To: BOCES District Superintendents
              Superintendents of Public Schools
              Public School Leaders
              Charter School Leaders
              RIC Directors and Level 1 Project Managers

From: Marybeth Casey, Assistant Commissioner
              Rose LeRoy, Director of Educational Data and Research

Subject: New Student-Level Digital Equity Data Collection

Date: June 8, 2021

This memo provides information on the new collection of student digital equity data in the Student Information Repository System (SIRS) for public school districts, Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), and charter schools for the 2021-22 school year.

In June 2020, and again in October 2020, the New York State Education Department (Department) released a Digital Equity Survey that asked schools to provide data on computing devices and broadband access in students' and teachers' locations of residence. The data, particularly from the Fall 2020 Digital Equity Survey, show that considerable progress has been made to address the digital divide, thanks in large part to the efforts of our schools, districts, and BOCES. Even so, hundreds of thousands of New York State students still do not have access to a device appropriate for learning, or to sufficient broadband access.

The importance of access to devices and broadband has been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and this access will remain necessary in the future. Digital equity is essential for educational equity. To serve our students, families, and educators, it is imperative that districts, BOCES, charter schools, and the Department have, and maintain, an updated, accurate, complete picture of the state of digital equity for each individual student.

Beginning in the Fall of 2021, schools and BOCES will report data on students' access to devices and broadband in their places of residence to the Department via SIRS. This information will replace the Technology questions 8B and 8D currently collected as part of the Basic Education Data System (BEDS) Institutional Master File (IMF) public school form.

The new Student Digital Access data elements provided as an attachment to this memo will be added to the data collection for every student in SIRS. The attachment details each element's name, definition, response options, and clarifications, as well as sample questions to provide to parents and guardians to ascertain the device and internet access students have at their places of residence. Likewise, this information will be included in the SIRS Manual and be updated as needed to assist the field with reporting requirements. This data will provide the most accurate picture of digital access and informing State Policy and providing Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) with programmatic and instructional information and needed supports to further outcomes in teaching and learning.

This data will be used on an ongoing basis throughout the year to help identify specific needs and target resources and funding opportunities when they become available. In addition to identifying funding opportunities, the data are also used to inform legislature and senate initiatives in addition to informing Department policy.

The Digital Equity data collection in SIRS will require schools and districts to report Student Digital Access data from all students enrolled in the district in grades K-12 and ungraded students. At this time, data on Pre-K students will not be required. The home district is responsible for reporting this data for all students enrolled in their schools and for students who are enrolled in a BOCES program part-time but still attend their home district for part of the day. BOCES should only report data for Out-of-District placed students to whom they provide full-time instruction. Data would be reported using the main BOCES BEDSCODE.

Students' parents/guardians will only need to be canvassed once at the beginning of each school year *unless* a student's enrollment changes to a new school building or the student moves to a new residence and their internet connectivity changes. Schools are greatly encouraged to keep all Digital Equity data on students updated in their student management systems (SMS) and to push that data to the Level 2 Data Warehouse (L2DW) throughout the year to indicate student changes and any school-initiated changes, for example, the deployment of new district- or school-owned devices to students for use in their places of residence.

Districts, BOCES, and charter schools can implement their own processes and tools for surveying students' parents/guardians to collect the data needed to report to SIRS. A resource that may be helpful is the Digital Bridge K-12 Home Access Needs Assessment Playbook, a step-by-step guide created by national nonprofit Education Super Highway to help school districts identify students who lack a home Internet connection or a dedicated learning device.

For the 2021-22 school year (SY), data can begin to be entered into your SMS and flow to the L2DW when the SIRS 2021-22SY collection opens in September. The first data extract by the Department is planned for Monday, December 6, 2021. The finalized data will be due at the close of the warehouse in August 2022. The collection extracts will be reviewed to provide information

regarding disparate access to devices and internet in students places of residence and inform State policy and initiatives to address gaps at the State level. Moving forward, in the 22-23SY and beyond, changes to the dates when extracts are pulled may occur and will be updated in our SIRS Manual (guidance). For all practical purposes, schools and districts should update and push data to the L2DW as often as practicable to provide the best picture of their digital access and equity at any given moment to assist the Department with providing resources to those entities who meet the qualifications of various funding sources.

The NYSED Office of Information and reporting Services has apprised Student Management System vendors of this new SIRS reporting requirement. Collection requirements for student management vendors will continue to be available on the Vendor Support for School Districts and BOCES.

School districts, BOCES, and charter schools should ensure their data coordinators and chief information officers are aware of these new requirements and have a process for coordinating with district and school staff involved with the student survey portion of this collection.
For questions about reporting data in SIRS, please contact the Office of Information and Reporting Services at 518-474-7965 or Data Support.

As always, we thank you for all that you do for the children of New York.

Attachment: New Student Digital Access Data Elements in SIRS

New Student Digital Access Data Elements required to be reported to the SIRS using the eScholar Student Digital Access template.

	Element Name	Element Definition	Options	Clarifications	Example Parent / Guardian Questions
1	School-Provided Device	Indication of whether the school or district issued the student a dedicated school- or district-owned device for the student's use during the school year, either for use both in and outside of school, or for use exclusively in the student's place of residence.	Yes No	This does not count any devices that are in-school use only, or any device that is provided by the student's family/guardians. If this answer is Yes, elements 2, 3, and 4 cannot be None, None, and No Device.	Did the school or district give your student a device at your place of residence?
2	Primary Learning Device Away From School	The type of device the student uses most often to complete learning activities away from school.	Desktop Computer Laptop Computer Tablet Chromebook Smartphone None	This can be a school-provided device or another device, whichever the student is most often using to complete their schoolwork. If this answer is None, elements 3, 4, and 5 should be None, No Device and No. If element 1 is Yes, this cannot be None.	What device does your student use most often to complete their schoolwork away from school?

	Element Name	Element Definition	Options	Clarifications	Example Parent / Guardian Questions
3	Primary Learning Device Provider	The provider of the primary learning device.	Personal School None	Personal – not owned or provided by the school or district. School - owned or provided by the school or district. If No to element 1, this cannot be School. If Yes to element 1, this cannot be None. If None for element 2, this should also be None.	Who provides/owns the device that your student uses most often to complete schoolwork at home or the place you are currently living?
4	Primary Learning Device Access	An indication of whether the primary learning device is shared or not shared with another individual.	Shared Not Shared No Device	Shared - multiple students/people share the device for school or work. Not Shared - dedicated to one student. This can be a school provided device or another device, whichever the student is most often using to complete their schoolwork. If elements 2 and 3 are None, this should be No Device.	Does anyone else use the device that your student uses most often to complete schoolwork at home or the place you are currently living?

	Element Name	Element Definition	Options	Clarifications	Example Parent / Guardian Questions
5	Primary Learning Device Sufficiency	Indication that the primary learning device is sufficient for the student to fully participate in learning activities away from school.	Yes No	A sufficient device is a computer or computing device such as a laptop, desktop, Chromebook, or full-sized iPad or other tablet, that is able to connect to the internet (even if an internet connection is not always available); has a screen size of at least 9.7"; has a keyboard (on-screen or external) and a mouse, touchscreen, or touchpad; and can run all applications, allowing for full participation in learning without or with very limited issues. While many students may participate in learning through a phone, phones (as well as mini-tablets) are not adequate devices for full participation in learning, and should not be considered sufficient. If elements 2, 3, and 4 are None or No Device, this should be No.	Does your student have any device issues that make it hard for them to do their schoolwork? Ex. software/ application issues, lack of a mouse, slow machine, etc.

	Element Name	Element Definition	Options	Clarifications	Example Parent / Guardian Questions
6	Internet Access In Residence	An indication of whether the student is able to access the internet in their primary place of residence.	Yes No	Primary Residence - the residence where the student typically resides. If student has multiple residences that share equal time, use the residence that has the more limited access. If this is Yes, then the element 7 cannot be None. If this is No, elements 7 and 8 must be None and No.	Do you have internet access in your home or the place you are living?

	Element Name	Element Definition	Options	Clarifications	Example Parent / Guardian Questions
7	Internet Access Type In Residence	The primary type of internet service used in the student's primary place of residence.	Residential Broadband Cellular Network Mobile Hot Spot Community Provided Wi-Fi Satellite Dial-up None	Residential Broadband - uses a cable (fiber or coaxial) or DSL modem hooked up to an Internet service provider. Cellular Network – uses your cell phone provider for internet access. Mobile Hot Spot - a wireless access point created by a dedicated hardware device or a smartphone feature that shares the phone's cellular data. For example, a cellphone or a device like a Kajeet, Verizon Jetpack, Netgear Nighthawk or MiFi. Community Provided Wi-Fi – internet connection provided by a community location (library, café, hotel, etc.) Satellite - Internet access provided through communication satellites (there is a satellite dish on your property for internet). Dial-up - connecting to the Internet by using a modem and telephone line. None If No to element 6, this must be None. If Yes to element 6, this cannot be None.	Who is your internet provider? Do you have a modem or router in your house? Do you use your phone as your internet access point? Do you use free Wi-Fi at a different location near your house as your only internet connection? Do you have a device like a MiFi, Kajeet or Verizon Jetpack in your house? Do you have a satellite dish on your house for internet access? Do you use a separate phone line to access the internet?

	Element Name	Element Definition	Options	Clarifications	Example Parent / Guardian Questions
8	Internet Performance In Residence	An indication of whether the student can complete the full range of learning activities, including video streaming and assignment upload, without interruptions caused by poor internet performance in their primary place of residence.	Yes No	Yes – The student experiences very few or no interruptions in learning activities caused by poor internet performance in their primary place of residence. No – The student regularly experiences interruptions and is unable to complete all learning activities due to poor internet performance in their primary place of residence or lack of internet access. If elements 6 and 7 are No and None, this must be No.	Can all individuals in the household use their devices at the same time without the internet slowing down? Can the student(s) stream videos with little to no interruption? Can students attend their live class meets with little to no interruption?
9	Barrier to Internet Access In Residence	An indication of the primary barrier to having sufficient internet access in the student's primary place of residence.	Availability Cost Other None	If a student has multiple barriers to sufficient internet access, select only the main barrier. If element 8 is Yes, this should be None.	If you do not have sufficient internet access in your place of residence, what is the main reason?
10	Survey Date	Report the actual date the survey information was collected. If portions of the survey were collected on different days, report the last day of the month in which the survey was completed. Date must fall within current school year.		The district, BOCES, or charter school should keep track of the date the survey information was collected as this is a required data element to be reported to the Department.	

Reportable Codes Using the eScholar Student Digital Resources Template

TEMPLATE FIELD NUMBER	FIELD NAME	SIRS CODE	SIRS_DESCRIPTION
6	PRIMARY LEARNING DEVICE TYPE CODE	DESKTOP	DESKTOP
6	PRIMARY LEARNING DEVICE TYPE CODE	LAPTOP	LAPTOP
6	PRIMARY LEARNING DEVICE TYPE CODE	TABLET	TABLET
6	PRIMARY LEARNING DEVICE TYPE CODE	CHROMEBOOK	CHROMEBOOK
6	PRIMARY LEARNING DEVICE TYPE CODE	SMARTPHONE	SMARTPHONE
6	PRIMARY LEARNING DEVICE TYPE CODE	NONE	NONE
7	SCHOOL PROVIDED DEVICE INDICATOR	Y	YES
7	SCHOOL PROVIDED DEVICE INDICATOR	N	NO
8	PRIMARY LEARNING DEVICE PROVIDER CODE	PERSONAL	PERSONAL
8	PRIMARY LEARNING DEVICE PROVIDER CODE	SCHOOL	SCHOOL
8	PRIMARY LEARNING DEVICE PROVIDER CODE	NONE	NONE
9	PRIMARY LEARNING DEVICE ACCESS CODE	NO DEVICE	NO DEVICE
9	PRIMARY LEARNING DEVICE ACCESS CODE	SHARED	SHARED
9	PRIMARY LEARNING DEVICE ACCESS CODE	NOT SHARED	NOT SHARED
10	PRIMARY LEARNING DEVICE SUFFICIENCY INDICATOR	Y	YES

10	PRIMARY LEARNING DEVICE SUFFICIENCY INDICATOR	N	NO
11	INTERNET ACCESS IN RESIDENCE INDICATOR	Y	YES
11	INTERNET ACCESS IN RESIDENCE INDICATOR	N	NO
12	INTERNET ACCESS BARRIER CODE	AVAILABILITY	AVAILABILITY
12	INTERNET ACCESS BARRIER CODE	COST	COST
12	INTERNET ACCESS BARRIER CODE	OTHER	OTHER
12	INTERNET ACCESS BARRIER CODE	NONE	NONE
13	INTERNET ACCESS TYPE CODE	RESBROADBAND	RESIDENTIAL BROADBAND
13	INTERNET ACCESS TYPE CODE	CELLULAR	CELLULAR
13	INTERNET ACCESS TYPE CODE	MOBILEHOTSPOT	MOBILEHOTSPOT
13	INTERNET ACCESS TYPE CODE	COMMUNITYWIFI	COMMUNITYWIFI
13	INTERNET ACCESS TYPE CODE	SATELLITE	SATELLITE
13	INTERNET ACCESS TYPE CODE	DIALUP	DIALUP
13	INTERNET ACCESS TYPE CODE	NONE	NONE
14	INTERNET PERFORMANCE CODE	Y	YES
14	INTERNET PERFORMANCE CODE	N	NO