

## ADOPT Equipment Project Proposal

Manhattan-Ogden Unified School District 383

### **STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

June 28, 2023

#### **Mission**

Our mission is to prepare all students for success as lifelong learners, earners and citizens.

#### **Objectives**

1. Provide every student equitable access to learner-centered curriculum, instruction, assessment and interventions.
2. Provide a culture and environment to promote positive and productive conditions for learning, teaching and working.
3. Develop and enhance mutually beneficial relationships where schools, families and community partners share a commitment to student success.

#### 1. Executive Summary of the Project

In the fall of 2020, the Manhattan-Ogden school district moved to provide 1:1 devices for all students. After distributing these devices it became apparent that addressing the access to the digital equipment was one aspect to the digital divide of technology access and internet access was the other. While the district had addressed the Wi-Fi access in the buildings there was a gap for those students needing to connect to the internet to complete assignments outside of the regular school day. While the Manhattan-Ogden school district worked to provide Wi-Fi options in and around the schools and district buildings for extended day support (e.g., addition of access points on the exterior of district buildings, setting up large cellular Wi-Fi antennas in community buildings and locations). Soon it was apparent that to meet the needs of all students and families there needed to be more equity in the access to high-speed internet. There is a need for all students and their families to have this access to address educational needs as well as to expand digital skills of everyone in the home.

It needs and usage of Wi-Fi access showed that the internet is a vital tool in the everyday lives of those living in the Manhattan-Ogden community. The need for Wi-Fi accessibility, affordability, and device availability for families are necessary to be active members of the community. With family members working from home, along with student educational needs it was communicated from families that home infrastructure limitations, along with affordability issues led to the lack of access to adequate Wi-Fi access for all members of the home (i.e., some families use cellular phones as Wi-Fi hotspots for everyone in the family to use). With various grant opportunities the Manhattan-Ogden school district was an entity capable of procuring, distributing,

managing, and maintaining devices to provide in home Wi-Fi access. Staffing from the technology support area of the Information Technology department took on the management of these devices and providing them out to schools where they could be distributed from the school libraries. Wi-Fi devices were provided to individuals lacking the short-term needs, means or infrastructure in their homes. The Manhattan-Ogden also provided information on low-cost options for Wi-Fi access from various local and regional providers of internet access for those that requested it.

Wi-Fi has become one of the tools necessary to participate and compete in our increasingly connected world. By being able to provide these tools to students and families in this transient community served by the Manhattan-Ogden school district it assists in access to educational as well as community resources that connects these individuals and groups of high need to become more viable members of the community.

2. Description of Partners and how this will make devices available.

The Manhattan-Ogden school district works with various community entities to meet the long- and short-term needs of those living in the Riley and Pottawatomie counties. While the Manhattan-Ogden school district serves the students and families in these counties and assists with the needs of community members other community organizations are not being solicited to assist with this grant proposal.

By having these in home hotspots for Wi-Fi connectivity students and families will be able to access additional resources within the community. Today, many support resources can and sometimes only be accessed digitally. Having the connectivity to meet these needs are becoming more of necessity than ever before. Being able to connect to education resources students can expand their interaction with online tools to assist them with various needs (e.g., English language support).

3. Goals of the project and community benefit.

The Wi-Fi goal for the Manhattan-Ogden school district has been the same since first providing mobile hotspots in 2020, to assist students to be productive using the educational tools available both online as well as off. It also has become clear that these tools also provide opportunities and support for families that may have moved to the Manhattan-Ogden school district to find new educational or family opportunities within the community.

With connections to both Fort Riley as well as Kansas State University the Manhattan-Ogden school district has the ability to connect students and families to various opportunities within the community. Technology today allows for these connections to happen more organically and the first major hurdle to be addressed is that of Wi-Fi and internet connectivity.

4. How the project will enable eligible entities to distribute no-cost devices.

Since 2020 the Manhattan-Ogden school district has been providing home Wi-Fi hotspots to students needing access at no cost. The funding for these Wi-Fi hotspots had come from various grant funded programs (e.g., Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund -ESSER and Emergency Connectivity Fund – ECF). With many of these federal programs coming to an end in 2024 the Manhattan-Ogden school district has been working to locate additional funding sources to address the critical needs of its students.

5. Short and long-term benefits to the community.

In the last four years the access to Wi-Fi hotspots have helped students with various family situations to be able to continue the educational process in their homes. The access to free public Wi-Fi has provided assistance for some students and families but having access in the home has been identified from direct family communication as the most beneficial for families, especially to work on assignments or connect later in the evening or at times when transportation to public Wi-Fi is not available. The Manhattan-Ogden school district continues to strive to find financing for this Wi-Fi access so that students and their families can meet their needs within the digital space.

Having the ability for community members to go online and search for resources within the Manhattan area is important as many of these resources are located on the internet. Having students being able to complete educational assignments assists the community by having technologically literate members that can, not only access, but understand the use of these online tools.