

I wanted to provide an update on our network Infrastructure in regards to our internet access for our schools in Dixon. We have previously talked about the concern that we had only one internet provider with that one connection providing internet access to our classrooms and office around the district. This makes us susceptible to outages and downtime in our classrooms. We've been looking into options to provide a cost effective solution for a second internet provider that would provide us with service via an alternate link that would come in to a different building on a line that is completely diverse from our legacy provider.

Our legacy provider is Stratus(bought out iFiber in 2024) and they connect us to Illinois Century Network(state agency) for internet bandwidth.

Over the past year, we were able to put out a project request via the erate process and we received an offer from Bluebird Fiber that met our requirements for providing a fully diversified connection for our district. That connection was put in place a few months ago, and over winter break, we completed some configuration changes in how our primary phone service is routed over the internet, and we now have split our internet service in our district between the two providers.

Our internet service in our schools in Dixon is now split between the two providers so an outage from one provider will only impact a portion of our sites, and we can quickly switch over internet service for the sites impacted by the outage to utilize the alternate internet circuit.

We are still susceptible to power outages, local fiber cuts and equipment failures can occur, but we currently have a higher level of redundancy in our internet service than we've ever had. This will provide a higher level of reliability to our classroom to keep them online with our curriculum tools.

Our only school that is not included in our Dixon infrastructure is our Dempsey Therapeutic Day School. We currently have an internet connection there provided by Brightspeed. There have been outages, but we have a hotspot from T-Mobile that allows us to get the internet and phones running in the main office. Additionally, we have submitted a request through the state consortium to get a fiber connection directly connecting TJD to our school network. We have a proposal and the state is going to work on completing that connection so we can more fully integrate TJD into our network infrastructure. If this project works out, the cost will be covered 100% by the consortium. If things go well, we could have this connection in place for the 2026-2027 school year.

Jim Manley

Director of Technology