



Infrastructure Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

January 31, 2025

Attendees

- Colleen Bailie — West Haven Public Library
- Doug Casey — Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology
- George Claffey — Central Connecticut State University
- Kerri Kearney — Manchester Public Schools
- Sam Nanayakkara — CT State Community College @ Tunxis
- Rick Widlansky — Libraries Online (LiON)

Welcome

At 9:30 AM, co-chairs Colleen Bailie and Kerri Kearney called the meeting to order and welcomed Advisory members. Kerri provided an overview of the meeting agenda and then asked Doug to provide highlights of the Community WiFi program.

Community WiFi Program Overview

The Connecticut Education Network (CEN), with oversight from the Commission for Educational Technology, is expanding efforts to provide free, secure wireless (WiFi) Internet access across Connecticut. Entities classified as “community anchor institutions” (e.g., educational institution, local government entity, or non-profit) can apply for funding allocated to CEN through the Governor's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) investments. Awards made as part of a \$10M total allocation to the program will support the buildout of CEN connections to local entities, development of WiFi networks connected to CEN and open to the public, and integration of the eduroam authentication system. The grant application window is open January 30 through March 13, 2025. Additional details are at www.ctedunet.net/cwifi/. Interested parties can attend office hours with the CEN staff and access multiple recorded presentations tailored to different types of organizations.

Kerri expressed interest on behalf of her town, with the hope of expanding eduroam across the school district, library, and community college wireless networks in Manchester. Doing so would enable students to log into both environments seamlessly and provide aggregated data on where and when students access WiFi. However, as Sam Nanayakkara noted, the Connecticut State @ (community college) campuses do not at this point provide community WiFi service. Rick Widlansky stated that the libraries LiON serves generally have open WiFi for patrons, in some cases with a single password. George Claffey described the Central Connecticut State University (CSCU) WiFi system, which requires guest registration that leases access for three days. Questions arose on the topic of eduroam and its advantages. Doug provided a highlight of the service,



which enables someone with college, university, school district, library, or other educational credentials to use their username and password to log into any other eduroam network campus. Advisory members discussed scenarios such as having student teachers at CSCU log in to schools where they are serving in classrooms. Such instances would save time both for the students and for network administrators in those schools, removing the need to create temporary credentials for the visiting student teachers. George provided additional examples, such as students visiting for athletic events, conference participants, and dual community college and CSCU students all able to access secure WiFi service seamlessly.

Doug shared sample reports that show host institutions how many visitors use their network, and for home institutions, where their students access WiFi at other schools and libraries. Schools can use this data to get a sense of how many students may not have home Internet access, helping to quantify and address the “digital divide” in their towns.

Cost-Saving Recommendations

The Advisory Council has discussed several approaches to achieving more value-driven investments of technology for teaching and learning as well as opportunities for cost savings. As Doug noted, these recommendations have taken the form of Goal 4, Sustainability, in the State Educational Technology Plan (CT.gov/EdTechPlan). Specific recommendations include the expansion of volume and cooperative purchasing. An easier “lift” would be the open sharing of contract information for hardware and software. Doing so would equip school, library, and university leaders with insights to help them bargain for competitive prices with vendors.

Colleen welcomed the idea and noted the success of volume purchasing through the [Connecticut Library Consortium](#) (CLC). George cited the cooperative purchasing program administered through the 287-member Northeast Regional Computing Program (NERCOMP, www.NERCOMP.org). However, CSCU has often negotiated better pricing on its own rather than through cooperative programs. The larger the institution, the better the negotiating power. For schools, Kerri suggested bringing the topic to the ad hoc K – 12 technology meetings to see how open they would be to sharing contract information.

George offered another approach to building capacity and insight at the local level: the creation of a mentoring program for school technology leaders. Current resources include the statewide listserv that the Commission hosts, with 500 members, as well as the aforementioned ad hoc meetings, hosted by Rebecca Osleger of Suffield Public Schools. In addition to these groups, Doug welcomed George's idea to create a brief list of resources and mentioned the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN), the national affinity group for school technology professionals. (Shortly after the meeting,



Kerri drafted a shared document with links and resources, especially for newcomers to school technology.)

Legislative Session

Doug introduced this topic, an open discussion of bills proposed and in review during the current legislative session. He referred members to the General Assembly's Website, cga.ct.gov, where members of the public can search for legislation by topic, author, committee, and other criteria. The Bill Tracking feature enables any visitor to create an account, add legislation to a personal list, and receive updates in a real-time or digest format.

Colleen highlighted several pieces of legislation that would impact libraries, including bills that prohibit public and school libraries from censoring books and providing legal protections to staff members ([SB 523](#)) as well as bills that provide additional oversight on the curation of school materials ([HB 5898](#)). Another topic is the cost of digital books ("e-books"), which continues to rise and remains higher than consumer prices for the same digital materials (see [SB 1234](#) and [HB 6958](#)). She welcomed the review and testimony in support of the e-book legislation.

For schools, Kerri mentioned the topic of education cost sharing (ECS). This formula-based program provides essential funding to local education agencies. The [Governor's budget](#) as well as [SB-1](#), [HB-5857](#), and [HB-5897](#) address potential changes to ECS, especially in accounting for funding to offset the delivery of special education services.

Kerri, Colleen, and Doug thanked the members for their recommendations and encouraged them to engage with their elected officials on topics of concern to their institutions. The group adjourned at approximately 10:45 AM.