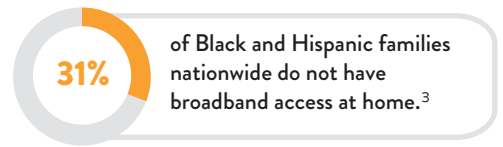
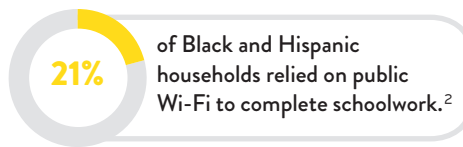
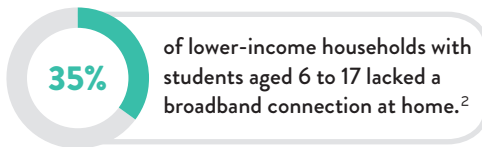


School curriculum increasingly requires computer-based learning, which is why internet access is critically important to students in the 21st century. Despite this, **research in 2019 suggested 40 percent of school facilities in the U.S. lacked broadband**, and many students remained disconnected at home.¹

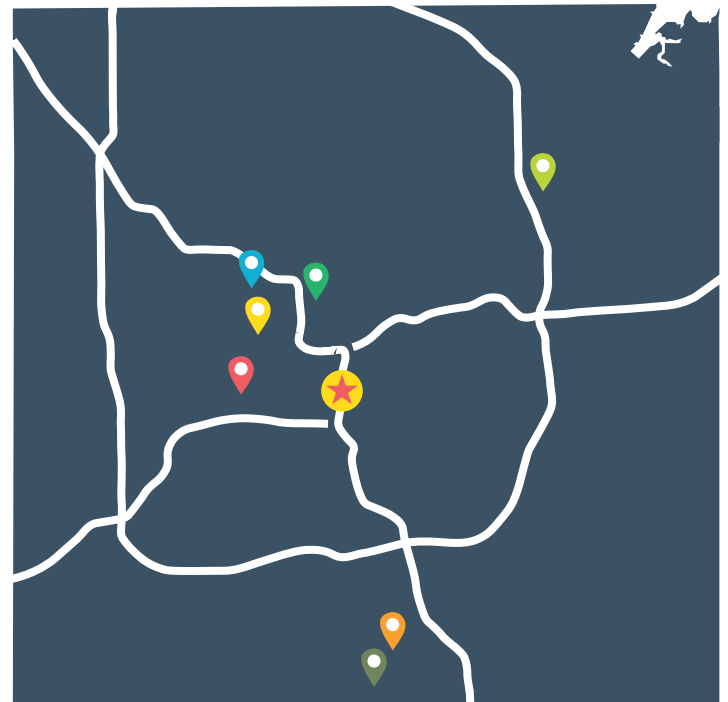


This so-called **“homework gap”** widened further due to the COVID-19 pandemic – so much so that when Indianapolis schools shifted to remote learning in 2020, many students found themselves struggling to continue their education.

Now, as many schools return to in-person instruction, the need to close the homework gap remains a priority, especially since some form of digital instruction will remain the new normal. That is why Marion County leaders are working to ensure every K-12 and post-secondary student in the county, regardless of family income, can access the internet and learn to their full potential.



To that end, they launched the **Marion County Dedicated eLearning Network Pilot**, which will enable broadband connectivity for K-12 and higher education eLearning for students from low-income households across Marion County. The pilot is funded with **\$500,000** from the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, **\$330,000** from Lilly Endowment Inc. and **\$730,000** in federal CARES Act funding from the City of Indianapolis to the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership (CICP) Foundation. Energy Systems Network (a CICP initiative) and Indiana 5G Zone are implementing the pilot across seven sites in Marion County with network infrastructure and services in students’ homes provided by SBA Communications. The network pilot was established in April 2021 and will continue to operate throughout the 2021-2022 school year.



In addition to helping address the need for high-speed internet access, the pilot also will equip partners with the insights necessary to develop a county-wide network solution. The pilot has engaged a **Community Advisory Board** to manage issues such as network governance, financing and engaging the community in the pilot.

PILOT SITES: MARION COUNTY

- 📍 George Washington High School
- 📍 Winchester Village Elementary School
- 📍 Harrison Hill Elementary School
- 📍 Riverside High School
- 📍 Southport Elementary School
- 📍 Vision Academy
- 📍 Ivy Tech Community College’s Indianapolis Campus

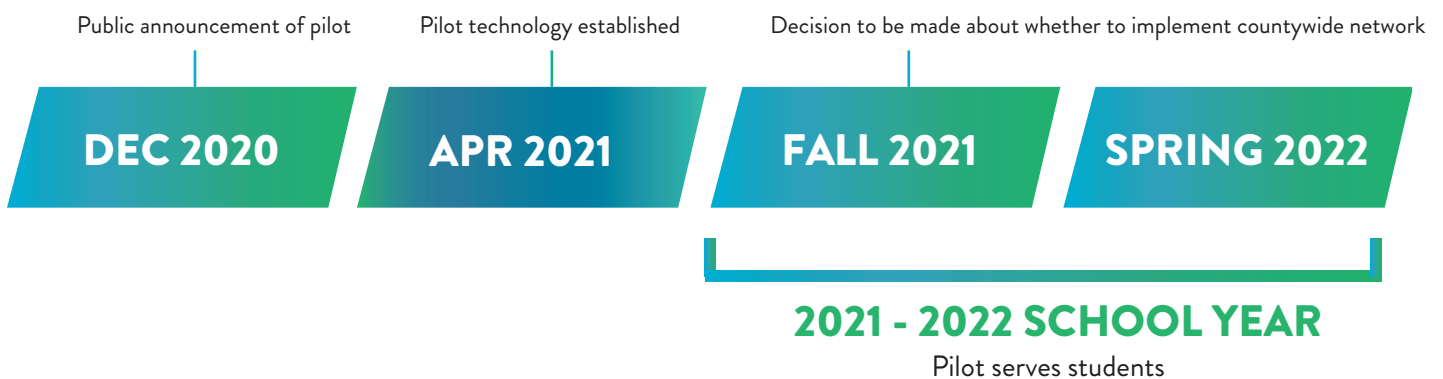


Those managing the network will assess its impact and effectiveness through surveys and data-tracking and will share those outcomes with updates throughout the project, as well as a final report. The Community Advisory Board will determine whether to forge ahead with a countywide network this fall based on the insights they glean about its impact.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

- Michael Bottorff**, Chief Technology Officer, MSD Lawrence Township
- Claire Fiddian-Green**, President & CEO, Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation (Co-Chair)
- Kent Hatcher**, CFO, Perry Township Schools
- Ryan Heater**, Chief of Staff, Indiana Utilities Regulatory Commission
- Sean Hendrix**, Managing Director, Indiana 5G Zone
- Dr. John Keller**, Chief Technology Officer, Indiana Department of Education
- Patrick McAlister**, Director, Office of Education Innovation, Office of the Mayor, City of Indianapolis
- Paul Mitchell**, President & CEO, Energy Systems Network
- Dr. Kara Monroe**, Provost, Chief Academic Officer, Ivy Tech Community College
- Elliott Patrick**, Chief Information Officer, City of Indianapolis
- David Rosenberg**, Founder, Center for Innovative Education Solutions
- Dr. Shawn Smith**, Superintendent, MSD Lawrence Township
- Andrew Strope**, Chief of Strategy & Planning, Indianapolis Public Schools
- Anne Valentine**, Vice President, Government Relations, United Way of Central Indiana
- Shannon Williams**, Executive Vice President, The Mind Trust (Co-Chair)

PILOT TIMELINE



SOURCES

- ¹ The Pew Charitable Trusts (2019, July 26). *America's Digital Divide*.
- ² Pew Research Center (2020, March 16). *As schools close due to the coronavirus, some U.S. students face a digital 'homework gap.'*
- ³ Future Ready Schools (2020, July 20). *Students of Color Caught in the Homework Gap*.
- ⁴ Indianapolis Mayor's Office of Education Innovation (2020, April). *Preliminary Needs Assessment Results*.