

CLOSING THE HOMEWORK GAP

DIGITAL EQUITY STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Nearly 20 years ago, the E-rate program was created to provide basic Internet connectivity for all classrooms. Since that time, significant new challenges have emerged. Learning simply doesn't begin and end in the classroom. The promise of anywhere, anytime learning for all students requires that we close the "homework gap" and the widening disconnect that impacts parents and guardians as well.

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX TO ACHIEVE DIGITAL EQUITY

- **Create a Common Vision**

Technology literacy in a community is directly tied to economic growth and development. Local officials, such as mayors, understand that expanded broadband access is today's interstate highway system. District leadership teams, including the Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer, Chief Technology Officer, and Chief Financial Officer, now have the imperative to address digital equity with new strategies and partners. They should partner with local officials and be a passionate voice for why broadband is essential to today's learning.
- **Convening Your Community for Action**

Libraries, community centers, community-based organizations, and faith-based organizations can make great partners for school leaders in the drive to improve digital equity. Banding together with unexpected community partners can expand broadband access and serve families who are under-connected.
- **Get Creative About Wi-Fi & Hotspot Deployment**

Start by mapping out free Wi-Fi in your community and creating a directory that lists locations where students can access Wi-Fi for free and do their homework. Installing Wi-Fi on school buses can increase time for students to do homework and reduce disciplinary issues. Schools and public libraries are providing mobile hotspots with age-appropriate filters for students that lack broadband at home.
- **Learn How Others Are Closing the Homework Gap**

See examples and get underway with CoSN's free, **Digital Equity Action Toolkit** <http://www.cosn.org/DEtoolkit>
- **Don't Forget the Training**

Digital equity requires more than a device and a fast connection. Work with libraries, nonprofits, or community centers to provide training on how to navigate the internet safely, utilize software, and connect relevance to their lives.

Our comprehensive **Digital Equity Action Toolkit** provides a range of helpful tools and resources including case studies, a community survey, research and supporting statistics, and step-by-step guidance:

<http://cosn.org/digitalequity>.