Statewide Report on network infrastructure to, and within, schools in order to better understand the gaps and the resources needed to close them.

Broadband Infrastructure Grants (BIG)

A grant process is being developed so Local Educational Agencies (LEAs, to include direct funded charter schools) may apply for funds to address network infrastructure (i.e. last mile) gaps, giving a priority to those hardship cases that need immediate assistance in order to implement the 2014–2015 computer-based assessment.

Specifically, eligible school sites will have experienced one of three situations during the Spring 2014 SBAC Field Test:
1. School site was unable to administer field tests due to inadequate connectivity.
2. School site tested students, but was required to move tested students to an off-site testing location (or other school campus).
3. School site tested students, but was required to stop all other online activities to do so.

As a condition of receiving grant funding, LEAs shall commit to supporting the ongoing costs associated with improved Internet infrastructure.

As a condition of receiving grant funding, LEAs shall utilize subsidy programs such as E-rate and CTF for future expenses.

In addition, internal network enhancements (switches, routers, wireless, cabling, conduit) to qualifying school sites will be funded.

Broadband Infrastructure Grants (BIG)

- Approximately $26.7M one-time funds

- Grants are non-competitive

- Request for Applications (RFA)
  - The process will be online
  - One application per school site
  - LEA's may apply for multiple-sites; each site will require a separate submission – ranked and scored independently
  - Consortium applications are allowable

- RFA will be released August 18 and will close September 26th. A Letter of Intent will be due August 29th. The LOI is requested and valuable to planning, but not mandatory. Applications with no LOI will be reviewed.

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BIG – Scoring and Ranking

- Grant funds will be prioritized and awarded based upon established criteria developed by California Department of Education (CDE), State Board of Education (SBE) and K12HSN with input from other statewide organizations such as ACSA, SSDA, CETPA, CUE, etc.

- Rubric is being designed to score applications (per school site)

- Panel of reviewers will be assembled to score applications in October

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BIG – Funds

- If insufficient funds are available to award all applications that receive a qualifying score, a funding priority ranking will be applied until all funds are exhausted.

- Grant funds will be prioritized to last mile network connectivity infrastructure to school sites that fall under the first priority for critical need.

Statewide Report on Connectivity

- The Governor's 2014–15 budget calls for the completion of a statewide report on K-12 network connectivity by the K-12 High Speed Network (K12HSN) in consultation with the CDE and SBE.

- This report shall be completed by the K12HSN, in consultation with the CDE and the SBE, by March 1, 2015, and submitted to the Department of Finance, the Legislative Analyst's Office, and the budget committees of each house of the Legislature.

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Statewide Report on Connectivity

- The report will include a detailed estimate of the costs associated with upgrading Internet infrastructure to implement the computer-based assessments.

- This includes an assessment of local area network resources and wireless coverage within the school campus.

- The needs assessment tool will be online and currently has approximately 60 questions to collect the data points required for the report.

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Statewide Report on Connectivity

- The report will include a sample of schools sites to collect network infrastructure information using a 95 percent confidence level with a 4 percent error rate, which will engage approximately 700 sites for the State.

- The school site sample will include very small, small, medium and large schools equitably distributed throughout the 58 counties in the State.

Roles for County Offices (COEs)

Broadband Infrastructure Grant

- Provide assistance to LEAs that plan to apply for grant funds through the application process to include:
  1. Technical Expertise
  2. Information on costs (to enhance connection to district or COE)

- Assist K12HSN with the due diligence process for information submitted by LEAs.

- Collaborate with telecommunication carriers to explore suitable options for LEAs with sites in need

- Participate in the reviewer panels.

- Encourage LEAs to apply and submit their information.

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Roles for County Offices (COEs)

Statewide Connectivity Report

- Coordinate data collection to a sample of school sites within their County.

- Enter the assessment information in the online data collection system.

- Collect assessment information from LEAs via phone, e-mail or by site visit where appropriate.

- Analyze current broadband capacity and the internal network to determine what broadband infrastructure is available.

- Assist with obtaining network performance measurements such as bandwidth utilization and latency.

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Roles for County Offices (COEs)

- K12HSN would work with each COE to determine the level of participation and design an agreement to meet the needs of the grant program and the statewide report for their County.

- It is anticipated that COEs will be reimbursed for their expenses to assist with this work.

- COEs will assist LEA's to determine network enhancements required at the District or COE to accommodate the enhanced capacity of the sites. These costs should be included as part of the school site application.

Timeline

Finalize Grant App. + Needs Assessment   July 2014

Broadband Infrastructure Grants

- BIG Grant Application Window   August – Sept 2014
- BIG Scoring & Due Diligence   October 2014
- BIG Grant Awards   November 2014
- BIG Implementation   Nov – June 2015

Statewide Connectivity Report

- Data Collection/Needs Assessment   August – Dec 2014
- Report Development   Dec – Feb 2015
- Connectivity Report Released   March 2015
- Final Program Report to the Legislature   March - June 2015

Key Challenges

- Aggressive timeline

- Determining costs for the last mile connectivity in rural and remote areas (hard to serve).

- Aligning with LEAs procurement cycles and meeting bidding and subsidy program requirements.

- Capacity of LEAs and vendors to deliver services so that testing in March is successful.

- Addressing the needs of Charter Schools.

Questions

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