

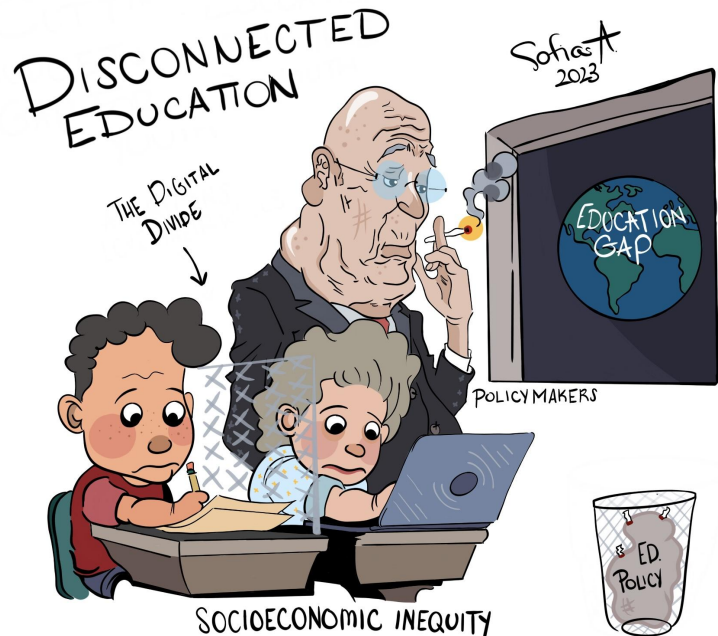
The Digital Divide and Changing Education in Pandemic Times: A Case Study of  
Teacher Experiences in a Rural Town

Washington, United States  
Case Study

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<sup>1</sup> The digital divide emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and the world woke to a reality that was once mystified amongst the writings of sci-fiction novels. Overnight, nations worldwide awakened to the digital world's presences. The digital era has revolutionized every aspect of our lives, transforming the way we communicate,



work, and access information. It has created unprecedented opportunities for connectivity, efficiency, and innovation, reshaping industries and driving societal advancements at an unprecedented pace. As progress surges forward, the digital revolution casts a shadow in the form of the persistent digital divide. Despite the wave of advancements, the balance remains skewed, highlighting the ongoing disparity in access to technology and digital resources.

This division is primarily characterized by the unequal access and distribution of digital technology, which has led to inequality among minority and diverse populations. According to Dr. Bach,

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<sup>1</sup> The cartoon in the right hand corner highlights the issue of the digital divide and its impact on youth education. The two children in the classroom represent the divide, with one child having access to advanced technology and resources, while the other child has limited resources. The digital divide is represented by a chain link fence. Emphasizing the divide between those who have access to technology and those who do not.

The stereotypical politician represents the policymakers who cut education budgets, limiting resources for students who need them the most. The image of the politician holding a cigarette and the trash bin containing a crumpled piece of paper labeled "Education Budget" surrounded by cigarette buds represents the negative impact of budget cuts on youth education.

The caption "Disconnected Education" emphasizes the message that budget cuts in education further widen the digital divide, leaving many students with limited resources and unequal access to education. The cartoon aims to raise awareness of this issue and call for action to address the digital divide and ensure equal access to education for all students.

the root of the problem lies in socioeconomic inequality and social exclusions, according to a report produced in the *Journal of Information Policy*. The Digital Human Capital framework highlights the complexity of social exclusion in the Information Age. (Bach, 2013, pp. 247–66). This realization began in the mid-20th century and involved a swift transition of industries to an information technology-based economy. In the *Journal of Intellectual Property*, informed by Dr. Mira Burri records show that at the World Summit on the Information Society in 2003, global leaders recognized the main challenge of the 21st century as building a society that ensures universal access to information, promotes self-development, and fosters equality and equitable development. (Burri, 2011, pp. 217-225).

The lack of digital access in rural communities poses a significant challenge for schools and education in these areas. Limited access to technology and broadband services hampers the ability of schools to provide a modern and effective learning environment. Students in rural schools may have limited access to online educational resources, interactive learning platforms, and digital tools that enhance their educational experience. This disparity in access places students at a disadvantage compared to their peers in more connected areas. Teachers in rural schools face difficulties in incorporating digital technologies into their teaching methods and may struggle to deliver engaging and interactive lessons. In the *Journal of International Affairs*, Dr. Koss, delves into the lack of digital access in rural schools. In which, exacerbates educational inequities, as students miss out on the benefits and opportunities that digital resources can provide. Bridging the digital divide in rural communities is essential to ensure that all students have equal access to quality education and the tools necessary for success in the digital age. (Koss, 2001, pp. 75–90).

This case study explores the uneven broadband access in rural and suburban areas in the post-COVID-19 era of online learning. The research aims to address several inquiries, including the challenges faced by faculty and administrators regarding broadband access during the pandemic and how this affected their teaching, communication with parents, personal digital literacy and ability to assist learning with diverse groups of students. Additionally, the study investigates teachers' perspectives on digital learning and communication between students and their households and the implications of

experiences and lack of broadband access on student outcomes such as engagement and learning. Dr. Jessica Brown, writes on the impact of Addressing the digital divide in rural communities is crucial for fostering equal opportunities, empowering individuals, and promoting overall community development. (Brown, 1999, pp. 16-21).

Developing initiatives to close the digital divide has become increasingly evident in recent years, especially in light of the global pandemic. The pandemic has emphasized the urgency of this issue as schools transitioned to online learning, highlighting significant disparities in technology and broadband access. This has negatively impacted many students' learning outcomes and academic success, especially those from marginalized communities. The future of education hinges on understanding and addressing the digital divide.

In 2021, Dr. Park, Dr. Ross and Dr. Ledezma wrote that the unequal distribution of broadband access and digital literacy training in marginalized diverse communities exacerbates this issue, hindering parents' ability to participate effectively in their children's education. The implications for student outcomes, such as engagement and learning, are significant. Students with limited access to technology and broadband services are disadvantaged, and their academic performance may be adversely affected. Teachers face challenges in delivering fair education when students across the classroom experience differing access levels to technology and digital literacy skills. Bridging the digital divide in education is vital to ensure that all students have an equal chance of excelling academically. This study addresses disparities in access to technology and broadband services, particularly in marginalized communities. For instance, a recent study focusing on Latinx mothers and their children, shedding light on how Latina mothers teach and support their children in both home and remote classroom environments, particularly within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study participants stressed the need to go beyond technical solutions and address the digital divide. Instead, they highlighted the importance of considering the socio-political and economic factors that influence parents' access to and utilization of digital literacies. (Park, Ross & Ledezma, 2021, pp. 79–93).

Offering equal access to technology and supporting digital literacy skills will guarantee that all students, families, and educators across diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds have the assistance they require to thrive in a digital age.

This case study primarily seeks to investigate the question, “How does the unequal distribution of broadband access in rural and suburban communities shape the experience of parental digital literacy and engagement in their children's education in the era of online learning in a post-COVID-19, and how do teachers perceive digital learning and communication between students and student households?”

Understanding and addressing the digital divide is critical to the future of K-12 education. In 2005, an article by Dr. Marri illustrated that the pandemic has highlighted the urgency of this issue as schools shifted to online learning, revealing significant disparities in access to technology and broadband services. As a result, many students, particularly those from marginalized communities, were left behind, negatively impacting their learning outcomes and academic success. (Marri, 2005, pp. 395–409).

An additional study aims to examine the impact of the digital divide on education during the COVID-19 pandemic in rural and suburban communities, identify the needs of teachers and administrators, and propose policy solutions to address the gaps. Dr. Machado-Casas, Dr. Sánchez, and Dr. Ek, advocated with their research that parents also faced challenges during this time, as they were expected to support their children's online learning, which required digital literacy skills and access to technology. The unequal distribution of broadband access in rural and suburban communities further compounded this issue, limiting parents' ability to effectively engage in their children's education. (Dr. Machado-Casas, Dr. Sánchez, and Dr. Ek, pp. 28–33). In 2022, a research article written by Dr. Reynolds, Dr. Aromi, Dr. McGowan and Dr. Paris, B. aims to address the implications of student outcomes, such as engagement and learning. Students with limited access to technology and broadband services are disadvantaged, and their learning outcomes may be negatively impacted. Teachers also face challenges in providing equitable education when their students have varying access levels to technology and digital literacy skills. (Machado-Casas, Sánchez & Ek, pp. 1665–1680). While, an earlier article in 2017, by Dr. Stornaiuolo and Dr. Ebony advocates on addressing the digital divide in K-12 education is essential to

ensure that all students have equal opportunities to succeed academically. Policymakers, educators, and communities must work together to address the disparities in access to technology and broadband services, particularly in marginalized communities. Providing equal access to technology and supporting parents' digital literacy skills will ensure all students have the support they need to succeed in a digital world. (Dr. Stornaiuolo & Dr. Ebony, 2017, pp. 337–57).

This case study utilizes a multifaceted research design to examine the digital divide in rural and suburban communities and its impact on education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research incorporates qualitative data collection methods such as interviews and focus groups with faculty, staff, and community leaders to identify the specific needs and experiences of teachers and administrators. The study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the digital divide and propose evidence-based solutions that policymakers can implement to bridge the gap and improve education in these communities.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review was conducted in two separate parts, historical and present. The current stance surrounding the digital divide and how it has been discussed across the spheres of policy in relevance to the United States and international nations. Although this case study will be conservative to specific policy implementation and recommendations of rural and suburban school districts located in incorporated counties of the western region of Washington State, I would like to emphasize that there are vital frames of references highlighted in the literature review that encompass international discussions; they are to provide supplementary contrast and global awareness to the scope of the digital divide.

### **HISTORICAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

Articles and discussions collected from different time periods highlight the ongoing concerns and complexities surrounding the digital divide. In a news article published in the year 1999, both authors Lisa Burgess and Jessica Brown, write that in 1999, questions were raised surrounding the potential disenfranchisement of those who lacked access to technology, emphasizing the importance of universal

access and digital literacy. Socioeconomic inequality and social exclusion were identified as underlying factors contributing to the divide. (Burgess, 1999) (Brown, 1999, pp. 16-21).

Dr. Mira Burri writes that in 2001, the term "digital divide" gained recognition and was used to describe the significant gaps in access to and use of information and communication technologies, both within and between countries. Economic and informational research played a crucial role in understanding and addressing the prominent divide. The need for partnership between the non-profit and private sectors was emphasized in an additional article, stressing the importance of bridging the divide to secure America's economic future. The year 1999 marked a significant period when top business officials and leaders pledged their support for efforts to provide access and training to the less advantaged. (Burri, 2011, pp. 217-225).

The United States was recognized as facing the challenges of the digital divide, with its roots in educational divisions and historical discrimination. The ownership and regulation of telecommunications and internet access were also highlighted, raising questions about responsibility and distribution of broadband connections.

Moreover, the term "digital divide" was seen as reflecting a global division between populations with access to information and communication technologies. It existed not only within local communities but also on an international scale, highlighting the inequality between developed and developing countries and Eastern and Western nations. Access to ICT was considered a fundamental human right.

The historical context demonstrates the ongoing awareness of the digital divide and the need for concerted efforts to address the disparities in access, literacy, and socioeconomic factors that contribute to this divide on both national and global levels.

## INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS, TELECOMMUNICATIONS & EDUCATION POLICY

The literature reviewed in this section compares digital access and digital literacy between the United States and other countries, revealing notable differences. The United States has faced criticism for

its lag in broadband access and digital literacy comparable to similar western nations. Therefore, it is imperative to address the digital divide and enhance digital literacy to maintain competitiveness in the global economy.

In an article written by Dr. Pena-Lopez, governments worldwide are taking steps to improve broadband access and bridge the digital divide. The Paradigm Initiative's report on digital rights in Africa emphasizes the need for inclusive technology access and data privacy protections. These efforts reflect the importance of digital inclusion in promoting economic opportunities and addressing inequalities. (Pena-Lopez, 2010, pp. 21-32).

The expanding wealth gap among households in the selected region is an essential factor to consider. Dr. Sam Stevens explored how socioeconomic disparities impact access to and utilization of broadband and digital literacy resources. By focusing on a diverse range of households regarding wealth distribution, the study aims to capture the nuances and challenges associated with bridging the digital divide in this context. The research focuses on Western Washington, specifically King County, emphasizing unincorporated areas. The chosen population includes rural and suburban communities, multi-generational households, and households experiencing varying levels of wealth disparity. The objective is to examine the difficulties surrounding broadband and digital literacy infrastructure within these communities and gain insights into their unique challenges. These examples from different countries and regions demonstrate the global interconnectedness of issues related to broadband access, digital divide, and digital inclusion. These various initiatives and discussions reflect the recognition of the importance of broadband access, digital literacy, and digital rights for social and economic development on both local and global scales. (Stevens, 2019, pp. 215–256).

### **BRAVE NEW WORLD? YOUTH, DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION & FAMILIAL**

The digital divide presents a concerning issue in education, as not all students have equal access to digital devices and the internet, particularly in rural and low-income areas. This gap in technology

access, known as the digital divide, is identified as a common theme in various references, and it is considered a significant barrier to education and economic development, especially in low-income communities. ("Text - H.R.8077 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Closing the Digital Divide for Students Act of 2022.").

Several articles by Dr. Rowsell, Dr. Morrell and Dr. Alvermann has examined different aspects of the digital divide and its impact on education. With focused research on a New Zealand secondary school's implementation of a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy, uncovered issues related to digital access, capability, and outcomes. (Rowsell, Morrell & Alvermann, 2017, pp.157–165).

Without appropriate policies, there is a constant risk of the digital divide widening even further. Another concern is the level of digital literacy among students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, as digital literacy is crucial for navigating the online learning environment effectively. Additional parental involvement is crucial for supporting children's education, particularly in remote learning scenarios. The studies underscore the challenges faced by parents, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and emphasize the need for support in this aspect.

### **MAJOR US FEDERAL POLICY CONVERSATIONS | 2021 - 2022**

Introduced June 15th, 2022, Bill H.R. 8077, also known as the 'Closing the Digital Divide for Students Act of 2022', appeared on the floor of the House. Congress Representative Bill Foster, a Democrat of Illinois, is the primary sponsor of the Bill. The proposal is designed on the reform of section three of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 USC 1427 a(b) amended. This reform would address additional issues surrounding the Digital Divide by referring to the House Committee on Financial Services. H.R.2183 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Eliminate the Digital Divide Act of 2021." (Library of Congress, 24 March 2021) and ("S.2911 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): American Broadband Buildout to Eliminate America's Digital Divide Act of 2021").

Additions would include utility allowance for the costs of high-speed internet service, renting, and purchasing equipment to provide internet access. Limitations of this bill include the cost of the utility allowance for public housing — in addition to not exceeding the low cost available for monthly high-speed internet access, including the costs of satellite television and telephone services. Although, families who maintain joint packages that include satellite television cannot obtain assistance. Qualified families incur the costs of children who qualify for free or reduced lunch prices (section nine, Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. 42 USC 1758).

In addition to the limitations, the bill will regulate the protection of minors. In addition, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA) is a United States federal law located at 15 USC which imposes specific requirements on operators of websites or online services directed to children under 13 years of age. Moreover, the bill will include within the utility allowance other specific technology that can block and filter internet access to visual depictions [referring to 254(h)(5)(B)(i) of the Communications Act of 1937 (47 USC 254(h)(5)(B)(i))] Therefore, providing technology protection that meets the stated requirements for certification. (H.R.2183 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Eliminate the Digital Divide Act of 2021).

It is highlighted on the account that the bill was introduced through the House Committee on Financial Services rather than education. Although the title and context of the bill may correlate with the students and broadband accessibility, it lacks the audience of the education community. When designing the bill, the action of providing broadband access is limited to the funding of broadband research and not the development of education policy. In research, there needs to be more evidence of why the severity of education is forgotten. The bill acts on the values of student resources but needs to acknowledge the education policy itself.

In 2021, HR 3684, Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal, was passed by the House with a 228-206 vote and a USUS Senate majority of 69-30 vote. The bill highlights critical broadband grants for States and US territories. Under the bill, division F, Broadband, Title I: establishes the promotion of broadband

deployment across unserved and underserved communities. Specifically, the title highlights key areas surrounding broadband equity, action strategies, and access agency and awarding grants to facilitate the purpose of the title. The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) requires broadband providers to maintain and create a broadband mapping of the geographic footprint of the federally funded broadband infrastructure program. The broadband program holds language from the bipartisan Digital Equity Act (S., 2018), which Senators had initially designed: Patty Murray (Democrat, Washington), Robert Portman (Republic, Ohio), and Angus King (Independent, Maine). The program's language refers to the resources surrounding digital literacy and online learning systems, emphasizing low-income and minority communities. (H.R.3684 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act).

Moreover, a journalist, Rebecca Kern recorded in an article that in May of 2021, US Vice President Kamala Harris addressed the White House during an event focused on the digital divide, "The disparities are clear: fewer Black and Brown Americans use home broadband than white Americans. When people are cut off from high-speed Internet, they are also cut off from opportunity," Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said in an interview, "Broadband is the gateway to economic opportunity. So in order to open that gateway, we are putting equity at the center of everything we do. To truly transform our economy into one that works for all Americans and one that will make our country more competitive on the world stage, we have to make investments in a way that is equitable and just." (Kern, 2021).

The fault is that the social foundations of education are operationalized on the disadvantage and seek the influence of political assistance. Education policy has diligently focused on improving and advancing academic growth, a race to surpass neighboring nations. The United States needs to account for the poverty and disadvantaged populations that fail to meet the current education standards. In ten years, hypothetically, America will face enormous academic division, furthering the wedge between wealth and poverty. Policymakers speak on economic growth and self-development but must see the limits of an already dividing US education. Technological developments may grow the global boundaries of education, but still, it needs to account for the students that fall behind, the ones lost beneath the dust.

## WASHINGTON STATE POLICY

The Washington State Broadband Policy has set ambitious goals to provide universal, reliable, high-speed internet access across the state. By 2024, all residences and businesses will have scalable internet speeds of 25/3 Mbps, and by 2026, anchor institutions will have access to 1/1 Gbps. By 2028, the plan aims to offer 150/150 Mbps to all residents and businesses. To achieve these goals, the Washington State Broadband Office (WSBO) is developing a Five-Year Action Plan and a State Digital Equity Plan in collaboration with other state agencies and through public engagement. These plans will establish eligibility for federal funding to expand broadband access and bridge the digital divide in the state. The initiative, known as Internet for All in Washington, aims to provide reliable, high-speed internet access to everyone and invest in digital equity programs to ensure people have the necessary tools and skills for full digital inclusion. ("Internet access in Washington: Stats & figures, 2022)

Needless, this case study provides valuable insights to inform Washington's efforts in addressing the digital divide within the framework of the State Digital Equity Plan. By examining the specific needs of teachers and administrators in rural and suburban communities, the study can identify practical solutions and policy recommendations that align with the goals of the State Digital Equity Plan. The research's focus on broadband access, digital literacy, and academic equality can contribute to the development and implementation of targeted initiatives that promote equity in education across the state. By incorporating the perspectives of community leaders and leveraging existing resources, this work can serve as a valuable resource to guide Washington's ongoing efforts in bridging the digital divide and fostering digital equity for all residents. (Broadband Access Study. King County, 2020).

## METHODOLOGY

The study will utilize a case study research design to conduct a thorough analysis of the topic under investigation. In-depth school board meetings and interviews with faculty and administrators are

conducted to gather firsthand insights and perspectives. By integrating these diverse data sources, the case study will offer a holistic examination of the current policies, stakeholders, and other relevant variables associated with the research topic. The research design employs a multidimensional approach, combining elements of a case study with an objective of an exploratory sequential design.

The study took place in Western Washington, specifically focusing on the northernmost part of the United States. The primary area of interest was King County, a prominent and densely populated county in Western Washington State. The research focused on the unincorporated areas within King County that had limited access to broadband internet and online services.

King County stands renowned for its diverse landscape, characterized by forested highlands and lowland valleys. The researchers' deliberate choice of this demographic is underpinned by several compelling factors. The region's rural ambiance has fostered a surge in inhabitants, including Microsoft, Amazon, Google, and other corporate personnel and their families, who have made this locale their primary residence. This surge in affluence has precipitated significant transformations in the societal fabric, impacting families deeply rooted in the area's tribal history. Consequently, a conspicuous schism has emerged between the rural and suburban enclaves, with marked disparities in socioeconomic indicators prevalent across the district.

Within this area's educational landscape, the school district encompasses two principal towns, Carnation and Duvall, as well as two subsidiary subdivisions, Ames Lake and Lake Marcel. Duvall, with its population density of 3,681 individuals per square mile, comprises a population where 73.1% identify as White American, 11.7% as Hispanic American, 9.4% as Asian American, and 0.6% as African American. The median household income estimate for Duvall soared to \$174,947 in 2021, reflecting a substantial rise from the \$71,300 recorded in 2000. In contrast, the smaller towns in the vicinity, such as Carnation with its population of 2,167, Ames Lake with 1,486 inhabitants, and Lake Marcel with 1,277 residents, exhibit estimated annual incomes that fall below the \$100,000 threshold. (US Census)

## DATA

To gather diverse perspectives on policies and their implications, interviews were conducted with faculty, staff, and administrators. The study focused on a public high school with a diverse student population, including both suburban and rural students with varying levels of broadband access. A total of fifteen educators were interviewed, representing a range of roles within the school. Additionally, a focus group was formed at the end of school hours to encourage faculty members and staff to participate in the study, with approximately ten participants involved. The interview and focus group questions can be found in *Appendix A*. Teachers and administrative staff play crucial roles in the education system and possess valuable insights based on their classroom experiences. Through these discussions, the study obtained firsthand accounts of policy implementation, effectiveness, and the challenges faced by educators. By incorporating these interviews, the case study brings a human element to the analysis, presenting personal narratives and diverse viewpoints that enhance the overall understanding.

By employing this multi-faceted approach, the case study examines the present policies, considering their historical context and impact on various stakeholders. Including a literary review, school board meetings, and teacher interviews will ensure a comprehensive analysis, providing valuable insights into the subject matter and offering recommendations for future policy enhancements or revisions.

The study leverages detailed school board meetings held between 2018 and 2023 to enhance historical analysis. These meetings play a vital role in shaping policies and making decisions, offering valuable firsthand insights into the current policies and their effects on different stakeholders. By meticulously transcribing the minutes and notes from these meetings, the research gains a comprehensive understanding of the underlying processes, diverse perspectives of board members and community participants, and the dynamics influencing policy formation. The data obtained from these sources provides a solid foundation for identifying gaps, understanding community needs, and addressing the critical factors that are prioritized in the policy-making process.

The interview questions cover key themes related to the effects of remote learning, including disparities in student outcomes, parental engagement, communication challenges, digital literacy, teaching

methods, and school administration support. The questions explore factors contributing to disparities between rural and suburban communities, parental involvement strategies, communication challenges without reliable broadband access, and the importance of effective communication in supporting student learning.

Additionally, the questions address digital literacy training for parents, intergenerational learning, the role of schools in supporting households, and the personal impact of remote learning on the interviewees. Teaching methods, adaptation to the digital divide, comfort with online learning, and support from school administration are also discussed. The theme of unequal broadband access and its impact on student outcomes is examined, including potential solutions to address this gap. Overall, these themes provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing the interview data and understanding the challenges of remote learning in the post-COVID-19 era.

## COLLECTION

The interviews and focus group were divided into two distinct segments:

For the interviews, individual sessions were held between the principal researcher and the participating educators. The first segment aimed to establish the study's focal points, followed by a comprehensive analysis of the discussions to capture profound insights, narratives, and a broader perspective on the evolving landscape of education throughout the United States. This encompassed understanding the requirements of students, teachers, the community, and the overarching developmental needs of education. The initial interviews featured a total of ten participants.

The focus group, conducted with an open-minded approach, delved into the narratives surrounding education. While I, as the primary researcher, initially guided the group through detailed questions, the participants freely expressed their thoughts, particularly focusing on the repercussions of the global pandemic on educational programs. This conversation centered on the challenges it posed to administrators, educators, and the entire staff. The focus group comprised a total of eight participants.

## INTERVIEWS

Participants	Occupation
A1	Educator/Teacher
A2	Educator/Teacher
A3	Educator/Teacher
A4	Educator/Teacher
A5	Educator/Teacher
A6	Educator/Teacher
A7	Educational Administrator
A8	Educator/Teacher
A9	Educational Administrator
A10	Educational Administrator

*FOCUS GROUP*

Participants	Occupation
B11	Educational Administrator
B12	Educator/Teacher
B13	Educator/Teacher

B14	Educator/Teacher
B15	Educator/Teacher
B16	Educator/Teacher
B17	Educator/Teacher
B18	Educator/Teacher

## ANALYSIS

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic at hand, this study analyzes meeting minutes collected from the archives of school board meetings. The analysis focuses on the conversations related to broadband and digital literacy, with particular attention given to the frequency and intensity of these discussions. A vital aspect of the analysis involves examining the timeline in which these conversations intensified during the period of COVID and post-COVID. By carefully examining the meeting minutes, the study will delve into the content and context of the discussions surrounding broadband and digital literacy. This part of the analysis sheds light on educational institutions' evolving priorities and challenges in addressing the digital divide and promoting digital literacy during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The analysis closely examines the patterns and trends from meeting minutes. The research employs thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns or themes within the data. As the primary researcher, I focused on examining the interview data from both teachers and administrators, in addition to district meeting minutes. Searching for commonalities, differences, and meaningful patterns to group them into thematic categories. Thematic analysis comprehensively understands participants' experiences and perspectives, allowing for in-depth data exploration. Thus, identifying any notable shifts in the broadband and digital literacy conversations, considering the specific timeline of COVID-related events.

This approach provided intel to discern how the pandemic influenced the attention and resources devoted to these critical educational issues.

By expanding the analysis to cover the COVID period and the subsequent post-COVID phase, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the long-term implications and changes in the discussions surrounding broadband and digital literacy within the school board meetings.

Firstly, the study aims to shed light on the experiences of rural and suburban communities concerning broadband and digital literacy. These areas often need help accessing reliable internet connections and may need more infrastructure to support digital services.

Secondly, the research seeks to examine the dynamics within multi-generational households. Given the demographic composition of the chosen population, it is expected that many households consist of individuals from different generations living together. This aspect can influence the adoption and utilization of broadband internet and digital technologies within these households.

The potential policy implications are significant given that the existing data predates the COVID-19 pandemic and is primarily based on statistical evidence. The current research needs more evidence regarding the circumstances of rural and urban American households and the limitations teachers face in the digital education era. Additionally, there is a need to provide more context regarding ongoing discussions on broadband and education policies.

In my proposed approach, I consider the collected data, but I place greater emphasis on addressing the needs of teachers and their administrative responsibilities. I also consider the crucial role of digital literacy skills and the importance of community. Schools should not be seen merely as drop-off and pick-up points for children; they serve as central hubs where communities and populations come together to discuss the future of their children and the challenges they face. Thus these hubs should be accessible and open for growth. They are developing a learning center for students, parents, and teachers alike.

## LIMITATIONS

This mixed-method study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the findings may not be generalizable to all educational settings, as the study focuses on a specific public high school with its unique characteristics. The sample size is relatively small, with only nineteen educators participating in interviews and approximately eight participants in the focus group. This limited sample size restricts the diversity of perspectives represented and affects the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, there is a potential for bias in participant selection, as the study focuses on educators from a single high school. The accuracy and completeness of the meeting minutes and transcriptions from school board meetings may also be a limitation, as interpretations may vary, and important details could be missed during the analysis. The subjective nature of self-reported data from interviews and focus groups introduces the possibility of bias influenced by participants' perceptions and experiences. Time and resource constraints contribute to the study's timeframe, data collection, and the exploration of additional research questions. Considering these limitations is crucial when interpreting the findings and understanding the implications of this multifaceted study.

## FINDINGS

### MEETING MINUTES

A thorough examination of the school board meeting minutes was carried out. Despite meticulous scrutiny, no substantial evidence or remarkable discoveries pertaining to the digital divide and online resources were discerned within the minutes. However, the analysis did reveal an abundance of conversations shedding light on the intricate nature of the educational community and societal challenges.

Significant emphasis across differing conversations revolved around addressing the requirements of students who sought aid for meals and access to library supplies throughout the pandemic. This situation had a notable impact on the allocation of district resources. Mental health emerged as a pivotal focal point in community discussions, thereby contributing significantly to broader conversations concerning intergenerational needs, student well-being, and the imperative of mental health awareness.

Racial consciousness within the community added another substantial layer to the overall educational landscape and the community at large. This, in turn, led to an escalation in the frequency of discussions noted in meeting minutes. These matters were all of immense importance in the context of both student achievement and the holistic health of the community. The school district community members were actively addressing these larger variables and needs, underscoring their commitment to fostering student success and community well-being.

This investigation indicates potential avenues for future research, encompassing topics such as racial disparities, gender studies, youth engagement, and the intricate landscape of youth mental health. It is noteworthy that the school district's discussions on digital learning appeared to lack consistency, a circumstance that can be better understood considering the prevailing concerns surrounding students' mental well-being and its day-to-day impact. Conversely, the interviews provided more conclusive insights into differing topics — interviews revealed a prevalent focus on teaching implementation, particularly concerning the stages of broadband access and online learning. It became evident that these factors played a significant role in shaping the educational landscape.

## INTERVIEWS

A prominent theme that emerged from the interviews was the reflection on the digital divide and its profound impact on communities and students. The interviews shed light on the challenges faced by communities and students on the disadvantaged side of the digital divide. Limited access to reliable broadband internet and technological resources posed significant obstacles to their educational journey. As a result, these individuals faced difficulties fully participating in online learning, which became more prevalent during the period under review.

The implications of the digital divide were multifaceted. It impacted not only students' ability to access educational resources but also their overall academic performance and socio-emotional well-being. The divide mirrored existing inequalities in society, with marginalized communities disproportionately affected by the lack of access to digital resources. The consequences of the digital divide reached beyond

the confines of the classroom, perpetuating systemic inequities and hindering opportunities for educational advancement.

The interviews provided valuable insights into how the digital divide shaped the educational experiences of communities and students. It highlighted the urgent need for targeted interventions and policy changes to bridge the divide and ensure equitable access to technology and online resources for all. Addressing this issue is crucial to create a level playing field and empower students from all backgrounds to thrive in the digital age.

The study encompassed a comprehensive analysis organized into six distinct themed categories, each emphasizing the criticality and relevance of digital transformation in public education across the United States. It is essential to note that this research primarily focused on examining the micro-level aspects of the subject matter.

The categories explored within the study shed light on various facets of digital transformation within the education system. Each category played a vital role in understanding the implications, challenges, and potential opportunities associated with integrating technology in public schools.

### EQUITY AND ACCESS

The themes of equity and access in education emerged prominently from the focus groups and interviews. The discussions shed light on various issues ensuring equal opportunities for all students. One prevalent concern was the need for translated documents to facilitate understanding and engagement among diverse communities. The participants emphasized the importance of providing support and resources for students with disabilities and involving underrepresented populations in decision-making processes.

Effective communication with parents and students was critical, particularly for non-English-speaking and Hispanic communities. Building trust, establishing connections, and offering translated materials were highlighted as essential strategies for fostering meaningful engagement. During the interviews, one teacher remarked on the challenges faced by students who could not attend online classes due to familial responsibilities, such as taking care of younger siblings while their parents worked.

"Teachers were trying to call home; students were not showing up for online classes; they were working. Parents needed to go to work, and the older sibling needed to care for the younger siblings; it was their responsibility. That situation is happening all over the United States; even here, it is prevalent. It's a communication problem. Those who speak Spanish, to build more trust and connections." (Participant B11, Educator). This situation was recognized as prevalent across the United States, highlighting the need for improved communication, the collaboration of support systems, and significant sensitivity to cultural responsibility and exceptions across student populations.

The digital divide became a significant point of discussion, as it created a drastic disparity between those who could readily adapt to online learning and those who faced difficulties, mainly if English was not their first language. The division between students who could easily access online resources and those who struggled to navigate the digital landscape was underscored as a significant concern.

Some students were unable to turn on their cameras during remote learning due to various circumstances. They shared limited resources, such as a single Wi-Fi connection used by multiple family members attending classes or parents working remotely. An anecdote was shared about a student who hesitated to turn on her camera due to a background situation where her mother could be heard yelling. This scenario raised awareness about the potential challenges and distractions students face in their learning environments, emphasizing the need for critical thinking surrounding the support for students inside and outside the classroom.

#### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION?

"There were some positive outcomes. Kids today have a better ability to access technology and information that they will need to access in the future; they are forced to, and teachers too. It has shifted our learning and how we are learning. Moreover, right now, we have to reinvent that a little bit and look to some of those models in other places because the illusion has been blown on education for the students, parents, and teachers, and we need to come back together and talk about purpose, what is the purpose of public education. I think that's a lot of it." (Participant A1, Educator).

The interviews shed light on the need to reevaluate the purpose of public education in the United States, considering the evolving needs of the current generation. The participants expressed their belief that modern students have greater access to technology and information, necessitating a shift in how education is approached. There is a call for reinvention and a reexamination of the fundamental purpose of public education.

One participant highlighted the impact of technological advancements on learning and emphasized the importance of looking at models from other places to inform educational practices. They acknowledged that students, parents, and teachers had challenged the perception of education, prompting the need for collective discussions on the purpose of public education.

The current curriculum structure in the State of Washington, Core 24, was discussed as potentially limiting students' flexibility in course selection and access to different teaching approaches. This rigidity within the curriculum was seen as a barrier to providing a well-rounded educational experience.

Concerns were raised about the value of diplomas and the overall purpose of Public Education in the United States. What is a diploma worth if we create the competency levels (check marks) that ultimately give out diplomas? What is the purpose of public education in the United States? There are always going to be socioeconomic inequalities in this country. [looking at European education models] They have differing societal values; I do not believe we will ever progress to that point in this country [United States]." (Participant A3, Educator).

The participant questioned the significance of competency levels and expressed doubts about the effectiveness of the current education system in addressing socioeconomic inequalities. They contrasted the societal values of European education models and expressed skepticism about the possibility of the United States reaching a similar level of progress.

The purpose of education was further explored, emphasizing the need to build skills, content knowledge, and maturity levels. The shift from knowledge-based to skill-based education and the challenges of adapting to the fast-paced changes in the tech world were discussed. The competitive nature of the education system, where American students compete against each other but also against

international students, was highlighted. Post-COVID, the education structure was seen as requiring reform and adjustment to align with the current generation's needs.

"[United States] We need to re-examine our purpose of education; build skills, content, maturity levels? We have lost it. Back in the day, education was based on knowledge; today, knowledge is cheap. Then in the era of Generation X, Education was based on skills, then those skills became obsolete in the tech world. For the past twenty years, competitiveness held weight in the education system; American students were no longer competing against each other but against other international students for spots in United States-based universities and colleges. Post-covid, it has changed again, and the education structure needs to be reformed and adjusted to the generation today." (Participant A1, Educator).

#### VISUAL SUFFERING ACROSS A GROWING GENERATION

"The young people suffer during online learning." (Participant A5, Educator).

Socioeconomic inequality is recognized as a significant factor in education, with the text acknowledging the impact of funding disparities on access to quality education, especially in rural areas. The influence of societal values on educational systems and the need for more significant equity are also highlighted.

The digital divide, which stems from socioeconomic inequality, is portrayed as deeply rooted in the foundation of the United States. It is emphasized that the digital divide has been growing over time, and the global pandemic has further exacerbated this divide, revealing the stark socioeconomic disparities that exist in society.

One quote draws attention to the hardships young people face during online learning, emphasizing the negative impact of the digital divide on their educational experiences.

"Macro and micro, on a macro level, are all socioeconomic. That is partly how we fund education; it is inequitable...You can't go to the next town over [new school] and tell me they are not getting a better education than a rural school district. Furthermore, those are societal; why we do not have equitable broadband access for everyone in one of the wealthiest nations in the world is mind-boggling; it is simple. There's not much as an educator that I can ask or do, but as a citizen, I advocate for those

things. As far as a district level, there needs to be a refocus. The wealthiest in your district often get the loudest voices. We cater to the Microsoft population, and this district's rural and immigrant populations are left to fend for themselves. We need more equity in our district. In my classroom, it boils down to being more hyper-aware of where my students are coming from, not performance-wise, but what they can complete. Now after post-covid, we may no longer be online, but realistically we are still online in many aspects." (Participant A1, Educator).

The socioeconomic inequities in education are discussed on both macro and micro levels. The macro-level analysis acknowledges that funding for education is often inequitable, leading to unequal opportunities between different school districts. The lack of equitable broadband access is also raised as a concern, particularly considering the United States' status as one of the wealthiest nations in the world. The quote suggests that as an educator, there may be limited influence over such matters, but advocating for equitable access becomes a personal responsibility as a citizen. At the district level, there is a call for refocusing priorities and addressing the imbalance where wealthier populations tend to have louder voices and better resources, leaving the rural and immigrant populations underserved. The need for greater equity within the district is emphasized.

At the classroom level, the focus shifts to being hyper-aware of students' backgrounds and capabilities, not solely based on their academic performance. This awareness extends beyond the online learning context, acknowledging that even after the post-COVID period, online aspects of education will continue to play a significant role. The quote suggests the importance of adapting teaching practices to meet the needs of students who may still face digital barriers or have different capabilities due to their socioeconomic circumstances.

### HEROES TO SCAPEGOATS

The interviews provided insights into the challenges faced by teachers, highlighting the need for training, concerns related to standardized testing, and the impact of the pandemic on teaching practices. It also delves into the shifting public perception of teachers during the pandemic.

The quotes touch upon the evolving public perception of teachers during the pandemic. Initially, there was a promising recognition of their value, with teachers labeled heroes. However, the perception turned negative, making them scapegoats for various issues.

"Public perception of teachers and teaching was promising. And then it turned. The ones labeled as heroes, becoming negative scapegoats." (Participant A10, Educator).

The interviews also acknowledge the significant challenges teachers encountered during the pandemic. One quote emphasizes the cultural and national acknowledgment of essential workers, including teachers, during the crisis. However, it highlights teachers' difficulties in adapting to the sudden shift from in-person to remote and online teaching. The comparison drawn to the difference between reading a book and watching its movie adaptation emphasizes the significant disparities between in-person and remote learning experiences.

"During the pandemic, it was like reinventing the wheel. Describing it as, if you read a book or see a movie, why is the book so different from the movie? Teaching in-person is so different from teaching remotely and online." (Participant A5, Educator).

The impact of the pandemic on students' education is highlighted. The quote reflects on the disruption caused by transitioning from traditional in-person education to online learning, emphasizing that students had several years of established educational experiences that were drastically changed.

#### **INVISIBLE VOICES OF THE YOUTH: A FIGHT FOR EDUCATION**

The interviews bring attention to the limitations and challenges associated with online learning, including issues such as unreliable Wi-Fi connections, outdated computers, and the preference for physical activities and materials. Moreover, the need to ensure equal opportunities for students lacking home computer access is emphasized.

One quote highlights the misconception that all young people are proficient in digital technology, which was quickly dispelled when online learning became prevalent. Realizing that many students faced difficulties accessing information and learning tools during online education was a significant challenge.

An additional quote emphasizes the teacher's shift from online platforms and adopting physical activities and materials in the post-COVID era. The preference expressed by students for hands-on learning experiences is acknowledged and appreciated.

Furthermore, the interviews recognize the advancements in providing students with tools and resources upon their return to in-person learning. The ability to translate documents for students is mentioned as a positive development. A teacher interviewee commented, "Coming back, we have so many more tools for our students. I have been able to translate my documents for my students. However, the structure of the classroom is not equipped for online learning. Wi-Fi is unstable inside the classroom — the school is not equipped. The computers are outdated, taking away the time from the teachers and students from learning." (Participant B13, Educator). However, it is also noted that the classroom infrastructure may not be adequately equipped for online learning, with unstable Wi-Fi connections and outdated computers posing challenges for teachers and students.

The interviews shed light on the limitations and challenges encountered in online learning, highlighting the importance of addressing issues such as access to technology and the significance of physical activities and materials for effective education. The need for improvements in infrastructure and resources within educational institutions is also underscored to ensure a conducive learning environment.

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The central theme anchoring these recommendations highlights the importance of customization for a wide range of audiences. This specific methodology applied to the case study and the consequent outcomes carries the capacity to elevate and drive forward the dynamic educational panorama spanning all domains of expertise. It is important to recognize that these suggestions derive from the study's evidence, systematically categorized into three distinct segments: research endeavors, classroom recommendations, and state-level initiatives.

## RESEARCH INITIATIVES & SUGGESTIONS

The interplay of research endeavors emerges at the intersection of both rhetorical discourse and dialogues surrounding educational programs, as well as the advancement of scholarly investigations. In the contemporary landscape of education, there exists a compelling demand for a reevaluation of the very essence of education, its impact on students, and its broader resonance within society.

Within the realm of research, there lies an imperative to enhance conversations pertaining to educational policy and to reshape the narrative that enlists educators, students, and families from diverse backgrounds as active participants in the discourse and the future evolution of educational policies. This necessitates a broadening of the research scope by delving into supplementary sources and accumulating essential insights to enrich the ongoing study.

A meticulous exploration of historical contexts is pivotal in deciphering the socioeconomic ramifications and systemic influences that have molded the present-day educational system. Through a comprehensive collection and analysis of data, concealed trends and revelations can be unearthed, thereby contributing to a more profound comprehension of the educational terrain.

The findings of the case study unequivocally demonstrate that augmenting micro-level narratives in education results in an enhancement of overall data quality. Unlike statistical studies, which may lack resilience, this interplay between narrative and data fortifies the equilibrium, enabling a more robust assessment of educational efficacy, educator requirements, student involvement, and the broader transformational dynamics of the academic milieu.

Addressing the disparities in funding across educational institutions requires the implementation of policies that guarantee an equitable distribution of resources among various school districts. In addition, advocating for widespread and impartial access to broadband connectivity throughout the nation stands as a crucial stride towards equitable educational opportunities.

To rectify the perpetuation of societal values that breed inequalities, it becomes imperative to accord precedence to the needs of marginalized and underserved populations, encompassing rural and immigrant communities. Initiating dialogues and effecting reforms that redefine the very purpose of

public education in the United States is essential, taking into account the evolving requisites of the present generation.

Drawing inspiration from educational models in other nations can serve as a compass to inform educational practices, emphasizing the cultivation of skills, subject expertise, and overall maturation. A transformation of the curriculum to introduce flexibility in course selection and pedagogical approaches addresses the challenges of competitiveness and socioeconomic disparities embedded within the educational framework.

### DISTRICT & CLASSROOM INITIATIVES

Grounded in the findings unearthed by the research, educators articulated the challenges of navigating through shifting learning landscapes, patterns, and strategies – a predictable observation. However, it was the sincerity with which educators expressed their genuine concern for witnessing their students grappling with the concept of an evolving educational future that truly stood out.

Strategies include comprehensive training and support to enable educators to adeptly navigate evolving teaching methods, particularly in the realm of remote and virtual instruction. Demonstrate genuine acknowledgment and admiration for the tireless efforts of teachers, safeguarding them from unjust blame for the myriad challenges confronting the educational landscape. Tackle apprehensions linked to standardized testing while creating avenues for continuous professional growth. Empower teachers and marginalized communities by amplifying their voices in the realm of educational policy formulation, thereby fostering impactful discourse and advocacy that spearheads transformative change.

Channel efforts into crafting policies that accord paramount importance to the requirements and experiences of every learner, irrespective of their socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, or other defining characteristics. Enhance communication strategies with diverse communities, especially those encumbered by language barriers. Facilitate comprehension through translated materials, foster connections, and nurture trust to facilitate substantial engagement with both parents and students. Incorporate the insights and necessities of underrepresented groups into decision-making processes to ensure an inclusive and holistic approach.

Pioneer dialogues and reforms that redefine the purpose of public education in the United States, a reassessment attuned to the dynamic needs of the present generation. Garner insights from international educational models to enrich pedagogical practices and underscore the development of competencies, content mastery, and emotional maturity. Overhaul the curriculum to allow flexibility in course selection and instructional methodologies, effectively addressing concerns surrounding competitiveness and socioeconomic disparities entrenched within the education system.

### STATE & US POLICY SUGGESTIONS

The research findings address a scenario where policy implementation appears disconnected from educational research, leading to a rising sense of dissatisfaction within the educational system and amplifying the narratives of concern voiced by educators.

Empower educators and marginalized communities by elevating their voices within the realm of educational policy formation. This will foster constructive discourse and active advocacy aimed at addressing deep-rooted systemic challenges, thus paving the way for profound transformative shifts. It is imperative that policy overhauls are tailored to cater to the requirements and perspectives of all learners, irrespective of their socioeconomic status, racial background, gender, or other distinguishing characteristics.

Craft and execute focused initiatives and regulations to bridge the digital gap, thereby guaranteeing fair and unrestricted access to technology and online learning tools for every student. This strategy encompasses tackling broadband accessibility issues prevalent in underserved regions, equipping economically disadvantaged students with essential technological tools, and providing comprehensive support for enhancing digital literacy skills.

Confront the disparities in educational funding head-on by enacting policies that assure a more even handed allocation of resources among various school districts. Plead for uniform broadband accessibility throughout the nation, advocating for a level playing field for all.

Address and rectify societal norms that perpetuate inequalities, placing the needs of underserved demographics such as rural and immigrant communities at the forefront. Commit to enhancing

infrastructure within educational institutions to bolster online learning capabilities, guaranteeing dependable Wi-Fi connections and modernized computing systems.

Acknowledge the predilection for hands-on educational experiences and seamlessly integrate physical activities and materials into pedagogical approaches. Ensure that students devoid of personal computer access at home are afforded the same educational opportunities as their peers.

## **FUTURE ACTIONS**

The advancing agenda for this research is to delve deeper into the data's complexities and expand the study's scope. While today may not feel like a new day in the traditional sense, the research conducted thus far has revealed significant shifts and progress in our understanding of educational dynamics. As the principal researcher on this case study, I have approached the subject matter with an open lens, seeking to unearth meaningful conversations and narratives beyond the confines of mere statistical evidence.

When policymakers and educational board leaders present statistical data on student success rates, it often fails to capture the essence of students' experiences, the challenges educators, administrators, and households face, and the nuanced factors that contribute to educational outcomes. These seemingly meaningless numbers overlook the rich tapestry of stories that lie beneath the surface. In my research, I have been resolute in my commitment to collect and amplify many voices, giving agency to teachers who have expressed their fears, anger, frustration, joy, and sadness.

As I have delved into countless transcribed meeting minutes, a disheartening pattern has emerged – a lack of conversations surrounding student success and the crucial components of broadband and digital literacy access. While some mentionings of racial diversity have been made, there has been a dearth of meaningful connections within the context of digital equity. This realization highlights the urgent need to address systemic issues and bridge the gap between educational policies and the equitable distribution of resources.

My next steps encompass a multifaceted approach. First and foremost, it is imperative to address the limitations of the existing data by seeking out additional sources and accumulating the necessary information to enrich the study. Through comprehensive data collection and analysis, I aim to uncover

hidden patterns, untold stories, and crucial insights to foster a deeper understanding of the educational landscape.

In addition, a detailed historical analysis is vital to contextualize the socioeconomic impact and systemic forces that have shaped our current education system. A more nuanced understanding can be achieved by tracing the historical trajectories of educational policies, socioeconomic factors, and societal shifts. This analysis will shed light on how the United States, once a leading member on the global stage, has experienced limitations and layers imposed on its education system, stemming from a complex interplay of socioeconomic circumstances.

The significance of these next steps cannot be overstated. Through diligent research and advocacy, I aim to contribute to a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the challenges and opportunities within our education system. I aim to spark meaningful dialogue, policy reforms, and transformative change by amplifying marginalized communities' voices and examining the underlying structures perpetuating inequities.

Ultimately, this research aims to pave the way for a more equitable, empowering, and effective education system that values the diverse needs and experiences of all learners. By continuing to explore, analyze, and disseminate findings, I aspire to make a lasting impact and contribute to a future where educational opportunities are accessible to everyone, regardless of socioeconomic background, race, gender, or any other defining factor.

## **APPENDIX**

### *Interview and Focus Group Questions*

#### Section 1: Student Outcomes

- Have you noticed any disparities in student outcomes between rural and suburban communities during the transition to remote learning post-COVID-19? (Clarifying)

Follow-up questions:

- What specific disparities have you observed?

- Access to technologies during the pandemic
  - Disparities following and unfolding
- How do you believe these disparities have impacted student learning and progress?
- Have any specific challenges or advantages been associated with either rural or suburban communities in terms of student outcomes?

## Section 2: Parental Engagement

- To what extent have parents been engaged in their children's education during remote learning?

Follow-up questions:

- What methods or strategies have been effective in promoting parental engagement?
- Have you noticed any differences in parental engagement levels between rural and suburban communities?
- How has parental engagement (or lack thereof) influenced student participation and success in remote learning?

## Section 3: Communication Challenges

- Have you encountered any difficulties in communicating with families without reliable broadband access during the transition to remote learning?

Follow-up questions:

- How have communication challenges affected the delivery of educational content and support?
- Have you implemented any alternative communication methods to overcome these challenges?
- What impact have these communication challenges had on student learning and engagement?
- Can you provide any additional information on how remote learning has impacted you personally (inside or outside of the school setting)?

## Section 4: Adapting Teaching Methods

- How have you adapted your teaching methods to accommodate the digital divide in rural and suburban communities during remote learning?

Follow-up questions:

- What specific changes or adjustments have you made to your teaching approach?
- Have you found any strategies or tools particularly effective in bridging the digital divide?
- What additional resources or support would be helpful in further addressing the disparities in teaching methods?

#### Section 5: Support from the District

- Have you received sufficient support and resources from the school administration during the transition to remote learning post-COVID-19?

Follow-up questions:

- What types of support or resources have been most valuable to you?
- Have there been any notable challenges or gaps in the support provided?
- How has the level of support impacted your ability to address remote learning disparities between rural and suburban communities?

#### Section 6: Broadband Access and Student Outcomes

- To what extent do you think the unequal distribution of broadband access has impacted student outcomes during remote learning?

Follow-up questions:

- How have students without reliable broadband access been affected in terms of participation, engagement, and academic progress?
- What solutions or interventions do you believe would help mitigate the impact of unequal broadband access?
- Are there any additional insights or observations you would like to share regarding the link between broadband access and student outcomes?

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