



# County of San Mateo

## Inter-Departmental Correspondence

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**Department:** COUNTY MANAGER

**File #:** 20-832

Board Meeting Date: 11/10/2020

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**Special Notice / Hearing:** None  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**From:** Michael P. Callagy, County Manager  
Jon Walton, Chief Information Officer

**Subject:** Public Internet Connectivity Pilot Project Update

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Accept this informational report on the progress of the Public Internet Connectivity Pilot Project.

**BACKGROUND:**

In March 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic, as well as local and state shelter-in-place orders, and the subsequent suspension of on-site learning, San Mateo County school districts resorted to distance learning conducted virtually over video conferencing platforms. The proliferation of students engaged in distance learning revealed significant internet connectivity challenges for school districts, especially those serving students in vulnerable communities.

During the 2020-2021 school year, most San Mateo County school districts will employ distance learning until the risk of COVID-19 has been abated. The effective implementation of distance learning requires access to affordable, reliable, and fast internet service, which not all San Mateo County students currently have.

On August 4, 2020, this Board adopted Resolution No. 077629 authorizing the use of \$2,879,010 of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds for the purposes of funding the "Public Internet Connectivity Pilot Project" (Project) to improve high-speed internet access for disadvantaged students.

On October 20, 2020, this Board adopted Resolution No. 077789 authorizing the reallocation of CARES Act funds, and the execution of amendments with Kaizen Technology Partners, LLC for project management, data analysis, and application development and Strategy of Things for outreach and coordination services related to the establishment of emergency Wi-Fi connectivity.

**DISCUSSION:**

Since this Board's approval of the Project, the Information Services Department (ISD) has worked to

finalize plans with school districts and community members, gather quotes for equipment, and establish contracts with vendors.

The following progress has been made in the original Pilot School Districts areas-

**Ravenswood:** 275 Hotspots and 275 Comcast Internet Essentials promotional codes have been delivered to the schools and deployed to students. The County Wi-Fi expansion is underway and is on target to be completed by the second week of November. A mobile wireless access unit has been placed in the East Menlo Park region of the Ravenswood school district to provide internet connectivity for students in that area.

**La Honda/Pescadero:** Over 50 hotspots and 50 Comcast Internet Essentials promotion codes have been delivered to the schools. The County and school district worked together to connect “Learning Centers” on ranches and farms in the community. Based on internet access availability, the County will place mobile wireless access units to bolster internet connectivity for students in these areas.

**Redwood City & Sequoia:** The Wi-Fi expansion work is underway. The network design has been finalized and hardware has been ordered. Kaiser Permanente has agreed to allow placement of Wi-Fi equipment at their facilities to support this project. Similar discussions with Stanford and other local business are in progress. The equipment installation work at Kaiser is scheduled for completion in the second week of November.

With the additional \$3.5 million in funds allocated by the Board, ISD has continued to work to identify areas of student need for improved connectivity based on data provided by the school districts. The data shows high concentrations of need in Daly City, Brisbane, South San Francisco, Millbrae, San Mateo, and Foster City. ISD has issued requests for bids to procure additional Wi-Fi hardware to expand the areas of coverage in these communities. Up to 15 areas will be expanded to provide public internet coverage via the SMC Public Wi-Fi system by the end of December. Additionally, ISD has issued a change order to the contractor managing the project to expand the scope to these new areas, create a public portal to locate and monitor availability, and manage the installation of the new equipment. This expanded contract with Kaizen Technology Partners will enable the delivery of this project within the limited amount of time available.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with accepting this report.