Digital Equity 4All: Beyond Books & Bytes
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Castleberry ISD consists of:

- 7 Schools
  - 3 Elementary schools
  - 1 Middle School
  - 1 High School
  - 2 Alternative Schools
- ~7 square mile footprint
- Current enrollment: 3608
- 86% Economically Disadvantaged
- Student Polling Information (2017):
  - 36% stated they did not have access WiFi at home
  - 21% stated they had limited access to WiFi at home (usually through parent’s phone hotspot)
  - 9% stated they were unsure if they had WiFi at home (likely did not)
Background

- Many people aren’t always able to access free computer labs, usually found at libraries.
- Recent events have forced our local public library to close and with this much of the access to the internet and digital resources our community relied on.
- People are often parked outside community centers after hours to access its free wireless service.
Key objectives

- Keeping our community connected
- Promote literacy
- Encourage digital citizenship
- Improved accessibility
Crossing the Digital Divide

- Accessible Parking Lot
- Digital lifeline
- Free, Filtered & Fast Connection
- Literacy: Increase access to resources
- Opportunities for Community classes
Why does connectivity matter to River Oaks & Castleberry ISD

- Our goal is to bring affordable or free internet connectivity to our families in River Oaks / Castleberry ISD. The 2020 global pandemic made it essential to provide equitable access to education through broadband technology.
- River Oaks Public Library has closed and with this access to connectivity.
- Access to information for studies, research and social connections are no longer a discretionary educational component. Equitable access must be provided for every student & family.
- Castleberry ISD currently provides wireless access to registered students of the school district, but often families are still without a stable internet connection for other family members.
One in four Americans has no high-speed internet access at home...and some use their smartphone data plans for high-speed internet access, but those plans are often insufficient to handle the necessary workloads...

Pew Research Center, 2019
Attached is a heatmap of areas with dense economically disadvantaged populations in our district.

Providing library services and internet connectivity to these areas would serve a large number of students and community members who have been historically underserved.
Neighborhood Access Station #1

Location: River Oaks Events Center

Why:

- Monthly food bank & clothes closet for the community.
- Large parking lot which makes this prime location for free and accessible wifi.
- Project expansion opportunities
- Established relationship with directors
Neighborhood Access Station #2

Location: Eastgate Mobile Home Community

Why:

- Established relationship with manager
- Large parking lot which makes this prime location for free and accessible wifi.
- Identified Low Socio-Economic Density Hot-Spot
Neighborhood Access Station #3

Location: Sleepy Hollow Mobile Home Community

Why:

- Centralized Community Center provides expanded location to meet needs of residents
- Create stronger bonds with our local support systems including counselors, special programs
Technology Plan

- Install at least one wireless access point inside or outside of each neighborhood access station.
- Invite the community to connect to Guest WIFI.
  - Each time, community will receive a policy screen in English/Spanish to read and accept the “I Agree” statement which will include information about Safety, reminders about district AUP, and library/internet risks.
  - Free, filtered, wireless internet option for the community
    - The ease of access will allow for a barrier free program
    - There will be no printing available from any mobile devices and community members will select "I Agree" to begin all sessions
    - Laptop computer, PDA, or other devices with wireless network interface card and charged battery will allow for connection.
    - No outside electrical outlets will be provided.
- FAQ will be available to assist with simple connection problems on our Books and Bytes website, but there will be no onsite technical support available.
Expenditures per site include:

- 1 High-power Wireless Access point
- 1 High-speed LTE radio for internet backhaul
- 1 Gigabit switch capable of supplying POE+ power
- 1 Weatherproof enclosure
- Misc. mounting hardware

Total per site: $2500.00
Project total: $7500.00
Performance Indicators

- Surveys
  - Community
  - Students
- Analyze data
  - Trends in usage
  - Population of users
  - Coverage
- Summer Programs
  - Institute learning programs
    - Reading
    - Computer courses
Growth opportunities for overall program

- Community classes led by student leaders including high school CTE department
- Mentoring
- Literacy initiatives
- Special reading programming - summer reading
- Provide devices through “check-out” service for short-term loan.
Books & Bytes
Castleberry ISD is a book desert...

A **book desert** is a geographic area where printed books and other reading material are allegedly hard to obtain, particularly without access to an automobile or other form of transportation.
Getting Books to our community: Mo
Grab & Go libraries extend the reach of school collections:

- Extend current Books and Bytes Bookmobile program to provide a “grab and go” style library. Books will be readily and freely available the the community (similar program to Little Free Library style program.)
- Castleberry ISD School District librarians will facilitate supporting the collection and managing of library.
- Purchase digital editions including eBooks/audiobooks
- Accessibility to digital collections provides more flexibility of resources in a variety of languages
- Variety of resources including craft kits to encourage family engagement
- Make personal connections and better serve community needs
- Remove barriers to borrowing (no library card needed)
“... in spite of the evidence that pleasure reading had a positive impact on student academics, the number of students who read for pleasure has declined at an alarming rate. According to the National Endowment for the Arts (2007), “the percentage of 17-year-olds who read nothing at all for pleasure has doubled over a 20-year period.”

http://www.ala.org/aasl/sites/ala.org.aasl/files/content/aaslissues/advocacy/AASL_infographic.pdf

http://www.castleberryisd.net/departments/library_services
Thank you!