

# Idaho Digital Divide Task Force Implementation Recommendations for the Procurement and Deployment of Devices

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*Idaho's Digital Divide Task Force Device Subcommittee provides considerations, recommendations, and effective practices to ensure the timely procurement and deployment of devices for the upcoming 2020- 2021 school year. This guidance is not mandated, or state required. Local school districts have the authority and flexibility to meet their individual needs and to be responsive to their communities.*

## Intro: Preparing for the upcoming 2020-2021 School Year, Procuring, and Deploying Devices for Blended Learning

As school administrators and educators plan for various teaching scenarios in the coming 2020-2021 school year, students in both urban and rural Idaho may need to continue their education from home. In many cases, such remote learning will need to be supported by a plan for the timely procurement and deployment of digital devices.

This document has specific resources for School District administrators, educators, and parents for preparing, procuring, and deploying devices in a blended learning environment.

The guidance provided in this document is intended to assist district administrators and staff to digitally “bring school home” for students and educators.

Use the links below to navigate the different sections of this document.

1. [Preparation for the SY 20-21 School Year](#)
2. [Recommended Minimal Technical Standards for Devices](#)
3. [Content Filtering for Student Security and Assessing the Security of Online Collaborative Tools](#)
4. [Student Digital Citizenship. Empowering students to be self-accountable for being good Digital Citizens](#)
5. [Procurement of Devices](#)
6. [Leveraging Private/Public Partnerships to Close the Digital Divide](#)

# 1. Preparing for the 2020-2021 School Year

## Being Ready at a “Weeks’ Notice”

- Public health conditions can rapidly change county-by-county, meaning schools may need to respond to various scenarios on short notice, it is important to prepare for remote learning capacity in advance.
- Providing device options to students and teachers requires sufficient lead-time (three to eight weeks) to be sure digital access is readily available and able to be quickly deployed and effectively utilized at a week’s notice.
- Here are several recommendations and sources for assessing existing resources, identifying access gaps, determining options for procuring and deploying digital learning devices:
  1. **Conduct an asset inventory.** Do you have devices available to sign out? Does every educator have a device at home? Do they have connectivity? Are there older devices in closets? Consider conducting a schoolwide inventory of devices with the intent of identifying and leveraging excess capacity for interim (short term) technology solutions until your school/building/district can achieve your 1:1 device goal.
  2. **Evaluate educators’ need for devices.** Educators may need laptops, tablets, and data-capable smartphones to enable them to teach classes remotely, as well as interact with parents and school administrators during and after regular school hours. These devices and any affiliated data service plans can be funded with various traditional and new sources available at the local school districts and may be procured directly with the vendor or via statewide contracts. In scenarios when students are not able to come into the school building it may be possible for teachers to come to their classrooms while still following social distancing and other precautionary measures to utilize the school’s broadband and other resources for delivering instruction.
  3. **Consider assigning existing devices to families and students before executing procurement of additional devices.** Checking out devices to different students (depending on which students will be learning from home) would require an inventory tracking system at the school and possibly the grade level. If schools do not have the quantity of devices for a one-to-one (1:1) deployment, devices should be sufficiently sanitized in between deployment to different students and/or teachers.

4. **Consider possible procurement constraints due to shortage of devices available in the marketplace.** Because the nationwide demand for laptops and tablets may have exceeded manufacturers' ability to manufacture sufficient supplies, it is important to consider that vendors' delivery timeframes may be much longer than usual. Additionally, older Google Chromebooks will soon become obsolete because of manufacturer-mandated software changes.
5. **Determine if devices available for lending within your community.** Public libraries and local non-profits may have devices for lending to families and students. There may be Chromebooks or computers available at several public libraries across the state. Please contact your local public library to determine whether computers are available and if a partnership might be possible for students in your district. The public library directory is here <https://directory.lili.org/browse/orgs-browse/i> , and is the best way to learn about the catalog of what each library owns.
6. **Take into consideration there may be constraints for utilizing donated devices.** Schools can also reach out to local businesses and government offices, who may have slightly older devices to donate for families. However, precautions should be taken when attempting to incorporate donated devices into schools' inventory. Issues are likely to arise, such as aged devices that cannot be updated with the latest software or that lack interactive equipment (i.e. webcams), network security, content filtering, and others. Any of these considerations and others could compromise student learning and student safety and security.
7. **Establish an effective device refresh schedule.** Establish an effective device refresh schedule so laptops and tablets can be kept up-to-date and capable of being effectively used for supporting various educational platforms (e.g. Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, etc.) as well as the needed functions for your district's or school's Learning Management System (LMS).
8. **Here are some online resources to advise on the evaluation of options.**
  - Choosing the Right Digital Learning Device <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/06/11/choosing-the-right-digital-learning-device.html>
  - U.S. Department of Education (USED): Use of Technology for Teaching and Learning <https://www.ed.gov/oii-news/use-technology-teaching-and-learning>
  - Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD): Choosing the Right Device <http://www.ascd.org/about-ascd.aspx>

## 2. Recommended Minimal Technical Standards for Devices

### Digital Divide – Device Specification

- The goal is to provide every Idaho student with a device that meets general computing requirements. The computing requirements for some Career and Technical Education programs in Idaho are not part of solving the digital divide. A general computing requirement device may or may not address any Special Education accommodations and each LEA would need to address the needs of their Special Education population.
- Each LEA should be able to select the Operating System (OS) platform (e.g. Windows, MacOS, iPadOS, or ChromeOS) that is right to meet the needs of its students and its selected curriculum and tools (eg., LMS, Collaboration Suite). The LEA should consider additional support for features like digital linking with a stylus or other compatible writing implement.

### General Computing Requirements for Devices:

- Keyboard – K-12: Physical, K-2: On-Screen or Physical
- Trackpad or Touch Screen
- Wireless Network Adapter with at least Wi-Fi 5 (802.11AC) compatibility
- Webcam
- Noise canceling microphone
- Headset Support
- Technical Specifications that meet Idaho State Assessment requirements
  - English Language Proficiency (WIDA): <https://www.drctdirect.com/all/eca-portal-ui/browser-requirements/DRCPORTAL>
  - Idaho Reading Indicator (iStation): <https://www.istation.com/Support> & <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/assessment/iri/files/training/Idaho-Reading-IRI-Technology-Readiness.pdf>
  - Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT): <https://idaho.portal.airast.org/secure-browsers.stml> & <https://idaho.portal.cambiumast.com/supported-browsers.stml>
- Optional Connected Device Support (Cellular Connectivity) to address Homework Gap connectivity issue. This may not be viable in all areas of the state of Idaho. Each LEA needs to review if this is a possible connectivity solution for their service area.

### **Additional Considerations for LEAs:**

- Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs may have additional computing specification requirements above and beyond the general use computer to operate the software. The CTE Programs at each LEA may have unique software needs that need to be addressed. The software applications may also require specific operating systems. It is up to each LEA and their CTE program to determine computing needs for their programs and how to address them.
- High-end computing requirements for CTE or other programs for blended or remote learning could be addressed from a virtual workstation in a public or private cloud format or a remote access format. It would be a decision of the LEA on how to best address the needs of their high-end computing need and solutions that would provide that access.

### **Staff/Teacher Devices**

The LEA also need to consider what device to provide to staff. Here are several key questions each LEA needs to consider and address.

- Is the selected student general purpose device enough for a staff member's (e.g. Office manager, Registrar) needs?
- What about the needs of a teacher?
- Are the needs different for an elementary vs a secondary teacher?
- What about the CTE teacher?

### **Where can an LEA get additional advice on device selection for their district?**

- The Idaho Education Technology Association has a vibrant membership that can be used to help discuss how the different challenges faced by the LEA can be addressed. They can be reached by emailing [board@idahotechtalk.org](mailto:board@idahotechtalk.org).

## 3. Content Filtering for Student Security

### Content Filtering for Student Security

The goal of K-12 content filtering is to prevent students from viewing inappropriate content. The goal of K-12 cloud security is to prevent cybercriminals from gaining access to school information, such as students' social security numbers, staff W2s, and intercepting vendor payments for their own financial gain.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, "Congress in 2000 enacted the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) as part of the 2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act.

The act provides three different types of funding:

- 1) Aid to elementary and secondary schools
- 2) Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grants to states for support of public libraries
- 3) E-rate program that provides technology discounts to schools and public libraries.

CIPA also requires public libraries that participate in the LSTA and E-rate programs to certify that they are using computer filtering.

For applicable laws, see [National Conference of State Legislatures, "Children and the Internet: Laws Relating to Filtering, Blocking and Usage Policies in Schools and Libraries and the Federal Communication Commission's Consumer Guide on the Children's Internet Protection Act \(CIPA\). Idaho Code 33-132 \(1b\).](#)

**All Web Filters are NOT created equal.** Here are some useful links to access detailed information about Web Filtering solutions:

- [How to Tell if Your School's Web Filter is Designed for Education](#)
- [Flexible Policy Controls in Web Filtering](#)
- [Non-English Filtering](#)
- [Web filtering and BYOD](#)
- [Web filtering and AI Evaluation](#)
- [Web Filtering and CIPA – What Schools Need to Know](#)
- [How to Choose the Right Web Filter](#)

### **Assessing the Security of Online Collaborative Tools**

The security of Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts and other online collaboration tools is largely dependent on how the tools are configured, and the settings selected. However, knowing a little bit about the tool's features, the developing company's Privacy and Security principles, and tips for safe use, can help you make safer choices.

Here are links to access recommendations from industry sources about the features, privacy and security principles, and tips for safe use for these popular tools so districts can make informed choices.

[Microsoft Teams](#)

[Google Hangouts](#)

[Zoom](#)

## 4. Student Digital Citizenship

A broad definition of digital citizenship is the ability to use technology and the Internet in an appropriate manner. As technology continues to advance, so does the potential to abuse it by individuals.

All students need digital citizenship skills to participate fully in their communities and make smart choices online and in life. Digital citizenship skills give students the right tools to engage with the digital world in ways that promote healthy online communities.

Digital citizenship refers to the responsible use of technology by anyone who uses computers, the Internet, and digital devices to engage with society on any level. This is why digital citizenship is such a crucial topic to teach today's students.

Discussing these issues and their consequences shows students the big picture and makes your students think twice when they encounter them.

The Idaho Digital Divide Task Force Professional Development Subcommittee recommends the following actions for the promotion of digital citizenship. Many LEAs already include Digital Citizenship models in their current policies and curricula. These listed below are simply references for personal professional development and perspective.

<https://digcitutah.com/digital-citizenship/>

<https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/what-is-digital-citizenship>

<https://www.digitalcitizenship.net/nine-elements.html>

## 5. Procuring Devices

- **Federal funding for procuring devices:**

- Federal formula funds (Title funds, current 1003 funds and [1003 Digital Connectivity Grants](#), Consolidated Funds)
- CARES Act funds (allowable uses include “planning for and coordinating during long-term closures” and “purchasing educational technology”)
- Federal Communications Commission
  - Eases Lifeline Application Process for households with unemployed workers:  
<https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-364070A1.pdf>
  - Other FCC updates, including E-Rate flexibility: <https://www.fcc.gov/coronavirus>
- Multiple Federal agencies have programs, grants, loans, etc. that can fund internet connectivity equipment, infrastructure, and devices.
  - U.S. Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS): <https://www.ims.gov/grants/grant-programs>
  - Other Federal fund options: <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/new-fund-search>

- **Grant Opportunities**

- AT&T’s Aspire Grants for K-12 Education supports education, communities and quality of life, prioritizing the areas in which its employees live and work. Aspire includes four funding initiatives: jobs of the future, future storytellers, educational technology and high school success. Jobs of the future supports “organizations that help people build the skills they need for successful careers in technology, media and telecommunications” and prioritizes “people from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds.” The future storyteller’s initiative aims to introduce students to skills and opportunities related to careers in the media industry. In the area of educational technology, AT&T invests in startups that are developing promising K-12 curricula. AT&T and the AT&T Foundation accept requests for funding through their website: <https://giving.att.com/Account/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f>.

- Comcast Foundation's Grants for K-12 Education: offers funding for digital literacy for K-12 in the geographic areas served by its parent company. The foundation does not fund education directly, though many of its grantees serve K-12 populations. Some of the Comcast Foundation's recently funded projects include [My Future](#), an online platform used at Boys and Girls Clubs across the U.S. that teaches children to "learn play and socialize," online, and the Arc of Southern Maryland, which uses technology to enable increased independence for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Comcast also runs the [Internet Essentials](#) program, which brings affordable internet access to eligible low-income households in the U.S. Grantees are usually identified by local Comcast operations. The foundation accepts information from eligible nonprofits in its service areas.

- The Idaho State Board of Education approved \$30M dollars in federal coronavirus relief funds to help bridge the digital divide between students that have online access and those who do not. The funding can be used by school districts and charter schools to purchase learning management systems, computers for students and teachers, adaptive learning technology, improve connectivity and provide teachers additional training to deliver remote instruction. Funds will be allocated based on grant applications submitted by districts and charters to the State Department of Education. Details on how to apply for the State grant can be found at <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/files/general/Blended-Learning-Grant-Program-Application.docx>

- **Existing Contract Vehicles.** LEAs can use the existing State of Idaho contracts or leverage consortiums to maximize purchasing power. Here are links to site containing important information about existing contract vehicles: <https://purchasing.idaho.gov/>, <http://www.hp.com/buy/naspovp-pc4>, <https://store.oetc.org/>

- **Vendor Offerings.** Here are links to access information provided by vendors offering device and software solutions to meet your unique needs:

[Apple](#)

[Hewlett-Packard Computers](#)

[Kajeet](#)

[GoGuardian](#)

[LightSpeed](#)

[Microsoft](#)

## 6. Leveraging Private/Public Partnerships for Closing the Digital Divide

### 1. Private/Public Partnerships available for School Districts:

- Idaho Business for Education, a nonprofit group comprised of hundreds of businesses dedicated to transforming Idaho's education system, launched a statewide initiative called the Close the Divide project to collect used computer devices to donate to Idaho school districts, and to partner with internet companies to provide hotspots for families without internet access.
- Idaho Business for Education will accept laptops, tablets, desktops and any other devices that can connect schools to students, according to its website. The nonprofit is also looking for donations of keyboards, power cords and computer mouse devices.
- If you are a School District, educator, or student in need of a computer device or access to the internet for blended learning, please contact Dr. Robert Sanchez at [rsanchez@idahobe.org](mailto:rsanchez@idahobe.org) for more information.
- Detailed information about Idaho Business for Education Close the Divide Campaign can be found at <https://www.idahobe.org/close>

2. **Additional Resources:** Each school system is encouraged to contact their local [Chamber of Commerce](#), civic organizations (e.g. [Rotary Clubs](#), [Kiwanis Clubs](#)), small businesses, community and other foundations, individuals who may be in the position to help or who may be interested in supporting connectivity and device needs of local students.