



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Quality Digital Learning Study Minutes December 3, 2013

Members present: Dr. Ed Franklin, Dr. Richard Abernathy, Representative Dan Douglas, Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Len Pitcock, Adrienne Gardner, Susan Harriman, Dr. Jay Barth, Cody Decker, Dr. John Ahlen, Claire Bailey, Elizabeth Bowles, and Representative Johnny Key.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. Eleven guests were in attendance. Chair Franklin welcomed everyone and directed members to examine two documents: McKinsey Global Institute: Impact of Internet on Economic Growth and the report of the FASTER Arkansas Engineering/Infrastructure Task Force. He noted that the FASTER Arkansas Committee adopted the recommendations in the report at their most recent meeting and sent them to QDLS members for review. After allowing time for committee members to re-read the recommendations, Chair Franklin introduced Kendall Gibbons, chair of the FASTER Arkansas Engineering Subcommittee.

Mr. Gibbons acknowledged that this has been challenging work, but he has had the opportunity to work with several very experienced network managers to determine considerations for increasing bandwidth in K12 schools. They determined that cost, speed to market, and Governor Beebe's interest in partnerships when possible were among the most important considerations.

The Engineering Task Force Report has four recommendations:

- Connect schools with a robust fiber-optic network
- Adopt the State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) recommendations for K12 bandwidth as minimum targets
- Centralize management for statewide network support services
- Efficiently aggregate statewide demand

Mr. Gibbons discussed the rationale behind the recommendations. He finished by making the point that Arkansas currently ranks 50th in the nation in broadband per student, so an exceptional network will be needed to meet the increasing needs of students. Arkansas already has an exceptional research and educational network in AREON.

Chair Franklin thanked Mr. Gibbons for his report and asked members if they had any questions. Several members asked clarifying logistical questions. Mr. Pitcock asked if there are any statutory concerns with the recommendations put forth. Mr. Gibbons replied that K12 is currently statutorily prohibited from connecting to AREON.

Senator Key asked Mr. Gibbons to describe what the model looks like in the other 41 states that do allow K12 to connect to their research and education networks. Mr. Gibbons responded that all the models look different. He provided some examples from Idaho, Nebraska, and North Carolina.

Richard Abernathy made a motion that the committee accept the FASTER Arkansas Engineering Task Force recommendations. Dr. Barth seconded the motion. Chair Franklin asked if there was any discussion.

- Mr. Pitcock thanked the committee for allowing him time to talk to members of his association. He stated that the lack of accurate data, lack of funding, and statutory concerns will cause him to abstain from voting.
- Dr. Ahlen noted that he believes the statute could be amended in light of the new information the committee has obtained and the standard of 100 kbps that the committee is recommending.
- Dr. Barth stated that it is important to make sure schools should receive adequate training and professional development in digital learning and technology.

Chair Franklin asked for a vote, and the motion carried with all “ayes” and one member abstaining.

Julie Lombard of OSP was recognized and gave an update on the bid.

Ms. Gardner was recognized and discussed the McKinsey Global Report, which highlights the economic impact of the Internet. A sample of the economic impact: 1) an increase in living standards over 15 years of \$500 per capita GDP, faster than then the 50 years the same took the Industrial Revolution, 2) for every job being phased out the Internet creates an additional 2.6 jobs, 3) small-and medium-sized businesses with a strong Internet presence grew more than twice as fast as those with a minimal Web presence, brought in more than twice as much revenue through exports as a percentage of total sales, and created more than twice as many jobs as companies that were not heavy Internet users.

Chair Franklin told the committee that Ms. Gardner would circulate a draft of the QDLS report executive summary within a week. He encouraged all members to comment. The final report will also be circulated in draft form and open for comments at a later date. He thanked all members for their service on the committee and noted that this would be the last time the QDLS committee met in person.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.