U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF INDIAN EDUCATION

+ + + + +

LISTENING SESSION

+ + + + +

WEDNESDAY
MARCH 16, 2022

+ + + + +

The Listening Session met via Video-Teleconference, at 1:00 p.m. EDT, Julian Guerrero, Jr., Facilitator, presiding.

PANELISTS PRESENT

JULIAN GUERRERO, JR., Facilitator, OIE
JESSICA CH'NG, OET
HALI LARKIN, OET
JI SOO SONG, OET

ALSO PRESENT

HOLLIE MACKEY
MICHELE MATTESON
PHILLIP ROULAIN
MARK TAYLOR

PUBLIC PARTICIPANTS

DEREK BEGAY
CASSIDY RICE
LUCYANN HARJO
ALISSA LANE-KEENE
PAUL McDONOGH
ELIZABETH SATIACUM
CAROL THOMPSON
TARA TINDALL
CHARLES WAGNER
JUSTIN ZUNIGA

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

1:00 p.m.

MR. ROULAIN: Good afternoon and welcome to the U.S. Department of Education listening session, "Understanding Educational Technology Needs, Realities, and Opportunities."

This session is being co-facilitated by the Office of Indian Education and the Office of Educational Technology.

Before we begin, may I please share a few housekeeping items? All of the lines coming in have been muted. The session and audio is being audio- and video-recorded. Participants will be given the opportunity to present remarks, comments, and with priority to tribal leaders. Whenever you are speaking, please announce your name, title, tribal affiliation, and/or company who you are representing.

Please also note this is a closed press event. If you are a member of the press and have any questions, please contact the phone number listed on the screen, 202-401-1576, or

email press@ed.gov for questions.

If you are experiencing any technical issues with your sound, please contact the host through the chat window by using the private chat feature and send your message to Mark Taylor or Phillip Roulain. You may also reach us via email at mtaylor@tribaltechllc.com or proulain@tribaltechllc.com.

I am now passing the session over to Mr. Julian Guerrero, Jr., who is the Director of the Office of Indian Education at the U.S. Department of Education.

MR. GUERRERO: Wonderful. Thank you so much, Phillip. And Mark if you can help me get my video on? It says I cannot turn it on, but for the sake of time I'm going to keep us rolling here and kick us off.

(Native language spoken.)

Hi, everyone. My name is Julian Guerrero, Jr., and I am ecstatic to be welcoming you today online today discuss a really critical topic, amongst many other topics we're going to

be having listening to sessions on. This is one
of four listening to sessions that we'll be doing
here within the two-week span, and we want to
kick off strong with a focus and emphasis on
educational technology.

I am accompanied by my colleagues at
the U.S. Department of Education who bring in a
plethora of experience and perspective to this
work. And you'll see on the screen in front of
you I have my colleagues Ji Soo Song, Broadband
Advisor with OET, as well as Jessica Ch'ng,
Education Pioneers Fellow with OET, and Hali
Larkins, also another Education Pioneers Fellow
with OET. I am very pleased to be able to
introduce them today.

Next slide, please. Before I kick it
off to Ji Soo, I wanted to take a moment to also
introduce online and via audio another colleague
of ours, Hollie Mackie, who is currently going to
be serving as the Executive Director for the
White House Initiative on Native American and
Alaska Native Education.

Hollie, would you care to say hello for us this afternoon?

MS. MACKEY: It's a pleasure to be here with all of you today and I look forward to working with you more in the future.

MR. GUERRERO: Great. Thank you so much, Hollie. I got a message the video is now enabled; I will be able to go on camera. There we go.

That being said, I'm going to go ahead and kick off the next slide to Ji Soo Song to say hello and then explain some of the background on why we're meeting today.

MR. SONG: Thank you, Julian, and to our colleagues at the Office of Indian Education for inviting us to co-host this listening to session. My name is Ji Soo Song, and as Julian mentioned, I serve as a Broadband Advisor here at the Office of Tech, or OET.

As you see on the slide, I have the high level. The purpose of this session today is to listen and learn how the Department of

Education can better support the Indian Education community in leveraging the power of technology for learning. And this session is, of course, aligned to the Secretary's Priority 1 to increase the effective use of technology to advance evidence-based practices.

Next slide, please. And this work is incredibly important to the Office of Educational Technology and one of our outline commitments to advance digital equity for all of our students especially in light of the bipartisan infrastructure law that seeks to equitably close the digital divide.

To that end, we've actually launched and initiative where we're trying to identify adoption challenges faced by student communities including our Native students and their families, prompting strategies to get around those barriers and identify some exemplary stories of success as well.

These pieces of information will be really key to our initiative as we seek to help

state leaders develop a really comprehensive and
equitable digital equity plan. Next slide,
please.

And as I mentioned, I'm really happy
to be working with Julian and his colleagues at
the Office of Indian Education for identifying
promising practices and persistent barriers as
they pertain to ed-tech within the Indian
education community.

And again, as written in this slide,
we're happy to be working with them as they help
facilitate and support meaningful services and
grantees who have ed-tech questions and needs.

Next slide, please. I believe I'm
passing it back to Julian.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you, Ji Soo, I
appreciate that.

And just as a friendly reminder to
those joining us online, a few things to bear in
mind for today's listening to session. The first
is this, above all, is an opportunity for you to
be heard and us as federal employees to listen.

And please announce your name, your
title, and your tribal affiliation for the record
because we do have a court reporter who is on the
line. So, if you could also enunciate clearly as
best as possible, that's going to help the court
reporter capture the information we're getting
from you.

We ask that elected tribal officials
or leaders, if they are present, to have the
first opportunity to speak out of respect to
their positions. And please use the raise your
hand feature in this Zoom to be recognized for
speaking.

So, let's go ahead and dedicate a
significant portion of our time to the questions
at hand. Next slide, please. The first question
is an open-ended question. And again, feel free
to raise your hands when you would like to be
recognized to speak.

The first question is: could you tell
us about the efforts at your local school
district to encourage more access and active use

of technology for education?

Phillip, if you can help me by pointing out if we have any listeners who are raising their hand.

MR. ROULAIN: Yes, I am happy to do that. So far, we do not have anyone presently raising their hand.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you. So, I think at this point any brave volunteers who would care to provide some input on this question? I see some hands now.

Do you know who was first, Phillip?

MR. ROULAIN: We have Justin Zuniga.

MR. GUERRERO: Justin, you have the floor. You might need to unmute yourself there, I see your microphone is muted.

MR. ZUNIGA: Yes, my name is Justin Zuniga, affiliated and enrolled member of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony and my position is that of independent contractor working within Indian education and helping families in our communities, our rural communities.

And I'm Nevada here, so I'm doing a lot of virtual assistance. When I was working with the school district in Reno, the Washoe County School District, schools were providing hot spots for our families in need, which was a huge help.

Our tribe has two communities, one is very rural and does not get wireless Internet very well at all and it's hot spots. And that worked out very well and they were able to get additional funds specifically for our community to get that access.

We really did appreciate everything they did to make sure our families had the ability to get online, it was one of the more difficult communities to get access so they really went above and beyond to meet the need.

Together with the school district and what was provided by our tribes and the education program of course there was some scrambling done but we were able to make it happen. And it was primarily through hot spots, getting them to the

families in need.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you very much for that. I appreciate your input. Phillip, could we move to the second hand?

MR. ROULAIN: Yes, Lucyann Harjo is up next.

MS. HARJO: I'm Lucyann Harjo, I'm the Coordinator of Indian Education for Norman Public Schools, Navajo. Our district has challenged our Indian ed program by providing technology updates consistently and provide training for me, devices for me and our team to serve our students as well.

And when the pandemic hit, our students were given hot spots. We had to practice that a little bit more because not all students had a device, an individual device they had to share. There was a family of four that had to share a device, which was challenging because not all of our kids could join their classrooms. We had to figure that out. Also, some of the hot spots that the district provided

our families didn't work.

And so it was a part of our team that was communicating between the school and the family to make sure they have access to a device and Internet.

I think that with the updates and encouragement to use and to get more of the whole experience with technology in Norman, Oklahoma, we're right in the center.

The University of Oklahoma is just three miles from our office fortunately, and so I think we have a great district that supports our technology needs throughout.

So, when the pandemic hit, we were scrambled some but we were able to try to meet the needs of our students.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you very much for that input, I appreciate you joining in. Hello, it's good to hear your voice again. Phillip, can we get the third hand, please?

MR. ROULAIN: I am trying to get Elizabeth, excuse me if I'm saying this

incorrectly, Satiacum, she's up next.

MS. SATIACUM: Good morning, everybody, I am Elizabeth Satiacum, I'm a Quileute tribal member. I'm the Native American Coordinator at the Young School District, and somebody had talked about the hot spot.

Our reservation in our small town is bordering a military and it makes it really difficult for some of our students to have wifi and to get even wifi at the tribal center that's a couple miles down the road.

And I've only started this job a month ago and I'm wondering if anybody could help me with any suggestions trying to get technology out to the tribal students.

Thank you.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you very much, I appreciate that, Elizabeth. Phillip, are we doing okay on time here?

MR. ROULAIN: Yes, next is Tara Tindall. You will need to unmute yourself.

MR. GUERRERO: Tara, we can't hear you

if you are talking. Tara, we'll come back to you
and if you could figure out your audio, we'll
make sure to give you an opportunity to be
recognized.

Phillip, do we have any additional
hands?

MR. ROULAIN: Not at this time so you
should probably move on to your next question.

MR. GUERRERO: Great, and for those
who did raise their hand already, could you lower
your hand just to make sure that we don't have a
full room of raised legacy hands and we give an
opportunity for other folks to raise their hand
as well.

And for the second question, I will be
handing it off to Ji Soo. Could you take us
through the second question?

MR. SONG: Absolutely, and I think
this question flows nicely from what Elizabeth
was talking about.

If you could describe the barriers
that your local district has faced or is facing

on accessing or effectively using educational technology, we'd love to hear more about that.

And if you could also, please describe where the barrier is, if it's at the school, student's homes, or in the community, that would be great as well. I think the hands that are raised are old hands if I'm not mistaken.

We'll give folks a couple seconds to think about those barriers.

MR. ROULAIN: We currently do not have any new hands raised.

MR. SONG: It looks like in the chat Carol was trying to raise her hand but couldn't. Carol, would you like to add anything? I'm not sure if my attendee list is updating as the hands are being raised.

It looks like Alissa also had something to add.

MS. THOMPSON: Can you hear me?

MR. SONG: Yes, we can hear you.

MS. THOMPSON: I had my hand raised at the last one too, I'm from Northern Minnesota, I

work at a public school between three reservations between Leech Lake, White Earth, and Red Lake.

And our school district primarily serves White Earth enrolled members although we have 14 tribes within our school district from all over the country. We run into issues with cellular service, we run into service with broadband service and wifi.

We have issues with being so spotty in Northern Minnesota, we have wifi that is unavailable to our homes. We did get devices so our students could have hot spots.

That did not work because the wind would blow and our students would not have wifi so they could not connect.

We are one-to-one device schools so each of our students can have a Chromebook so everything is online and accessible, especially when COVID-19 happened.

And when we were doing distance learning our issue was with having the wifi. We

were offering the hot spots but there were just some pieces that didn't work because it wasn't there.

So, we tried to work with our local wifi service providers, our Internet providers, and we ran into issues because some of our places were so rural that they could not run Internet service out to the homes.

Or if they could it cost so much. We talked to our local tribes and again, that was something they could not do as well. We want to tribal meetings, they were unable to get consistent Internet out at our tribal community centers.

So, every place we went we ran into a barrier for our students. It was just overall an issue so we fought to make sure our students were there.

One of the pieces that I did is went to the homes and tried to drive my car because at the time I had a newer car that had wifi in it, picked families up and said, hey, come on, let's

do this, and tried to connect and work with their families like that for a bit.

I did not renew my subscription for my car for the wifi so that didn't last too long but it was something that we could do, and then a couple of our newer buses also had the wifi so we ran with that for a little bit as well.

But again, that was something we found that was very expensive and when the students found out we had wifi on the buses they all connected as fast as they could because they had their phones and they wanted to connect as much as they could.

And that went through super-fast as well. But those were the issues, so it was the home and the community environments that became the barriers for students.

MR. SONG: Thank you for sharing that story. It seems I can't see the new hands that are raised so I'm going to go by the chat. It seems like Paul was actually wanting to answer Question 2.

MR. MCDONOGH: Hi, my name is Paul McDonogh, I'm a Sugpiaq tribal member from the Village of [Native language spoken] and I currently work as a Program Director for Indian Education at the Anchorage School District.

We have about 8000 students so I get a really broad scope from the perspective of technology, and I would like to shift this towards the barriers in the community teaching environment specifically.

We found that teachers in the district tried to transition into more technologically driven instruction, and they're moving faster than a lot of our Native students can.

So, the teachers have begun implementing these new let's say more complicated-technology-based things. Imagine trying to do your algebra however but only on the computer without paper.

And the teachers find it possible but a lot of our Native students don't have the developmental skills yet on the computer.

We find the Native students have less
screen time at home, and some of them, because
they're on borrowed-technology like hot spots or
Chromebooks, they don't even have as capable of
devices.

So, basically, we're finding there's a
widening instructional gap where the teacher's
lessons are no longer out of a textbook and the
students are having a much harder time keeping
up, especially when they're absent from school.

That's all, thank you.

MR. SONG: Thank you for sharing that.
 I think I see Alissa Lane-Keene as the next
speaker.

MS. LANE-KEENE: Hi, can you hear me?

MR. SONG: Yes.

MS. LANE-KEENE: Good morning, my name
is Alissa Lane-Keene, I am a Siletz tribal member
and the education Director for the confederated
tribes of Siletz Indians here in Oregon.

And we have an 11-county service area
so we're a mix of both rural and non-rural tribal

students. I'm going to speak specifically to our rural students here in Siletz with regards to this question.

When COVID-19 hit, our school district scrambled to do a one-to-one device-to-student ratio which was really nice. They let students keep their devices over the summer months and that went really smoothly.

But here in Siletz, we are the most rural part of Lincoln County, of our school district, and we were not considered for Internet.

As families started expressing issue with students are falling behind, they're unable to stay logged on to complete their assignments, or the family just didn't have Internet.

There's no Internet available because they live so rurally. The tribe began conversations with the school district and pointed out that we were an afterthought.

And at first the discussions were, well, we go through this carrier, and then they

kind of changed to, okay, we are open to buying

hot spots with a carrier that is out there but

now these devices are no longer available.

So, the third olive branch they

extended to us was they kept a list and assisted

families who could get Internet with their

Internet bill. And then none of the hot spot

buses were able to come out to rural Siletz.

They went to all the other towns in

Lincoln County and our students really just

suffered because of that.

So, fast-forward to in-person

education being something that exists now,

nothing else has been revisited in terms of

Internet, so if this were to happen again this

would definitely be an issue.

And another barrier, when we talk

about school districts not being prepared for

this type of educational delivery, so your

lessons, how you're delivering services to your

students, there are many public charter schools

that are available for students to access.

But this is their whole existence, they are prepared for this type of learning, they're there to support families and students where school districts were not prepared at all.

But in Lincoln County we have a three percent cap.

So, they penalize, even if the student is being unsuccessful online through their curriculum, if they are already at their three percent student cap, they will not let a family transition into a school that can better support them.

MR. SONG: Thank you for sharing those barriers. I think I had Lucyann as the next speaker.

MR. TAYLOR: Just give us one second, we're having some technical issues on our end so we wanted to make sure we're allowing the participant to speak. One second.

MS. HARJO: This is Lucyann Harjo, Coordinator of Indian Ed for Norman Public Schools in Norman, Oklahoma. One of the barriers

that we saw or experienced with online learning

is the support at home.

Parents could not readily support

their student or help them to navigate technical

issues with the device, with the Internet, or

with learning how to use the platform that the

school district utilizes.

The other barrier is we've got things

in play for our at-risk students, students who

struggled in class before the online learning hit

our schools or it still continues.

It's trying to find ways and build

relationships with our students and families to

make sure that their student who is a virtual

student is joining the classroom, helping those

virtual kids and parents understand the

importance of participating in the class

virtually is critical to their success.

And we are just trying to find a

balance there in how to help those students.

MR. SONG: Thank you for sharing that.

I think we have a couple minutes left on this

question so I'm wondering if Tara is able to get
her audio working? I just wanted to make sure we
didn't forget her.

Tara, are you able to unmute yourself?
She's still trying to figure it out, I saw in the
chat she was trying to figure it out by logging
on and off. I also see some feedback on the chat
as well so thank you.

Are we able to unmute Tara?

MR. ROULAIN: Thank you for your
patience, I apologize for the technical issues,
Mark is working on that right now.

MR. SONG: We'll bookmark it for now
and then we'll move on to the next question but
Tara, when we circle back to you, we'll make sure
you have a chance to answer the questions that
you wanted to.

Next slide, please.   Could we go to
Question 3? My colleague, Jessica, was going to
ask this question but it seems like she's having
technical issues. Of course, when we're talking
about connectivity we're having connectivity

issues.

I'll facilitate this one. You talked about the barriers to accessing and adopting technology and connectivity at the district that you are in. We'd love to hear about your use of categorizing those barriers.

Do you feel they're more internal to your district, to your community, or are there other external factors that are affecting the adoption of educational technology, connectivity at the school district, home or community?

MR. ROULAIN: Again, I apologize for the technical difficulties we're currently experiencing with the Zoom platform.

Rather than utilizing the raised hand feature, please indicate in the chat window that you would like to provide a comment and the question number you would like the comment on.

Thank you.

MR. SONG: That sounds good, I'll keep an eye out on the chat. If folks would like to answer Question 3, please indicate in the chat.

MR. ROULAIN: And Julian, maybe it would help our participants if you could clarify what we meant by internal versus external barriers?

MR. GUERRERO: Yes, I'd absolutely be happy to.

So, the internal piece of it is more things in your control that are just difficult to make happen and external being things out of your control as a person who is trying to make sure educational technology does get advanced in your district.

And synonymous, you could take out internal, external, could you tell us things about things that are within your control versus things that are not within your control?

MR. SONG: Justin Zuniga in the chat, maybe we could start with Justin and go from there. Hi, Justin. Are we able to unmute Justin?

MR. ROULAIN: Thank you for your patience, at this moment I am not able to unmute

Justin.

MR. SONG: Okay, then I know Alan
added some comments in the chat. Alan, would you
like expand on your response? And then I have
Lucyann on Question 3?

MS. HARJO: I think for our program we
are seeing a lot of teachers leave and new
teachers, new counselors, new principals coming
into our district.

Because of the pandemic and the stress
level teachers are experiencing today and the pay
concern of our teachers in our State of Oklahoma,
barriers I think are part of the turnover of
teachers coming in, new teachers.

That always has a big part in how we
serve our kids in our district because we have to
continually educate those coming in on the
services we provide our students.

That's the only barrier that's not in
our control that I can think of.

MR. SONG: Thank you for your
response. Anyone else? We have some time that

we could use for this question, anyone else?

MR. GUERRERO: Elizabeth has her hand up.

MR. SONG: Elizabeth, would you like share your response?

MS. SATIACUM: A lot of it is in the chat, I can't hear that well because I'm an open office.

Being in a rural area where there's military, there's the reservation, and where we live is a very tough place for me to be in right now and it's okay.

And I wish I could expand but I don't have my own office right now.

MR. SONG: We'll make sure to note the comments you put in the chat then. Thank you for contributing your response in another modality.

MR. GUERRERO: Maybe Ji Soo, we could try Tara and see if she's sorted out her audio issue? Mark, do you know if Tara was able to be on mute?

MS. TINDALL: Hello, this is Tara. I

am the Native American Teacher Leader for Madison Metropolitan School District in Madison, Wisconsin and I am a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation.

And regarding this issue about internal versus external, I share the same concerns as one of the previous speakers about teachers are leaving due to the pandemic.

That's a big issue where as a teacher leader I usually do the right curriculum but because of the teachers leaving I have been spending a majority of my time subbing in the schools.

So, that means I have not been able to do the programming and the curriculum development that is part of my job. I can speak for other people, other teachers. We have had no training on how to have class virtually.

So, basically, everybody is on their own. We have a virtual class for K-12 so they have the option that they can go virtual and all those teachers are basically doing their own

thing and there's no coordination.

One of the problems I experienced with the Title 6 program, to me it's more external. When I try to do programming, I have to do virtual. So, basically, almost everything for the last two years has been virtual.

We've had our ASUS meetings, our culture classes, our parent meetings, tutoring, indigenous cooking class, and all-city graduation but the culture class is the major issue because community members are asked to come and teach craft.

But they don't have the background to do Zoom and handle a virtual class. So, even with the regular teachers the kids could just turn off their cameras and not engage.

And so when a community member is teaching and somebody turns off their camera, they don't have the expertise to know what to do or how to deal with it.

And as a result, a lot of community members just refuse to do virtual classes. So, a

lot of our programs have basically been on hold
until we can go back to in person.

Because we rely so much on community
members to do the arts and crafts, the
storytelling, the drum groups and all this kind
of thing. Thank you.

MR. SONG: Thank you for sharing that
and that issue of learner engagement, teacher
capacity to lead some engaging transformative
learning experiences through technology, that's
some of the issues that the Office of Tech has
heard from other communities as well.

So, thank you for contributing that
story. I don't see anyone else that didn't get a
chance to contribute their response to maybe we
can move to the next slide. I think that one is
Hali?

MS. LARKIN: Yes, thank you all for
sharing thus far and some of you have spoken a
bit to this question in some of your previous
responses.

But here we want to know how do

students in your Native school district deal with
using technology for learning?

Do they feel confident? Is there some
additional support that would be helpful for your
students? When do things seem promising or
challenging when it comes to helping Native
students leverage technology in your program or
office?

MR. ROULAIN: Thank you for your
patience, there are currently no comments for
answering Question 4. And Paul McDonogh has just
indicated he would like to express on Number 4.

MR. MCDONOGH: Hello, again, I'm Paul
McDonogh from Anchorage, Alaska, and I wanted to
highlight a positive use of technology here and I
think that connecting more opportunity is
actually helping Native students with different
needs find different niches within our district.

And we're probably one of the largest
programs here with about 40,000 total enrolled
students. So, one of the ways students really
get engaged is they find a program that fits and

we've been able to unroll a virtual program and a hybrid homeschool program.

And basically, a number of different niche opportunities for students who are either wanting to wait out the pandemic or for students who felt like the traditional school model wasn't fitting in.

And so I really celebrate that technology has at least provided us tools to differentiate the way school gets involved. I think we're kind of in a growing pains phase and I would agree with every commenter today.

There's a lot of challenges but I feel really positive about the potential. As a Native student, you have five or six different options on what school should look like for your family and I think it's great to give the families those options.

MS. LARKIN: Thank you, Paul, we're certainly thinking about that here at the Office of Ed-tech for sure.

One of our top priorities is thinking

about how technology can be used to support learner variability through different types of learning content, materials, and models.

So, that's very helpful to hear. It looks like Derek and Carol also have some comments to share. Would either of you like to unmute yourselves?

MS. THOMPSON: This is Carol again, I don't think I introduced myself last time. I am the Director of Indian Education at Bagley Schools, we are a public school. We used to have a little over 1000 students, we are now down to less than 900 students.

And again, we are located in Northern Minnesota, I am enrolled in White Earth Nation. But our students here absolutely love it or they absolutely hate it.

I think a lot of it goes with their comfort with the device and who is at home with them, if they're being raised by their grandparents and their grandparents don't know how to use the device.

And their age, if they're little they absolutely hate it because their grandparents can't teach them.

And if they're older and if they have cell phones or if they have family members who are able to show them and teach them, or if they have that comfort with it, they absolutely love it and that's what they prefer because it's easier and they don't want to write anymore.

So, they absolutely love doing things digitally so if it is able to do something with a video, if they're able to record things and it requires that multimedia piece or aspect of it, they are on top of it and they do absolutely wonderful.

They get A's across the board. If it requires them typing things out, they hate it and they fail because it takes up too much time and they don't like to type. But if we give them a piece of paper and say write it out, again they fail.

They don't like to take that time, so

it's a double-edged sword both ways.

MS. LARKIN: Thank you, Carol. Are we able to unmute Derek?

MR. ROULAIN: Thank you for your patience, Mark is currently trying to unmute him. Derek, if you could please use the unmute feature on your end as well? Thank you.

MR. BEGAY: Can you guys hear me now?

MS. LARKIN: Yes.

MR. BEGAY: Yes, I just wanted to say I was most recently a principal in Arizona on the Navajo nation. My name is Derek Begay, I currently work for New Mexico Public Education Department.

We were at a high school and we were serving our students to actually answer that question on how well they use it.

And there's a dichotomy with that answer and that's that a lot of our students that understood it and were able to do it and had great connectivity were successful but the majority of our students, when we asked them and

surveyed, we said, well, we're using the hot spots to do other things.

Or we're doing chores because we're at home and we have to babysit our younger siblings who are in elementary or middle school. So, those who did have access and didn't have those other assigned areas of duties as a family member were able to do well.

But those who had younger siblings and they were on Zoom as well within the same scenario or they were sharing one hot spot for a family of five, there was just a lot of issues that we didn't take into account.

So, as a district we had to look at offering more hot spots to one family so that they all could have connectivity. And it was just an ongoing problem-solving and troubleshooting.

And right now, currently the biggest issue is just with those various locations and a lot of it is physical location of distance and where they are and if they have cell service or

not.

Most of those places where our hot spots were going out to didn't even have cell service to be successful, so a lot of it was those external barriers, like I saw in the previous questions.

But those were some of the issues that were ongoing but again, there was a handful of those students who were able to be successful if they had the right setup at home and they had the right support and based on if their siblings were at a certain age where they didn't have to help them as well too.

So, again, it's just an ongoing troubleshooting, but those were some of the issues and barriers but also some of the successes we saw.

MS. LARKIN: Thank you, Derek. I think I saw Lucyann in the chat rather quickly. I want to make sure everyone who has a response or comment for Number 4 gets a chance to speak.

Lucyann, would you like to go next?

MS. HARJO: I think for the most part the school districts have been successful in using technology and adjusting to the new learning atmosphere or the new learning environment, generally because we're right smack in the middle of the United States and we have devices for them and we have hot spots if they need it.

But we still have a concern here and there, especially for the students really struggling before we went virtual. Trying to connect with those students seemed to be a priority of our program.

But one of the concerns I see that seems challenging is because of the rise in the amount of pressure and stress in our families, our students are struggling as well in the classroom, or the virtual classroom, because of everything happening.

The stress level of today, what's happening, that all plays a part in impacting our kids' learning. That's all I wanted to say.

MS. LARKIN: Thank you, Lucyann, I
think we have about two more people who are
interested in sharing. I think I saw Justin and
Tara.

MS. TINDALL: Hello?

MS. LARKIN: We can hear you.

MS. TINDALL: I wanted to share a
positive experience with the students is
indigenous cooking class, the kids are really
engaged. We have our indigenous chef who holds
the class and the parents are required to attend.

This is all virtual, so it's taking
place in the kids' homes in their kitchen with
their parents. So, this is one of the most
successful programs that I've ever experienced,
especially regarding virtual.

And then I also wanted to say about
craft class that usually, the parents sign the
kids up and so the kids didn't have a choice.
And if the parents are not there with them, if
they didn't have a choice in singing up for the
class, a lot of times they'll just turn off their

camera.

And I want to also agree about the
trauma and the stress related to COVID-19 and
being isolated. This is an urban area so a lot
of the students don't have access to other
Natives or the Native community.

And so being isolated and having
COVID-19, families who have COVID-19, even young
children, that's a real trauma. So, we're really
anxious to be out of COVID-19, out of the
pandemic.

And I think once we get out of it
things are going to brighten up, thanks.

MS. LARKIN: Thank you, Tara.

MR. ROULAIN: Tara, for the record,
could you please state your name, title, and
affiliation?

MS. TINDALL: I am Tara Tindall, my
title is Native American Teacher Leader for
Madison Metropolitan School District and my tribe
is Ho-Chunk Nation.

MS. LARKIN: I see Alan has shared

some thoughts in the chat. Thank you. Justin, would you like respond to this question?

MR. ZUNIGA: Yes, this is Justin Zuniga, Indian Education Independent Contractor working in Nevada. I am an enrolled member of Reno-Sparks Indian Colony. Just briefly to echo everybody else who has commented, it's good and bad here.

The students that were succeeding in the classroom, they were high-achieving, they seemed to do really well on the virtual side. The parents were still as engaged as they were before the pandemic.

Everything seemed to flourish for those students who were already high-achieving. However, for the students that were already falling through the cracks, when they were in session and they were then put into virtual classroom, there was just a much larger crack for them to fall through.

And they went under the radar even further and it became even more difficult to

contact those parents, where it was already difficult for the school and the district to get a hold of those families anyway.

And the students actually didn't mind it, it was easier for them to stay under the radar, so they actually loved it, that it was easier for them to slide through.

And yes, we saw them get passed onto the next grade as well, which is not doing them a service. So, it was a huge spectrum, students who liked it but they shouldn't have liked it.

And then there were students who wanted to do better virtually but they really struggled and they tried to reach out to so many different supports and just kept running into barrier after barrier and were just incredibly frustrated with virtual learning.

MS. LARKIN: Thank you, Justin. Those were all our comments for our questions. Julian, I'm going to pass it back to you.

MR. GUERRERO: Is that you, Lucyann?

MS. HARJO: Yes, this is Lucyann Harjo

from Norman, Oklahoma. I really like the way
Justin summed that up because that describes our
students in Norman, Oklahoma.

But on a positive note, some kids who
were really struggling in the normal school day
found great success with learning online. And
they loved it and our district adjusted to those
kids who wanted to remain on the virtual. And so
we have a virtual learning platform but for some
of our kids, they love virtual learning so that's
pretty great.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you, we
appreciate that. At this time, we're making
great time, I think we will move on to the next
segment of today's listening to session, which is
still gathering your input.

But this is more of a polling section
where we will have a series of nine polling
questions where there will be a prompt that
appears on your screen, and then there will be an
opportunity to select one answer from that
prompt.

We'll provide approximately 45 seconds

for each polling question so, Phillip, because of

the technology issues, let's make it at least a

minute so we'll add an extra 15 seconds on there

for a full minute for each of these.

So, again, there's a total of 9

polling questions and each of the facilitators

will take two polling questions and I'll be the

first to start with the first polling question.

So, Phillip, could we go ahead and

display? Great.

So, for Question 1, do you feel the

neighboring school districts around you do better

at implementing educational technology? There's

three options, yes, no, and not sure.

And the second question is do you feel

that Native students have access to quality

technology and educational support to facilitate

their educational experience?

And again, this is multiple choice

with three answers, yes, no, not sure. Phillip,

I have a participant in chat who is saying they

don't see the polling questions on screen.

Are there any other participants who are having the same issues?

MR. ROULAIN: Sometimes that happens if there is not an update on your Zoom platform, if you haven't updated your Zoom platform on your personal side sometimes it won't show the plugin.

MR. GUERRERO: It looks like there's multiple participants who are having this issue so we're going to do something a little tricky. But why don't we in the chat do our votes?

And then we'll do some light work on our end to capture that information. So, for all co-facilitators, instead of relying on the poll, we'll just do it in the chat.

So, let's start this part over and then if you can do your voting in chat, then we'll capture that, we'll aggregate. The first question, and could you put Number 1 and then your answer just so that we know which question to give an answer to.

Yes, just like Justin Marsh did. So,

Justin Marsh put Number 1 and then yes. The first question is do you feel the neighboring school districts around you do better at implementing educational technology?

And then if you could put Number 1 and then your answer? Let's leave some time for Number 1 to be answered. We're not going to do Number 2 yet, we'll wait until the chat dies down.

We'll just give it probably 10 more seconds and then we'll move to Number 2.

Now we will move on to Question 2, the second question is do you feel that Native students have access to quality technology and educator supports to facilitate their educational experience?

Again, if you could put your answer in the chat that'll be very helpful for us. Alan Mayo, I see you said to repeat question, absolutely.

Question 2 is do you feel that Native students have access to quality technology and

educator supports to facilitate their educational
experience? We'll give that just ten more
seconds and we will move on to the next tranche
of questions.

Mark, I had a question, for those
people who do have updated Zoom software, were
they able to vote on the polling, did you see any
activity there?

MR. TAYLOR: Yes, they were, you had
to scroll down just a little bit on the screen,
let me enlarge it a little bit.

MR. GUERRERO: I don't see any of that
on the screen that I'm looking at right now just
as an FYI.

MR. TAYLOR: We have 33 percent yes
and 53 percent no, and 13 percent not sure on the
second question so far.

MR. GUERRERO: What we'll do is take
that information and combine it with the
information we're getting from chat for those of
you who were not able to vote by poll. So, at
least you know now that if -- oh, I do see some

polling results now.

So, for that first question I see a 20 percent yes, 40 percent no, 40 percent not sure, but again, we're missing those folks who did vote by chat. So, we'll capture that and for Question 2, 53 percent no, 33 percent yes.

So, the silver lining to this is that if you weren't able to vote by polling, you now know you need to update your Zoom software. So, that's good. Let's go ahead and move on to Questions 3 and 4 and I'm going to hand those off to Ji Soo.

MR. SONG: Yes, and it would be great if we could post those questions up on the screen. I'm still at the polling question instruction slide, but I can also put it in the chat as well if folks can't see them.

The third question is do you feel you have the professional development resources to help you understand what educational technology is, how technology can be used to transform learning experiences.

So, that again is do you feel that you have professional development resources to help you understand what educational technology is and how technology can be used to transform learning experiences.

Yes, no, not sure.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you, Jessica and Phillip, for putting that in the chat.

MR. SONG: We'll give folks a couple more seconds to respond. We'll move on to Question 4, does your school district have a district plan to address digital equity?

Yes, I have read it, yes but I have not read it, no, and not sure. Could someone put that in the chat in case folks can't see it in the slides.

Does your school district have a district plan to address digital equity? Yes, I have read it, yes but I have not read it, no, and not sure.

We'll give folks a couple more seconds to answer that. We'll move on to Questions 5 and

6 that Jessica just put in the chat. Oh, wait,
she posted in the panel so I'll put it again for
all of us.

But the fifth question is
approximately how old are the laptops and devices
that your students work with every day, 1 to 2
years old, 3 to 5 years old, not sure, or 5-plus
years old?

That's actually Question 6 but I'll go
back to Question 5, I'm sorry.

Approximately, how old are the
computers that your students work with every day,
1 to 2 years old, 3 to 5 years old, not sure, or
5-plus years old, not sure.

And thank you, Michele, for posting in
the chat. I'll give folks a couple more seconds.
The next question is do you feel that your school
district's network Internet speed has been faster
or slower compared to last year?

Do you feel that your school
district's network Internet speed has been faster
or slower as compared to last year? Faster,

slower, not sure. I'll give folks about 10 more seconds to respond.

Do you feel that your school district's network Internet speed has been faster or slower as compared to last year? Faster, slower, not sure. I'll pass it to Hali for the next set of questions.

MS. LARKIN: Thank you. For Question 7, how many educational technology devices do you have for students? Again, the question is how many educational technology devices do you have per student?

And the options are one device, two devices, or three or more devices? Again, the options are one device, two devices, or three or more devices.

I'll give folks a few more seconds.

It looks like we can move on to the next question and for those of you who may have a little trouble hearing me, I'm somewhat close to the microphone but our colleague, Jessica and Phillip, are also posting questions in the chat.

The next question is does your school district maintain a one-to-one model with one device for each student? So, does your school district maintain a one-to-one model with one device for each student?

The options are yes, no, or not sure. Again, yes, no, or not sure. It looks like the chat has paused, I'm going to give folks a few more seconds before I pass it over to Julian.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you so much, I appreciate that.

The next question is the last and final question, Question 9, and the ninth question is: do you embed digital games or other engaging interactive learning experiences into the learning processes for your students?

Do you embed digital games or other engaging interactive learning experiences into the learning processes for your students? The options are yes, no, not sure, I do not teach students.

There are four options for this last

one. We'll give this one a solid 20 seconds.

Again, the question is do you embed digital games or other engaging interactive learning experiences into the learning processes for your students?

There's four options, yes, no, not sure, or I do not teach students.

That concludes ours and then I see some of those who were able to vote by polling, we have 30 percent yes, 10 percent no, 10 percent not sure, and 50 percent I do not teach students.

And then I also saw the same variability in the chat as well. Thank you for adapting with us and participating either by polling or by chat, we truly appreciate that.

Could we go to the next slide, please?

In addition to the underscoring of the importance of us listening more than talking, we wanted to have a small segment of today's opportunity to also do some reflection and you also hear back from us a reflection from each of today's co-facilitators on what we've heard from

participants today in addition to how we think we
can help the Indian Education community leverage
federal resources for their programs.

So, this is an opportunity for the co-
facilitators to just take a short amount of time
to answer both of these questions in real-time
versus you attending a listening to session,
really never hearing anything back.

But we truly intend to take all this
information, use it in such a way to help us in
our deliberations around these much-reviewed
resources.

So, to answer Question 1 and 2 I'll go
ahead and start with and then I'll hand it off to
Ji Soo and we'll follow the same order of co-
facilitation here.

And for Question 1 on what did I hear
from participants today, and I clearly found a
resounding amount of not only challenges but
opportunities around making sure that students,
one, have access, but then, two, actual
utilization, implementation of technology and Ed-

tech is hard.

It's an incredibly hard endeavor as well as making sure that there is less of gap between those who flourish in that environment versus those who flounder in that environment.

And both types of students need support in making sure that we do not let students fly under the radar and on making sure that the needs are heard.

And that is something so stark in what I've heard. These efforts to go one-to-one are wonderful but yet we still see persistent challenge.

These efforts to get mobile wireless technology and connectivity into these rural areas is occurring but it is expensive, and there are so many associated challenges that certain national conversations stop at a certain point and we need to take that further.

That's a reflection for Number 1 and doing some talking around Number 2 on connecting the dots here.

The Office of Indian Education has both formal and discretionary grant programs with certain policies and priorities and rules and activities that are allowable to these programs.

And I think so profoundly what I heard today is there's an opportunity to think about how our programs are leveraging education technology.

And in many cases, you are grantees of ours and there are certain activities that you currently do leveraging educational technology. And I think there's definitely a need to spotlight some of these promising practices and really think about how we address and bring a greater awareness to leaders around the issues that are persistent still.

And how we continue to build a community of collaboration more than competition, and that's something that just so clearly aligns with the values that we work with at the Office of Indian Education.

So, I will stop there and hand it off

to my colleague Ji Soo.

MR. SONG: Thank you, Julian, again for inviting us into your space, into this virtual space, to hear from our tribal leaders and folks who represent Native students.

And the key takeaway from this conversation that I'm having is an echo of points that folks that we've convened in the past have talked to us about regarding digital equity, that approaching this with just technical solutions isn't going to be enough in closing the digital divide.

Folks that we convened here today talked about how their district distributed devices and gave families hot spots. But there were still human-level challenges that couldn't be navigated just by those technical approaches alone, right?

I heard stories about how students were feeling disengaged because their educators didn't know how to use a technology platform to facilitate interactive experience.

I heard stories around the critical role that parents and families have to play in providing that technical support behind how to use the technology and those digital literacy skills.

And those are the things that the Office of Ed-tech is really focusing on right now. With regards to bipartisan infrastructure law, there's a lot of funding there around closing that digital divide.

And we don't want the funds, as important as they are, don't get me wrong, just solely on the technical solutions of making technology available.

We do need to set that as a foundation but we can't say mission accomplished after that has been done.

From hearing from this community, it feels like there are a number of other human-level challenges around educator capacity building, student engagements, parent digital literacy supports that need to be thought about

in conjunction to those technical solutions.

So, moving onto 2, the Office of Ed-tech, as I said, is at the top of the agenda and it's working on a guidance publication for our state leaders as they develop their state visual equity plans under Judicial Equity Act, which was part of the bipartisan infrastructure law, giving some pointers to state and local leaders.

As you build out your digital equity plans, these are those human-level adoption challenges that you will need to be thinking about and not just putting investments into those availability physical infrastructure solutions.

Those are important but in conjunction with them we have to be thinking about the human-level barriers that we talked about today. So, we'll be coming up with that guidance publication.

We're also talking to different sectors like the tech industry, SPs, education leadership organizations, philanthropies, and funders to talk about their respective roles in

advancing digital equity for all of our students.

And the stories that you told today will be really great data information that we can share back with them and say this is what we've heard from our communities, now what will be your role?

What will be your response in light of all the stories that we've heard?

So, thank you so much for inviting us into your space and I'll pass it to Hali for her reflections.

MS. LARKIN: For me there are two reflections here that, like they've said in some of our previous conversations, some of the experiences that you all share are familiar to us in terms of what we have researched, what we have heard from other populations, but certainly learning about new experiences as well.

But for me, what's standing out are the components about family and community partnerships, which is something that OET and the Department of Education are taking a close look

at as we continue this work.

So, for us when we're thinking about the importance of the parents and the caregivers being able to support the students in their learning with technology, when we're thinking about technology-enabled learning, yes, we want to think about how do we create the best experience for the learner, but how do we also empower the family to support?

So, that was very interesting to hear and then I think the other piece is how we've heard there have been some examples of remote and hybrid and distance learning that have worked well, and other places where they didn't work well.

And so we are, again, taking a look at the ways technology is used for learning to make sure that we develop and amplify best practices that can really be efficient for addressing learner's needs.

So, thank you all so much for your time today.

I'll pass it back to Julian and I also
want to say I know the DR team, we're open to
additional feedback if any of you all have
follow-up questions or thoughts to share.

We'll share our personal information
in the chat.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you so much,
Hali, and just as Ji Soo said in his appreciation
for OIE reaching out, I too as a representative
for OIE am appreciative of the collaboration with
OET.

And we already started some
collaboration earlier this year.

I see this as a continuance of that
and the strengthening of how we can move forward
to then identify resources and guidance and
helping pave a way so that knowledge is concrete
and we get resources out to the communities that
we serve.

And to my surprise, we are
exceptionally ahead of schedule.

With that, I would want to just maybe

carve out five extra minutes or so for anybody who was yet to speak or who would like to have an urgent topic in mind pertaining to this topic of educational technology that maybe we just completely missed, and it's off our radar, that we should think about as a catch-all?

So, as an open-ended question for anybody else currently attending right now as a participant, feel free to say I would like to speak via the chat if you would like to do so.

We'll give an opportunity for any last-minute comments. Cassidy Rice, I do see you said I have a question, so please, go ahead, Cassidy.

MS. RICE: My question is I am a Title 6 liaison in the Klamath Tribes in Oregon. I am helping represent the Klamath Tribes, the Modoc Tribes especially, and as a new employee, we haven't had much training.

Many of us are falling behind and there's no training liaisons about online teaching, which means no one is on the same page.

So, when we're teaching parents and things like that, no one is saying the same thing to parents and many schools share siblings, and so sometimes parents have different information for each child.

MR. GUERRERO: It looks like your mic cut out there, Cassidy, if you're still talking. If you're talking, Cassidy, we can't hear you.

MS. RICE: That's all I had.

MR. GUERRERO: If you don't mind, Cassidy, I didn't get the full question but if you could, please feel free to put that in the chat before we close out and we can get back to you. Especially if you leave your email we can get back to you.

And just to let folks know before we close out here, the written comment period for this topic is still open and it'll be open for the remainder of this month.

Written comments must be transmitted via email to indian.education@ed.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time March 31st of this

year.

So, again, the written comment period is still open and must be transmitted via email to indian.education@ed.gov no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time March 31st of this year.

And what we'll do is we'll make sure that is also aggregated into the overall information that we're gathering today.

Lucyann, yes, I see you here? Please, go ahead?

MS. HARJO: I think the only concern I'd like to express is the concern for our Indian kids in rural areas in Oklahoma that may not have access to a device or wifi.

I know that our tribes are doing as much as they can but I don't know how to aggregate for our Indian children in rural areas that may not have devices and wifi. I just don't know what the answer is.

But looking at scores statewide in Oklahoma, learning has truly been impacted.

I don't know if that's because of the

learning difficulties in our communities or if it's the amount of the pandemic effects in our community, so the amount of loss in our Native families and in our tribes and the stress of our families during this time.

But I hope that the Department of Education has some solutions to help schools in rural areas across the nation for Indian children. Thank you.

MR. GUERRERO: Thank you, I appreciate those comments, and I also see a question from Charles Wagner in the question.

Has an emerging program or apprentice program ever been looked at as a means for language and cultural revitalization?

Currently, the Office of Indian Ed does have a Native language education emerging grant program, it's a competitive grant program.

I encourage you to go to our website at OESE.ed.gov to then scroll over to the OIE page and then you can access all of it in the subtab.

And actually, to that point, to notify everyone, this completes one or four listening sessions.

There's another listening session, same time, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Eastern tomorrow and that topic is going to be the Native American languages interagency MOU, advancing the interagency MOU and Native American languages.

Charles, I invite and welcome you to that virtual space as well. Thank you so much everybody for joining us. If everyone could go ahead and log out, and federal employees, if you could stay online, we'll debrief quickly after this.

Thank you so much everyone for joining us and I wish you safe travels wherever you're headed today. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 2:30 p.m.)