



# Orleans Parish School Board

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Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012

## **Learning on the Go Report for Orleans Parish School Board**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

We would like to thank the FCC Commissioners and staff for selecting Orleans Parish School Board to participate in the Learning on the Go pilot program. It is unfortunate that the Commission has decided to fund the pilot for only one year rather than continuing it for two or three years to allow the FCC to have a more complete data set to analyze. It is likely this decision will cause some of the programs to “shut their doors” after only one year due to lack of funding at the local level. We truly believe that alternative education and digital literacy is vital for the continued success of our children.

As required by DA 11-1181, enclosed is our interim report on the efficacy of our program. We hope the information will be informative to the Commission as it decides whether remote learning should be supported by the E-rate program in the years to come.

### **Project Benefits**

- (a) a description of how the wireless devices were integrated into the project's curriculum and objectives (including approximately how many times per week the wireless devices were used to access program materials remotely and how many wireless devices were used during this period of time);

Prior to the implementation of the EDU2011 program, the 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade students at Bethune were given devices (DELL 2110 laptops) to use throughout the day. They were additionally allowed to take the devices home if parents agreed to support their appropriate use off campus. The implementation of the EDU 2011 grant provided these same devices with broadband access off campus. The overwhelming observation prior to the EDU2011 program was that the devices were largely used as digital textbooks and notebooks. There was limited integration of the differentiated software to address the unique needs of learners and/or to maximize the implementation of student led learning.

After the broadband access was made available the observations show a marked increase in student led learning as the teacher is comfortable to assign work to specific learners and/or learning communities with in the class that can be pursued outside of class. There is still substantial room for growth in this highly desired outcome, but the trend is very encouraging. On average 160 devices are going home on a daily basis and the vast majority are accessing the internet from home each day.

- (b) if available, a detailed summary of any data collected by the school or library on the project's outcomes and achievement of the project's goals, including usage of educational and research resources by students and library patrons and number of devices actually used;

There is no quantitative data available for reporting. The program is only four months old. Any data collected would be just data and not instructive or descriptive in any way for so short a period of time. However, qualitative observations illustrate greater use of the technology in the classroom for large and small group efforts since the devices going home include access afterhours. The project began a year ago with the devices being allowed to go home, but the added functionality of providing afterhours access for the students using the devices has created a much greater instance of technology integration in the classroom owing to the excitement over independent learning experiences via the much broader spectrum afforded by the afterhours access to the world wide web. By the end of the year, we will have a better idea of how the teachers were able to adjust classroom practice enough to produce measurable results, but even then they will only be the very beginning of the desired change.

Our project involves 7 teachers and 188 students. The afterhours access was not provided to teachers as they have access off site and have no need for the district to provide it. Of the 188 students included in the project only 176 actually took devices home owing to resistance from the parents of 12 students. These parents were unwilling to sign off taking responsibility for the devices during the times they would have been out of the school.

- o for schools, include any data collected regarding the impact on test scores or other measures of achievement levels for those students participating in the off-premises wireless project.

The project is too young to provide any feedback from test scores that could be attributed to the afterhours access project. We have no doubt that we will see a bump in test scores this year, but would be hesitant to attribute the bump to this one program. The program is one piece of a massive effort at Bethune to transform the design and delivery of instruction such that the students are leading their learning and the teachers are facilitating the process.

- (c) if available, a copy of any results or summary of the results of any survey given to students, teachers, parents or library patrons to assess any aspects of the off-premises wireless project;

To date we do not have survey results to report, but we intend to survey the student's in the near future and we should have results to report in our final report. However, frequent conversations with students using the devices netted almost 100% positive feedback.

### **Project Costs**

- (a) an analysis of the per student or per patron cost of the off-premises connectivity;
  - o for schools, specify, by term used by the school (for example, by quarter or semester), the number of students and teachers involved or served as part of the project, the number of those students and teachers involved or served that were able to participate as a result of E-rate support, and, where appropriate, the number of

students at each grade level using the wireless devices for Internet access for each specified term;

The broadband access has an associated cost of \$50 per unit per month or \$8,800 per month. The laptops being used were donated by a local business owner not associated with E-Rate. It OPSB's goal to run a three year pilot program, so going forward OPSB will incur the cost of any new machines as well as the cost of the broadband access. We feel this project is very important and will continue to support it from the General Budget despite the lack of much needed E-Rate funding.

### **Effectiveness of Protective Measures**

- (a) a detailed description of the measures, including specific software or filtering mechanisms, that were taken to ensure compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act as well as a description of measures that were taken to protect against waste, fraud and abuse; and –

OPSB used a device based client from the district filter which was installed on each of the machines, which lead to full compliance with the requirements of CIPA. The client based filter is exactly equivalent to the filter at the school site. However, there was an incident involving a student writing to another student using the word 'hate' in an inappropriate e-mail that was not blocked. The filter does not have that capacity, but the training the students received at the outset of the project regarding digital citizenry netted us a whistleblower on the e-mail and the situation was able to be dealt with expeditiously and to a positive end.

- (b) a detailed description of what, if any, issues arose in ensuring that the wireless devices were used only for educational purposes.

The incidents we had to deal with in the project that were problematic were related to adult relatives of the children taking the devices from the students to use for personal business. In each case we were successful in identifying devices which had fallen in to the hands of non-students. This was primarily snuffed out early on when the word spread that the district can see the devices and how they are being used. We did not have any CIPA violations because of the filter but there were a half dozen incidents in which the parent was using the device to pay bills and shop and even handle personal e-mail rather than allowing the student to have the device for learning activities.

### **Lessons Learned**

- (a) a description of any technical, operational, or administrative problems or issues associated with implementing the project (such as barriers in using the wireless devices or difficulties with the service) and a description of how those issues were addressed or are being addressed; and –

We significantly underestimated the level of help desk support we would need to address issues around access afterhours. Since afterhours assistance is no able to be provided, the school site SWAT Team (Students assisting with Technology ) had to develop a recurring schedule for checking devices for students whose access was spotty and teach the students how to troubleshoot and resolve their own access troubles after hours.

- (b) a narrative of the lessons learned as a result of the off-premise wireless project (for example, based on what you learned from the project, how would you plan and implement your project differently if you were doing it over again?).

Step one is start up manpower. The first year of the project has involved lots of hands on effort to deploy the aircards into the devices and load the filter clients onto them as well. For the second year we will not have that effort, but we will debrief at the end of this year to determine how we will handle the start up next year knowing we will have some start up effort that needs to be planned ahead.

Step two is teacher planning. Technology needs to spend more time at the front end working with the teachers to address issues associated with the physical management of the devices to ease the pressure on the classroom around help desk issues, power issues, and just plain physical space issues.

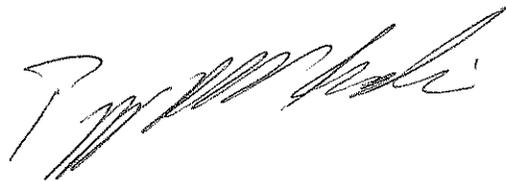
Step three is the help desk planning. At this point in the year we have finally gotten an upper hand on the effective handling of helpdesk issues with the devices. We need to formalize it so it can be scaled if the district decides to expand the project beyond the one school site.

This concludes our interim report for the Learning on the Go Pilot Program. Again, we would like to thank the FCC Commissioners and staff for allowing Orleans Parish School Board to participate in the Learning on the Go Pilot Program.

If you have questions regarding our application, please contact our E-rate consultant Andy Eisley using the contact information below:

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peggy Villars Abadie', written in a cursive style.

Peggy Villars Abadie  
Executive Director-IT