



Brief Review of the SOMSD Digital Divide

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Overview

We will briefly review the demographics of the responses to the South Orange Maplewood School District's -Family Digital Needs Assessment Surveys

- + Including internet connectivity, as well as devices needed to participate in a distance learning methodology.



Background

In response to the COVID-19 crisis and in compliance with Governor Murphy's Executive Order, the SOMSD shifted to a Distance Learning Methodology.

- + The District Administration's concerns immediately turned to our commitment to our *Access and Equity* work. Specifically, to concerns regarding the students and families who are the most vulnerable in our community.

Concerns: Access and Equity

- + Our Access and Equity Concerns included:
 - Food security for our families who have a free or reduced lunch designation.
 - Food security for families who have experienced a dramatic loss of income, as well as those who have experienced a recent traumatic loss or illness in their homes.
 - How do we provide instructional opportunities for students who do not have internet connectivity (or limited connectivity)?
 - How do we provide instructional opportunities for students who do not have a device that allows for easy response to instructional stimulus?

Concerns: Access and Equity (cont.)

More access and equity concerns:

- + How do we apply our *Access and Equity/Restorative Practices* commitment to our educators who are experiencing trauma during this crisis?
- + How do we demonstrate empathy, while also striving toward consistency of our offerings?
- + Lastly and most importantly, how do we keep staff, students and our community safe and healthy?



Digital Divide



Digital Divide

- + For purposes of this event we will focus on the digital divide, which is defined as...
 - ...the gulf between those who have ready access to computers and the Internet, and those who do not."a worrying "digital divide" based on educational attainment and income"
- + We as a District are aware that there is a digital divide within the universe of families that we serve and it is based on socioeconomic status...among other mitigating factors.

Digital Divide-Continued....

- + As a district, we did not yet have a one-to-one (1:1) standard device methodology: While schools have chromebook carts and labs etc., these setups are in many cases checked out on a daily basis triggered by teacher need or a predetermined rotating schedule (these machines were not designed to be issued to students/families).
- + What does 'one to one' mean?
 - The term **one-to-one** device usage (also known as mobile or **1:1 devices**) refers to the practice in educational establishments, such as **schools**, of allowing students to use an electronic device to access digital content, the internet or digital textbooks. **One-to-one devices** will include laptops, tablets and Chromebooks.
 - Whereas students are assigned a particular device and are also allowed in many cases to take devices home.

Our Digital Divide Response

In short, we surveyed families, disassembled equipment and issued technology to our district families.

- **Digital Divide Tasks-Timeline**



- Districts in the State of NJ were directed to prepare for a two week closure. In preparation, hard copies of the two week plans were made available for families who did not have devices or connectivity.
- Simultaneously we created multiple telephone surveys to ascertain which (and how many) families were in need of devices and/or connectivity.
- Once it was apparent that we would be closed far longer than 2 weeks, our techs worked with school based staffs and Principals to disassemble our chromebook carts.
- School-based dissemination schedules were created in conjunction with the social distancing guidelines.
- We then partnered with the Achieve Foundation and our Parent Center to purchase hotspots for parents who are in need of connectivity.

Survey Results



Device Survey-Broken down by demographic

Count of Student Number Row Labels	Column Labels						Grand Total	
	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multiracial	White		
Applecore Learning						3	4	7
Full Pay Lunch						3	4	7
Clinton Elementary School		5	26	10	13	36	90	
Free Lunch			10	7	1	2	20	
Full Pay Lunch		3	14	2	10	34	63	
Reduced Lunch		2	2	1	2		7	
Columbia High School	1	4	125	10	14	29	183	
Free Lunch			49	7	2	1	59	
Full Pay Lunch	1	4	61	3	12	28	109	
Reduced Lunch			15				15	
Jefferson Elementary School		4	16	2	11	27	60	
Free Lunch		1	5	2	3	1	12	
Full Pay Lunch		3	11		8	26	48	
Maplewood Middle School		6	55	8	2	17	88	
Free Lunch		2	25	5	1	1	34	
Full Pay Lunch		4	25	2	1	16	48	
Reduced Lunch			5	1			6	
Marshall Elementary School	1		20	1	10	38	70	
Free Lunch			8	1	1	1	11	
Full Pay Lunch	1		7		9	37	54	
Reduced Lunch			5				5	
Montrose Early Childhood Center		3	9	1	6	10	29	
Free Lunch			3		1		4	
Full Pay Lunch		3	3	1	5	10	22	
Reduced Lunch			3				3	
Seth Boyden Elementary School		3	70	2	8	12	95	
Free Lunch			37	1	1	1	40	
Full Pay Lunch		1	25	1	7	11	45	
Reduced Lunch			2	8			10	
South Mountain Elementary School		9	7	3	14	36	69	
Free Lunch			3			1	4	
Full Pay Lunch		9	3	3	14	35	64	
Reduced Lunch			1				1	
South Orange Middle School		2	44	4	9	15	74	
Free Lunch			13	2	2		17	
Full Pay Lunch		2	28	2	7	15	54	
Reduced Lunch			3				3	
Tuscan Elementary School		5	11	1	6	59	82	
Free Lunch			5	1	1		7	
Full Pay Lunch		5	3		5	59	72	
Reduced Lunch			3				3	
Grand Total	2	41	383	42	96	283	847	



Summary of Digital Divide Data

Available demographics of device survey respondents (847 families):

- + **American Indian-2**
- + **Asian-41**
- + **Black- 383**
- + **Hispanic-42**
- + **Multi-racial-96**
- + **White-283**

Connectivity Survey-Broken down by demographic

Count of Student Number Row Labels	Column Labels					Grand Total
	Hispanic	Black	Multiracial	White	Asian	
Applecote Learning				2		2
Full Pay				2		2
Clinton Elementary School	3	4		1		8
Full Pay	2	1		1		4
Free	1	3				4
Columbia High School	3	22	2	1	1	29
Full Pay	2	9	1	1	1	14
Reduced		1				1
Free	1	12	1			14
Jefferson Elementary School		2				2
Full Pay		1				1
Free		1				1
Maplewood Middle School	1	8				9
Full Pay	1	3				4
Reduced		1				1
Free		4				4
Marshall Elementary School		3				3
Free		3				3
Seth Boyden Elementary School	1	17			2	20
Full Pay	1	4				5
Reduced		2			2	4
Free		11				11
South Mountain Elementary School		1				1
Full Pay		1				1
South Orange Middle School	1	3	2		1	7
Full Pay	1	3	2		1	7
Grand Total	9	60	4	4	4	81

Summary of Digital Divide Data

Available demographics of 'internet at home' survey respondents (81 families):

- + **Asian-4**
- + **Black- 60**
- + **Hispanic-9**
- + **Multi-racial-4**
- + **White-4**

A few closing thoughts for context

We are continuing to receive individual requests for devices from families and are responding in-kind with a weekly distribution.

Our Board of Education approved on Monday evening, a significant investment that will help us to increase the number of devices in our District. While we already had an approved *device replacement master plan*, this latest approval allows for us to expedite the procurement of thousands of replacement devices. These computers will of course be used to support our continued efforts toward bridging the digital divide in our district, in the name of *Access and Equity*.

