

Agency: UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Request Title: San Juan School District Tribal Student Network Project Maintenance

Purpose Statement:

Provides access to around 500 San Juan dwellings in the River Region to the school San Juan student network to support K-12 tribal students with digital teaching and learning. This is the only connection available to many homes in this region.

What is the nature of your request?

- ★ **FUNDING REQUEST** – You are seeking new or additional financial resources to support a program/service for education.

Projected Results: *(Provide 1-2 bullets on how the policy/funding request would lead to a measurable outcome in the K-12 education system (ex. performance measure).)*

- # of K-12 student dwellings with access to the San Juan student network to support digital teaching and learning

Rationale: *(Describe in 1-2 bullet points the “why” behind your request. Why is this action necessary for K-12 education?)*

- K-12 San Juan tribal students in the River Region have access to the San Juan student network through the school district which was built out by pandemic relief funds.
- The district is seeking funding to maintain the existing network for K-12 tribal students to support learning.

If not funded/approved:

- Up to 1,441 students in over 500 dwellings in the River Region will lose home access to the school San Juan student network and district digital resources and may impact student learning.

USBE Lead Point of Contact:

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FUNDING REQUEST

This section only needs to be completed if you are seeking new or additional funding.

Board Action for Request:

June 1, 2023 full Board meeting

MOTION: That the Board directs staff to develop a legislative request for the 2024 legislative session to address the San Juan Broadband project needs.

1. Summarize the request, the specific problem it will solve, and how it will solve the problem.

The requested resources would fund the maintenance on approximately \$5,000,000.00 of new infrastructure providing internet through a wireless network for District LAN extension connection services for Native American students living in Montezuma Creek, Monument Valley, Navajo Mountain, White Mesa, and Bluff areas of the San Juan School District. Without these services students living on or near the Navajo Reservation would not have access to San Juan School District student network delivered to the home.

The existing infrastructure allows for students to access the San Juan school network in their homes, and that access did not exist prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This infrastructure is necessary to allow for students to be able to access their classroom digital teaching and learning resources, which are essential to address learning loss in their community. This school network access complies with all federal and state regulations, such as filtering, in the provision of internet access.

The request for funding for maintenance is to address the mobility of the student population. The existing internet infrastructure relies on radios direct to the households where the students live. When a student moves to a new household, which happens frequently, the radios must be moved to accommodate the student and maintain access to the internet. This funding will support the relocation of existing supplies, as well as the anticipated costs for making sure the new location has the appropriate power

source to support the radio. Additionally, the funds will support the creation of a “help line” at San Juan School District that provides households support for maintenance and access as those issues arise.

These funds are vital to support the existing infrastructure that has been created to provide broadband to the households for Native American Students in San Juan School District.

2. Amount Requested:

Funding Source	Amount (\$)
FY 2025 one-time funding	\$ 2,500,000.00
FY 2025 ongoing funding	\$
TOTAL funding requested	\$ 2,500,000 (one-time)

3. Provide an itemized budget, including revenue and expenditure sources, for how the funding will be utilized.

Funding Source(s):

San Juan Student Network Access		
Cost Category	FY 2024 (Current fiscal year)	FY 2025
Personnel Services	\$	\$
Travel/In State	\$	\$
Travel/Out State	\$	\$
Current Expenses	\$	\$
Data Processing Current Expenses	\$	\$

Data Processing Capital Outlay	\$	\$
Capital Outlay	\$	\$
Other Charges/Pass Through	\$	\$ 300,000.00/personnel and contracted services \$ 200,000.00/materials for maintenance
Transfers	\$	\$
Other	\$	\$
Total	\$	\$500,000.00/year for 5-years totaling \$2,500,000.00 one-time

USBE FTEs	FY 2024 <i>(Current fiscal year)</i>	FY 2025
<u>NEW USBE FTEs</u>	0	NEW USBE FTEs being requested as part of the funding request 0

4. To what extent is this request scalable? Articulate the impacts if lower funding amounts were provided for this request.

The funding request is scalable in terms of the time frame to maintain the current infrastructure, noting that the key fiscal need is for personnel and contracted services to maintain the network. Reduced funding will impact the potential for the FTE and contracted services to provide services and maintenance. If the funding is less than the original request, it will shorten the time period of maintenance to less than five years.

5. What has been done or considered to address this problem with existing resources, instead of requesting additional state funding?

The original project infrastructure was funded with pandemic relief funds as approved by the Utah State Legislature in the August 2020 Utah legislature special session. House Bill 6002 provided the Utah State Board of Education funding from the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) to provide resources to "WiFi Access in San Juan County" for \$3.9M.

The San Juan School District has been utilizing K-12 Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief (ESSER) local funds to be able to maintain the project. The ESSER funds are expiring in alignment with the federal funding period on September 30, 2024.

The San Juan School District technology department has played a crucial role in bridging the connectivity gap for students on the Navajo Reservation and other underserved areas by supporting the River Region Lan Access project. Utilizing the department's expertise in network design, they have implemented and maintained innovative solutions to ensure students have access to reliable internet connectivity in their homes. Through comprehensive field surveys, they have identified areas with limited or no internet access and worked towards deploying effective solutions in those regions. The San Juan School District has also facilitated a Chromebook take-home program, enabling students to have their own devices for remote learning. These commitments and efforts have significantly enhanced the educational opportunities for students on the Navajo Reservation, fostering a more inclusive and equitable learning environment.

6. Summarize the current budget for the project or program that is being funded. If this is a new project or program, summarize resources that are available for like-objectives within USBE.

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7. Does this request create any future funding obligations (operations and maintenance, multi-year scale up, etc)?

The San Juan school district is currently working with UEN to develop a solution for broadband access through private providers after the 5-year one-time funding sunsets.

That solution may include access to wireless technology.

8. Describe how the funding case supports the goals and metrics of the [USBE Strategic Plan](#).

The access to the school network internet allows for learning resources to be extended to the household to support improved student learning outcomes in alignment with Education Elevated, the Utah State Board of Education strategic plan, and agency performance measures including graduation rate, state assessment data, and ACT scores.

9. What value will additional resources create for Utah? What performance measures for that value will be reported or [are already reported](#)?

The Utah State Board of Education will report the number of individual dwellings that are enabled to have access to the San Juan school network through the maintenance of the infrastructure.

10. Provide details, sources, research, and analysis to which forms evidence-basis for this request or the associated program (e.g, cost benefit analysis, program evaluation, results from pilot program, etc).

This request is fiscally responsible, targeted, proactive, and enduring to meet an immediate need until long term broadband infrastructure is available to the Navajo Nation. It is an investment that will enhance and strengthen infrastructure that is designed to address the need of rural connectivity. In doing so, it provides an enduring benefit through the improvement of the delivery of educational services to an at-risk population residing in one of the most impoverished areas within the State of Utah. This project is essential to support the continuation of internet access to allow for K-12 instruction for students on the Navajo Nation.

The outcome will be increased student engagement in digital learning opportunities for students that had their school disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For many of these families, they have not had access to remote learning opportunities, and need this resource to be able to address learning loss in academic learning. The outcome will be noted in the number of students who are able to use the resource to attend digital

classes and progress in their studies.

11. Which populations or geographic areas will benefit most from this request? What safeguards will be implemented to prevent inequities or other unintended distributional consequences as it relates to this request?

San Juan School District will benefit most from this request. They have a unique population and geographic landscape that represents a significant differentiation in need, as they do not have access to a standard provider for broadband access. This is not the case for other LEAs that have household broadband access through existing infrastructure.

12. Which stakeholders have you engaged and coordinated with during the development of this request?

San Juan School District, the Utah Education Network (UEN), the Go Utah State Broadband Office, Utah State Board of Education representative Board Member Kristan Norton.