Summary of the February 2021 for KY K-12 Education Technology Leaders' Virtual Meeting

In case you missed it or want a refresher, the following is what we talked about during the February 16, 2021 edtech leaders' virtual meeting. A copy of the video and audio can be found at https://mediaportal.education.ky.gov/featured/2021/02/edtech-webcast-february-2021/.

Public viewing of the archived webcasts and written summaries are also available on the KDE Media Portal at: http://mediaportal.education.ky.gov/. Numbers in **RED** indicate the timestamp for that portion of the discussion so it can be easily located on the full digital recording.

This was a virtual meeting with our OET staff and all the districts joining via Microsoft Teams and/or YouTube. We will continue to make these available from our KDE media portal so that you can watch the archived discussion and share with the appropriate people in your district. Several GoSoapBox poll questions were posed throughout the meeting and district edtech leaders were asked to respond to all the questions as it assists us in planning and getting a feel for how to best move forward. Your voice and your feedback are important and extremely helpful to us.

(1:01) Heartbeat from the Field –As we have done the last few months, a few districts joined us virtually to share their experiences with technology and connectivity while navigating the challenges with Covid-19 and the virtual learning experience. This in in lieu of our district visits each month and it is our hope that we can resume those once it is safe to do so.

- **(1:50) Henry County schools (Supt. Terry Price & CIO Nikkol Bauer):** Supt. Terry Price shared that they have 1900 – 2000 students. Regarding the pandemic, they were not traditionally an NTI district but they were able to establish a virtual learning academy and continued the learning process through May of last school year. They are using Edgenuity. When coming back in the fall, they had a hybrid A/B model and also have the virtual option for a student to remain virtual for the remainder of the year. The best, well-spent funds during this time has been the addition of the Digital Learning Coach position and would even love to have a second position. They have a data dashboard and the virtual learning academy students are keeping up relatively well academically. The district just completed their 1:1 implementation and they were able to use their ESSER 1.0 funds to provide hotspots (MiFi) to students living in remote areas that are dead spots. Henry County is very solid as a small, rural district regarding the use of technology and this situation has really ramped up the use and familiarization of technology. The biggest struggle has been the failure rate/lack of student participation.

  Nikkol echoed all of Supt. Price's comments and said the teachers have been awesome through this process. David asked about the virtual learning academy and whether there will be a stickiness factor to keep that full virtual option? What percentage of the students really thrived in the virtual environment? Supt. Price said that the psychological aspect is one consideration and the other is that some students and parents are very pleased with this form of learning and may want to continue that form of instruction even when schools go back to in-person learning.

- **(16:56) Russell County schools (Supt Michael Ford & CIO Chris Bell):** Supt. Michael Ford took a moment to acknowledge and show appreciation for Judith Evans! They have close to 3000 students and have lost a few students to home school this past school year. They had participated in NTI through paper packets but this summer they hired a Digital Learning Coach and completed extensive teacher training on Google Classroom. The engagement piece has been the biggest struggle for them as well.

Russell County is building an ATC and will have an emphasis on computer science. Mr. Bell and his team have worked tirelessly during the pandemic and worked with students on Internet access away from the school campus; the MiFi devices being distributed/used are locked down. Technology staff deserve a lot of appreciation for implementation and troubleshooting! They were not a 1:1 district and used their funds to complete that and hope to use some of their second round funds to do some incremental replacement of devices.

Supt. Ford believes the virtual academy option will continue to be available in some format moving forward. He also sees it changing the homebound program moving forward. He has been so proud of his teachers, administrators, and staff embracing the use and maximization of technology.

(29:54) Don't Waste a Crisis: This topic is a look back to the ice storm of 2009 and what we have done since this time until this more recent ice storm. David took some time to educate Education Commissioner Glass on the differences between 2009 and now and what we have been able to accomplish to minimize the downtime and storm effects. Some of those items were better preparation, better branch/tree maintenance, new/improved pole access, and the implementation of disaster recovery services and expanded cloud-based services. Kentucky is the pioneer and national leader of cloud-based services. In 2010, we started a cloud conversion for email. In our current situation and snow days, we no longer have any reason to not keep working. We did not realize at that time that this also prepared Kentucky for navigating the pandemic. We applaud everyone who has helped us put things in place to help us make this happen.

Below is the portion of the email referenced in the audio from David's 2/11/2021 email:

"Wanted to update you all on a couple of things related to making the best of a crisis that apply to the past several days to our EdTech service to KDE the agency and all 171 school districts.

- In 2009, we had an ice storm that lead to a high percentage of our KY K-12 districts being without power for long periods of time. The trees and their tree limbs covered with heavy ice snapped and fell on electric, cable, phone and Internet lines throughout this state, which in turn caused the poles they fell on to tumble or snap. As the saying goes, don't waste a crisis. So, lots of things were done to minimize the next major ice storm, like last night. In western KY not only were those poles replaced, they were expanded which significantly improved the quality and resiliency of all those services throughout all parts of those counties. KY K-12 was the first state to move to "the cloud" and we had already started to move the first phase of our KY K-12 EdTech services (e.g., our financial mgt system..MUNIS) to "the cloud" but that 2009 ice storm crisis showed the significant advantages the KY K-12 districts, that had already moved to the MUNIS disaster recovery backup service/cloud, had over other KY districts. For example, the districts that already had MUNIS in the cloud back up services in their district could and did run their payroll for their employees without any delay. The others could not, causing angst with staff not being paid on time. While there are another 100 good reasons to move services to the cloud, that 2009 ice storm really helped us, over and over again, getting people willing to move to the cloud. Keep in mind, back in 2009, virtually no other private business or governmental organization had gone to the cloud… they were worried/pushing back about moving to the unknown cloud thing. So, the 2009 ice storm let them see firsthand the districts that were able to continue to operate all their major financial services even though there was zero power to their district for weeks. The other good thing is the weaker trees and tree limbs were gone; the stronger ones survived. Electric/cable/phone/Internet service providers were much more proactive in removing trees and limbs that may fall on lines during next bad weather… and there are more lines going underground. So 12 years later, (1) all our major KY K-12 services are in the cloud, which came in super handy during for extended NTI during the pandemic since last March, but also anytime an ice storm hits and (2) only a few of our 171 school districts didn't have power on their campus this morning, but both could continue to operate all their major services."

(35:13) EdTech Funding Update: There are currently a variety of funding sources available to use toward education technology in the KY K-12. While some don't enjoy the money part, it is what makes things happen and you'll need to be knowledgeable on the various monies available and how they can be used for the different sources of funds:

- **$923M in new federal funds for KY K-12** (CARES 2.0/CRRSA/ESSER 2.0**) and KDE's 10% funds from that $923M** – At KDE, we can retain up to 10% of these $923M funds for statewide services for districts…and KDE is working on a plan for those 10% funds in CARES 2.0. We did something similar for the CARES 1.0 funds and were able to do some really cool/valuable EdTech services at the state level on the districts' behalf (e.g., on-line registration, digital learning coaches/regional digital labs, Internet content mgt for students from homes, digital learning connections between districts, connecting Google Classroom to IC, etc.). In this current CARES 2.0 round, KDE could use up to $92M for statewide initiatives. These funds must be expended by September 2023. With KDE's 10% funds of CARES 2.0, a portion will be made available to school districts if they meet a certain criteria (i.e., 85% of the district's portion of CARES 2.0 funds must be spent on x, y, z in order to be eligible to get $75 per student from KDE's 10% funds). That means x number of districts will and will not go after that $75 per student, which is expected and ok. There are a large range of EdTech items/service that are eligible expenditures with the district's CARES 2.0 to count toward that 85% however two items are not (i.e., end devices and Internet access/hot spots beyond the school campus). However, there are many existing and new funding sources that can pay for computers and Internet hot spots beyond the school campus that are described below:
  - Fund 1/ General Funds (SEEK + Local)
  - Title Funds (Title 1, etc. – have traditionally been leveraged to purchase end devices that meet the need of students being serviced by this federal program)
  - IDEA B (districts still leverage this funding source and have traditionally been leveraged to purchase end devices that meet the need of students being serviced by this federal program)
  - The current SY2020-2021 Kentucky Education Technology System (KETS) offers are already and soon will be available to districts, that can be used by them to buy many EdTech items/services, including computers.
  - Over the years this is the one item that districts have found a way to get, through a broad variety of funding sources.

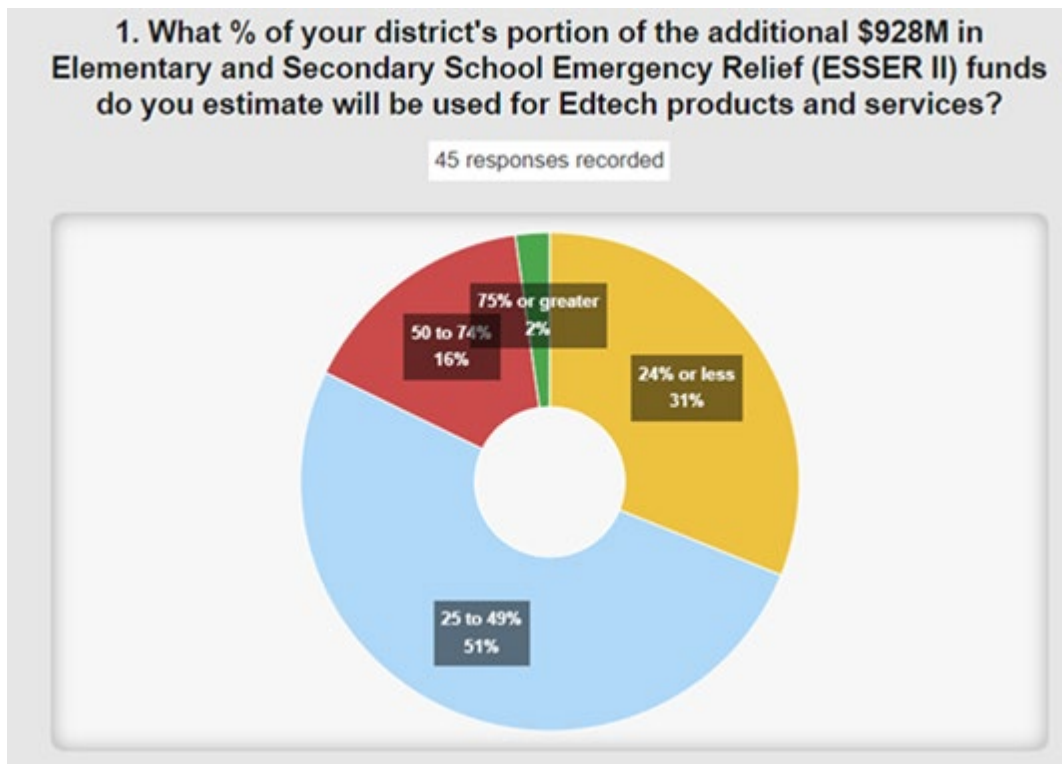These are newer funding sources that can buy devices/computers:
- CARES 1.0 with ESSER and GEER had a big focus on mobile end devices and Internet beyond the school campus for near 100% remote/virtual learning.
- With the increased amount of $5.5M that we are getting for Internet services, we'll get a 3-4 times our bang for that buck. The rebates we get for providing that service gets us an e-rate rebate that we send to districts that can purchase end devices... it's not immediate that we get that rebate money but it's eventually going to be available to districts.
- The 15% of the district's portion of CARES 2.0 funds plus the $75 per student that come from KDE's 10% funds.
- The district can choose to go above that 15% and get end devices, however that means just won't get that $75 per student on top of their portion of the $823M (i.e., approximately $1300 per student).

- **$3.2B of federal CARES 2.0 funds for Last Mile Internet (LMI) beyond the school campus 2.0** – We are learning more about this new federal program which focuses on low-income families. It provides low income families $50 per month for Internet service plus the cost up to $100 for a hotspot type of device if needed. For example, % percentage of KY homes don't have a last mile wired option and may not for x years, however a last mile wireless hotspot Internet service can quickly provide that home Internet service. We have had a Federal Lifeline Program for decades, but only 20% of those eligible low income families have applied and received the $10 per month Lifeline funds. The goal with this $3.2B would be to find ways to overcome and avoid the really low percentage of folks taking advantage of Lifeline funds. Verification of the income threshold will be important and they haven't finalized the guidelines. We will continue to share information regarding this discount program and hope that it doesn't involve a huge bureaucratic process that have contributed to such a low percentage of low income families taking advantage of Lifeline. Districts have done a lot of good work in gaining Internet access for their students

away from the school campus and this could perhaps be another option to transition from the district paying for hotspots back to parents. The one downside is that they don't have a timeline for how long the $3.2B will last.

- Thus far, in OET's request, these two items received a thumbs up to be spent with KDE's portion of the 10% funds of CARES 2.0.
  - Internet Bandwidth growth for districts through Sept 2023
  - Digital Learning Coaches & Design Labs Initiative through Sept 2023

OET submitted several items that were not approved at this time with KDE's 10% funds but districts can use their portion funds to purchase these.
- Campus Online Registration and Campus Learning – this are currently paid for through 9/2022
- Network Health Checks - With all these new services, new devices, and power users, it is important to routinely assess the operational and security health of the internal district's network and services.
- Kentucky Virtual Library Service – 58% of our districts currently have this service.

- **$20M GEER 2.0** – In the first round the GEERS funds focused on technology and feeding students, but we don't know what the focus will be for this CARES 2.0 round of GEERS funds.

1. What % of your district's portion of the additional $928M in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER II) funds do you estimate will be used for Edtech products and services?

45 responses recorded

75% or greater 2%
50 to 74% 16%
24% or less 31%
25 to 49% 51%

(56:21) KETS Offers of Assistance/E-rate Update: The second offer of $7/ADA is being processed and districts should be receiving notifications from the SFCC very soon. The third offer will make up the reduction taken in the first offer and we hope to get back up to the projected $21/ADA for the year.
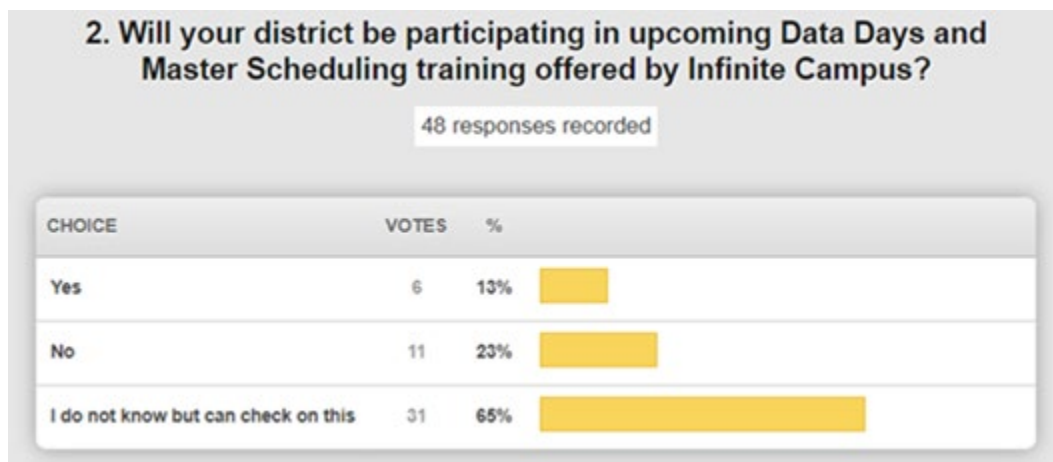
The E-rate filing window is currently open with a closing date of March 25th. This could be extended, but we must plan as if it will not. The form 470 filing deadline is next week; this is a reminder to ensure that gets completed.

(58:24) KY K-12 EdTech and Technology Enabled RFPs Update:
- SCN Point of Sale Procurement – Continuing to proceed and should be finalized/announced shortly.
- Teacher Certification System – Continuing to proceed and hope to move to active mode soon as well.
- Networking Products & Services Contract – All districts should be watching for these and contracts should be announced shortly and in time to allow for the March 25th E-rate filing window.

(1:03:14) KY K-12 Data Systems Update:
- Teacher changes deployed earlier this month with Campus.2104 included user interface changes and new functionality for communicating with students and parents. Teachers do have the option to turn them off but as you hear any feedback, please share that with us.
- March 2 – 4 will be Infinite Campus online training for Data Days and Master Scheduling. This is a very affordable option for district training needs as the district pays one flat fee.

2. Will your district be participating in upcoming Data Days and Master Scheduling training offered by Infinite Campus?

48 responses recorded

CHOICE	VOTES	%
Yes	6	13%
No	11	23%
I do not know but can check on this	31	65%

- The potential exists for another P-ebt program to assist free and reduced lunch eligible families. Right now, it is just a good idea that all free and reduced lunch forms are processed and addresses have been verified. As details are made public, that information will go out through the school food officers.
- As discussed earlier, Campus Online Learning and Campus Registration have been paid for through 2022 with ESSER funds, but please do have those conversations to continue payment for these services for up to two additional years with available district federal funds.
- User group trainings and KDE training are coming up this spring.
- Finalizing School Report Card requirements currently.
- There is interest in refining and expanding the early warning indicators within Infinite Campus to help pinpoint mental health and wellbeing of the students.

(1:10:23) Lightspeed RELAY Project and Network Updates:
- From a state perspective we look at the network constantly. A report is run each night that relays the overall health of the WAN connectivity. We will be working with our network providers to see how we might be able to do that more effectively.
- When we look at our dDos attacks, we don't mention this too often because we mitigate these so effectively that our downtime is very minimal.
- About this time last year, we chose Lightspeed's RELAY service. Since the pandemic began, over 500,000 devices have received the Lightspeed RELAY software; this is Part I. Part II is the hardware infrastructure move; we have completed a proof of concept with three districts and next we'll put together a project plan and complete a pilot stage before going to a full blown project implementation.

(1:18:17) KY K-12 Cybersecurity/Circling Back to Passwords: We began the implementation of the KY K-12 staff password policy upgrade and then made the decision to extend the deadline for the completion of this security initiative. We still have a lot of districts that haven't moved on this to strengthen the password policies in their district. We will be moving the deadline for the completion of this effort from June 30, 2020 to June 30, 2021. We also want to know and better understand the issues that your district is facing; feel free to touch base with your KETS Engineer or Bob Hackworth for further discussion. We want to know how we can help and we are still working on a default notification email that district may. We know that not all districts will want to use that.

2. What are the top three specific roadblocks to being 90% or more done with staff password policy upgrades by June 30, 2021?

- None. We have finished 180 day change number 3.
- Having all staff on campus to initiate the change 2. Having enough time (see above) to implement before summer break because at that point half our staff will forget their new password
- The continual feeling of dread and despair 2. The amount of uncertainty from staff to create more confusion and chaos 3. Nothing else is preventing us from implementing the password policy upgrade
- We implemented last year and it's been ok. Biggest issue is with staff off campus for COVID when passwords expire.
- We completed this last year at this time and have MFA for all staff for 365 day resets. We are now getting into our first round of resets required. However, the BIGGEST challenge we continue to face is the need to be on-premise to get prompted for the reset. Password expiration notifications look too similar to phishing emails for a majority of users to be reliable (we run everyone through security awareness training multiple times per year), be it a notice that they need to go to the districts SSPR page or have a link (ha!) in the email.
- We completed the 15 character requirement last year for nearly all staff. We have scheduled the last group, transportation, for next week. Pray for us . . .
- time and ability to meet with staff in-person to facilitate large-scale change
- Having staff on site. Understanding why this needs to be implemented.
- The changes taking place. We've implemented the group policy for the new requirements, but they don't appear to have been forced for everyone. We still have individuals that GP isn't requiring a password change.
- Floyd implemented last year. Biggest issue is with staff off campus for COVID when passwords expire.

3. What are the top three specific things that would get you over any roadblocks to complete staff password policy upgrades by June 30, 2021?

- Getting back to live attendance would be the greatest change
- Getting all staff back in person on a daily basis.
- Pass-through authentication for AD from Azure to allow for the local password policy enforcement...having a local password policy applied to users does me no good if I have a significant population of users that never set foot on my campus. My hope is that this will be an option in the next round of AD upgrades. Namely, if we are going to implement these sorts of policies (which we should), then we need to ensure that the AD infrastructure is flexible enough to accommodate this configuration. This was a need BEFORE the pandemic, but it now highlights the importance of flexible configuration options for AD given the changes brought by COVID.
- Getting all staff back on campus for a few weeks to facilitate and support them through the change.
- We want to implement MFA as part of the enhanced password policy implementation, and we want to leverage SSPR. There appears to be concern surrounding MFA. Specifically, user concern regarding the use of the second factor. Any guidance/support that KDE can provide to encourage districts to pursue MFA will benefit the technical implementation.

(1:25:43) Updated 2021 KY K-12 Infographic & Guidance Documents: KETS 2018 - 2024 Master Plan - Appendix B - Kentucky Department of Education. Two "guidance documents" that are being released (i.e., ESSER 2.0 and comprehensive COVID-19 manual) have significant portions that are EdTech related. (Marty Park)

- January 2021 is the newest edition of the KETS Infographic. Check it out! KETS 2018 - 2024 Master Plan - Appendix B - Kentucky Department of Education. Marty quickly covered a few data points, but this visual is regularly updated using the most up-to-date data elements from a variety of sources.
  - We still have 10 districts that have a 1:1 device strategy.
  - 82% of districts have access to a part time or full time DLC.
  - We now have more next generation devices (mobile) than we have students!

- New ESSER II guidance documents have been released and these reside on KDE's Covid website. The address is: https://education.ky.gov/comm/Pages/COVID-19-Updates.aspx. There is significant education technology guidance in these documents.

Thanks for joining us today!