

City of Alexandria, Virginia
Commission on Information Technology

MINUTES

May 9, 2011 Meeting

Meeting called order at 7:00pm.

Roll Call

Members present: Phillip Acosta, Nina Baliga, Daniel Brooks (Vice-Chairman), Steven Cooper, Margaret Leary, Kostas Liopiros (Chairman), Page Moon, Lynda Y. Rudd (Secretary), Marie Schuler

Excused: Marjorie Conner, Catherine Hogan,

Absent: Councilman Alicia Hughes, Helen Morris, Debra Roepke (for Del Pepper)

City Staff Present: Shelley Santos

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of both the March 14th and April 19th meetings were approved with modifications. Marie Schuler and Page Moon first and seconded the approval.

E-Rate Broadband Survey - Library

Alexandria Library's Deputy Director Linden Renner presented a report regarding the Library's use of e-rate funds.

Annual Report

The Chair asked that Commissioners review the plan in regards to tracking broadband and other research and studies on the subject and to submit findings, issues and comments by the Commission's July 11th meeting.

Recruitment Plan

Chairman Liopiros tasked Vice-Chairman Dan Brooks to review and revise the IT Commission's recruitment plan in order to attract more applicants. The revised plan will be considered at the next meeting and included in the Commission's annual report.

Nominating Committee

Chairman Liopiros appointed Commissioner Phillip Acosta as head of the Nominating Committee to fill the positions of Commission Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary. Commissioners Page Moon

and Steven Cooper will assist Commissioner Acosta. The proposed slate of officers is to be presented at the July 11th IT Commission meeting.

New Business

Commissioner Marie Schuler presented a new initiative by COMCAST entitled “Comcast Broadband Opportunities Internet Essentials Program” that emphasizes a plan to bridge the digital divide by offering students broadband services at a reduced rate. Commissioner Schuler further highlighted aspects of the plan as a part of the NBC/Universal deal with COMCAST and its subscribers. Further information will be forthcoming as finalized plans are made available to Alexandria School families and the public.

Meeting adjourned at 8:04pm.

A Comparison of Alexandria Library with the FCC Data from E-Rate Program and Broadband Usage Survey

E-rate has played a pivotal role in helping libraries connect their users to the Internet and the Alexandria Library is one of those. E-Rate has enabled the Alexandria Library to enhance its broadband speed for our patrons by providing funds for the installation of Fast-E lines. Excluding installation fees and with yearly recurring costs of approximately \$28,000, reimbursement of 80% pays for partial payment for subsequent annual fees and future upgrades. The Alexandria Library compares favorably with the E-Rate Broadband survey respondents by providing high speed internet connections at all of its branch libraries.

FCC Data from E-Rate Program and Broadband Usage Survey	Alexandria Library Details
<p><i>Almost All Have At Least Some Broadband:</i> 95% of all E-rate survey respondents have some form of terrestrial broadband connection to at least one facility, while 2% use satellite and 3% use dial-up.</p>	<p>Alexandria Library has had 100% broadband since 2009.</p>
<p><i>Faster Broadband Speeds Needed:</i> However, nearly 80% of all survey respondents say their broadband connections do not fully meet their current needs. Slow connection speed is the primary reason current Internet connectivity does not meet the needs for 55% of these respondents.</p>	<p>With the installation of 100 Mbps lines in 2009 in all of our branches, the Alexandria Library was able to meet the current needs of our patrons and staff. Prior to 2009, the Library had 3 bonded T1 lines that did not provide enough speed or bandwidth for our patrons.</p>
<p><i>Cost is a Big Factor:</i> 39% of E-rate survey respondents cite cost of service as a barrier in meeting their Internet needs, and 27% cite cost of installation as a barrier.</p>	<p>For the Alexandria Library, both the cost of the service and its installation has been an issue and could be in the future. With a dwindling budget, E-Rate funding enabled the Library to proceed with upgrading its broadband in 2009.</p>
<p><i>E-Book Use to Greatly Increase:</i> 56% of all E-rate survey respondents expect to implement or expand the use of digital textbooks in the next two to three years, and 45% expect to implement or expand the use of handheld devices for educational purposes.</p>	<p>Alexandria Library provides reference and popular title eBooks from 3 different vendors. Some are read-only while others are downloadable onto both computers and handheld devices. Currently about 25-30% of library patrons are using handheld devices to download popular audio books and eBooks. The Library's circulation of these materials has increased by 70% since December 2010. Library eBook vendors/distributors/publishers are subject to legal restrictions by publishers/intellectual content owners and must comply with access and distribution limitations from publishing companies and authors/writers.</p>

FCC Data from E-Rate Program and Broadband Usage Survey	Alexandria Library Details
<p><i>Most Have Speeds Greater Than 3 Mbps:</i> 10% of E-rate survey respondents have broadband speeds of 100 Mbps or greater and most (55%) have broadband speeds greater than 3 Mbps. More than half of school districts (60%) subscribe to a fiber optic connection. 66% of respondents provide some wireless connectivity for staff, students or library patrons.</p>	<p>Alexandria Library has a 100 Mbps connection. It is adequate for our needs at this time. We will increase speeds when we add additional computers; however, this is not in the library's immediate plans.</p>
<p><i>E-Mail Essential for Schools:</i> For schools, e-mail is the most-used application (almost all schools, 98%, regularly use or access e-mail), and the most essential (69% consider it the most essential).</p>	<p>Email is also the most used application in the Alexandria Library, next to the Internet, the Integrated Library System, and online databases and reference materials.</p>
<p><i>Libraries Rely on Online Reference Materials:</i> For libraries, online reference materials are both the most used application (86% of staff and patrons regularly use or access online reference materials) and the most essential (62% consider it the most essential).</p>	<p>Alexandria Library provides reference materials in the form of online journals and newspapers and searchable reference databases with full-text/full-image materials and eBooks. Because electronic reference materials are easily updated and assessable 24/7 via and Web accessible device patrons tend to prefer this method of information. It is easily updated and made current by vendors/publishers, patrons can access at any time, reference materials are not read cover-to-cover and the search interface provides quick access to relevant information and citation review and evaluation, information can be generated and printed or emailed without checking out a book. The only drawback is that patrons are subject to federal laws regulating Fair Use and Copyright and publisher rights regarding printing, loaning, borrowing and how the electronic data is able to be used.</p>

The world has gone digital.

It's time to bring home Internet service to more families.

Let's bring the Internet to more homes for just \$9.95 a month + tax.

- No price increases, activation fees or equipment rental fees
- Computers available for \$149.99 + tax
- Access to free Internet training — online, in print and in classroom

For more information and materials, visit: InternetEssentials.com/partner



Internet Essentials is also known as the Comcast Broadband Opportunity Program.

INTRODUCING
INTERNET ESSENTIALS
FROM COMCAST



Spread the word.

Let's help more students and families get online.



Today, people across the country rely on the Internet for school, work, communicating with others and more. It's no longer just a convenience. It has become essential for success. Unfortunately, millions of students and their families don't have Internet at home, creating a barrier to achievement.

As the nation's leading Internet provider, we want to help make the Internet accessible to more people. That's why I am pleased to introduce Internet Essentials,SM an important new program designed to help increase broadband adoption and digital literacy among students and their families.

Starting during the 2011-12 school year, Internet Essentials will be available to certain households with children who receive free lunches through the National School Lunch Program.

Participants will be eligible to receive fast Internet for \$9.95 a month plus tax, a price that never increases for customers while they are in the program. Plus, families can buy a low-cost computer and receive free Internet training.

I hope you will spread the word about Internet Essentials throughout your community. The faster the news travels, the sooner these deserving families can get connected at home — and benefit from the power of the Internet.

Thank you for your interest and support.

Sincerely,



David L. Cohen
Executive Vice President
Comcast

Here's Internet Essentials at a glance.

The program is designed to expand Internet adoption and close the digital divide in three important ways. While in the program, customers receive:

AFFORDABLE INTERNET

\$9⁹⁵
a month
+ tax

no

- price increases
- activation fees
- equipment rental fees

**A LOW-COST
COMPUTER**

Available at
enrollment
for just **\$149⁹⁹**
+tax

**FREE
INTERNET TRAINING**

Available online, in print
and in classroom

Now's the time for Internet Essentials.

According to the Pew Research Center, only 45% of those with household incomes under \$30,000 have broadband at home. Students growing up without Internet at their fingertips are missing out on valuable opportunities, and their families may be unable to communicate with their children's teachers and schools. Together, we can help close this gap.



**Share the news.
Starting today.**

It's easy to spread the word about Internet Essentials. Just visit our website for all the information, materials and updates you need to keep the momentum going.

**Get started now. Visit:
InternetEssentials.com/partner**



Introduction to Internet Essentials

Helping low income families get connected to the Internet

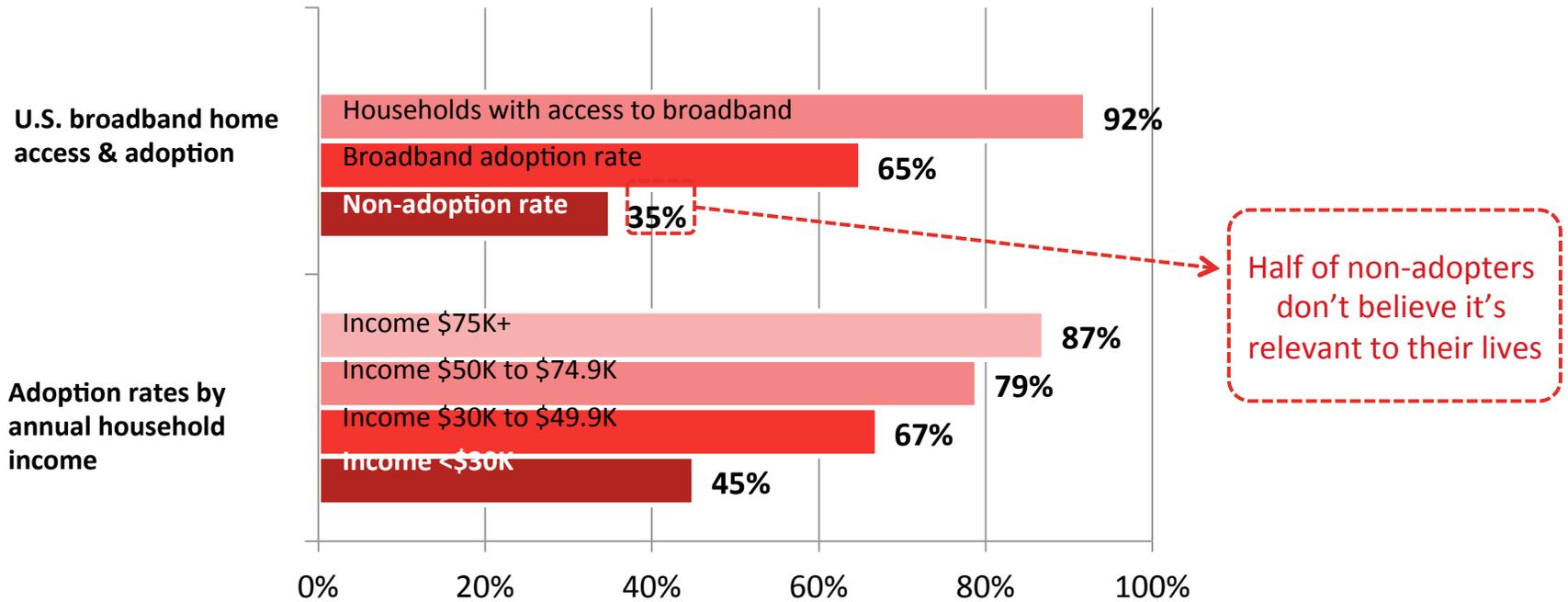
Alexandria, Virginia

Agenda

1. Closing the Digital Divide
2. Overview of Internet Essentials
3. A Community Effort
4. How You Can Help

Conquering the digital divide

The Broadband adoption challenge is more than 3x greater than the broadband access challenge



To close the digital divide we must focus on broadband adoption, especially among low income families

Sources: John B. Horrigan, *Broadband Adoption and Use in America*, OBI Working Paper Series No. 1, FCC, (Feb. 2010), available at www.broadband.gov
Aaron Smith, *Home Broadband 2010*, Pew Research Center, (Aug. 2010), available at <http://www.pewinternet.org/>

Barriers to adoption

FCC survey identified three major barriers that keep non-adopters from getting broadband

Cost

36%

- Some 24% are related to the cost of service.
- 15% point to the monthly service cost.
- 9% say they do not want the financial commitment.
- For 10% of non-adopters, the cost of a computer is the primary barrier.

Digital Literacy

22%

- They are uncomfortable using computers and those who do are “worried about all the bad things that can happen if [they] use the Internet.”

Relevance

19%

- Don’t think digital content delivered is compelling enough to justify getting broadband service.
- Many do not view broadband as a means to access content they find important or necessary.
- Others seem satisfied with offline alternatives. These non-adopters say, the Internet is a “waste of time.”



Internet Essentials was designed by Comcast with the FCC to address all three

Source: John B. Horrigan, *Broadband Adoption and Use in America*, OBI Working Paper Series No. 1, Federal Communications Commission (Feb. 2010), available at www.broadband.gov

Introducing Comcast Internet Essentials

One of the first programs of its type to directly confront the digital divide by providing affordable access to quality home Internet service, a discount-priced computer and training to low income families

Our Commitment

For \$9.95 per month*, participating families receive:

- XFINITY Internet Economy Service (currently 1.5 Mbps download)
- Option to purchase a computer for under \$150*
- Access to online, in print and classroom digital literacy training

Benefits to Participants

- There are no additional fees: no modem rental charges, no deposit or activation fees
- Credit check is not required
- As XFINITY Internet customers, participants gain other benefits at no extra charge, including Norton™ Security Suite, a \$160 value

Internet Essentials will be available starting in the 2011 “Back to School” season

NOTE: Internet Essentials is the commercial name for Comcast Broadband Opportunity Program

* Plus applicable taxes

Eligibility and availability: Potential long-term benefits

Comcast will accept new participants for at least three years, through the end of the 2013-14 school year

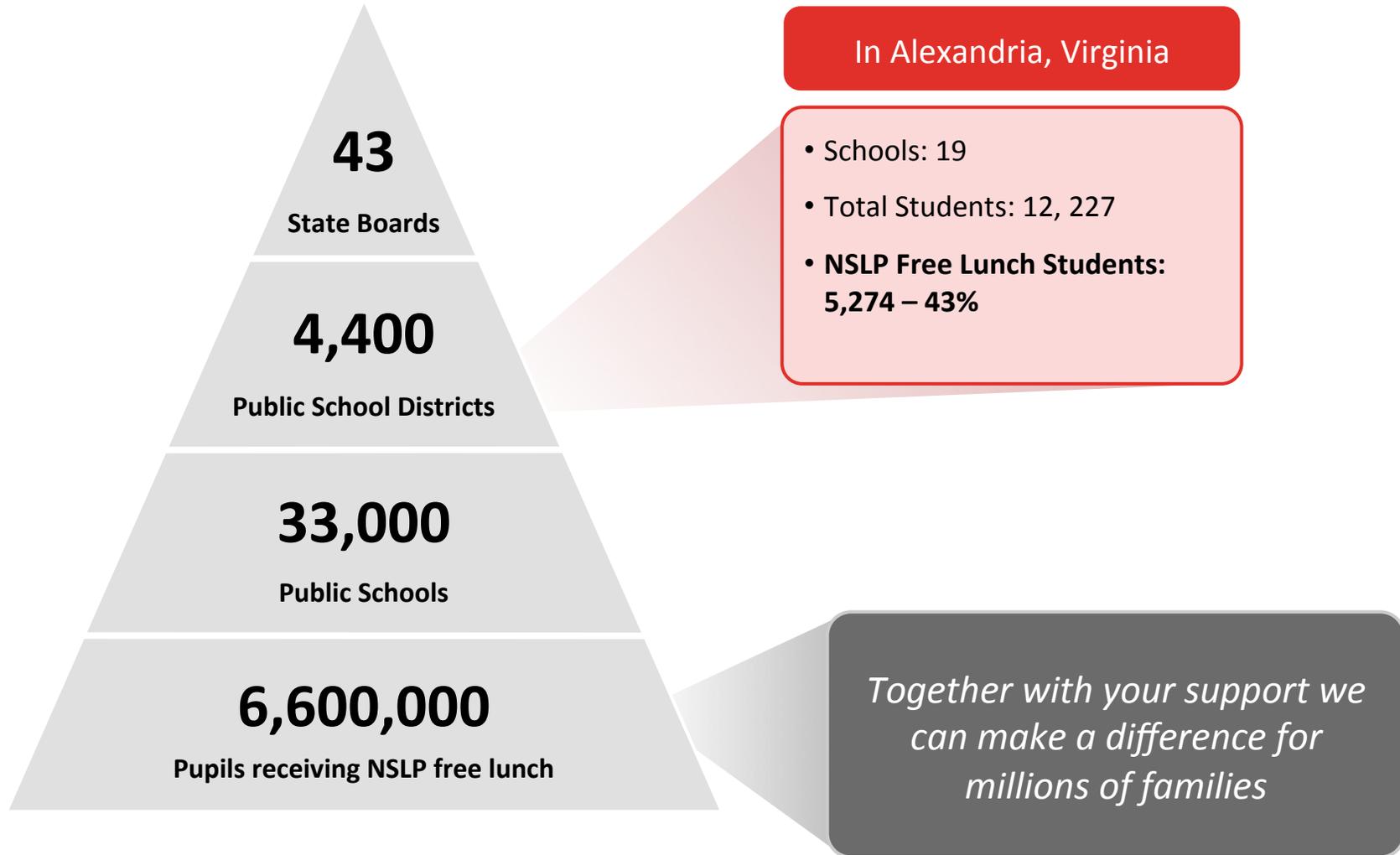
A household is eligible to participate in Internet Essentials if it:

- Is located where Comcast offers Internet service;
- Has at least one child receiving free school lunches through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP);
- Has not subscribed to Comcast Internet service within the last 90 days; and
- Does not have an overdue Comcast bill or unreturned equipment

Participating families will be able to benefit from Internet Essentials for the entire life of their child's K-12 education, as long as they remain eligible

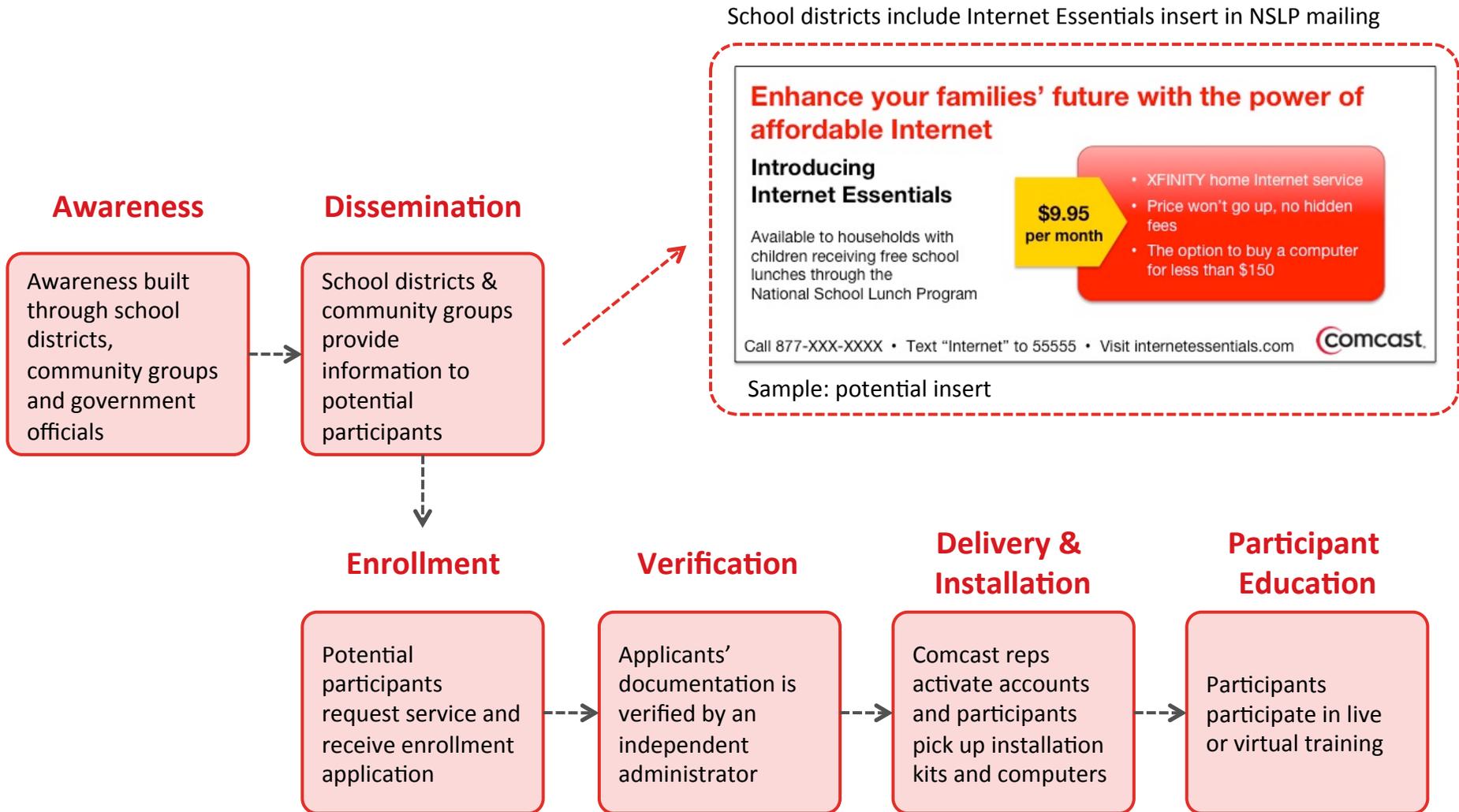
Scope of opportunity: Potential reach of Internet Essentials

Within Comcast's footprint some 6.6 million students are receiving NSLP free lunches



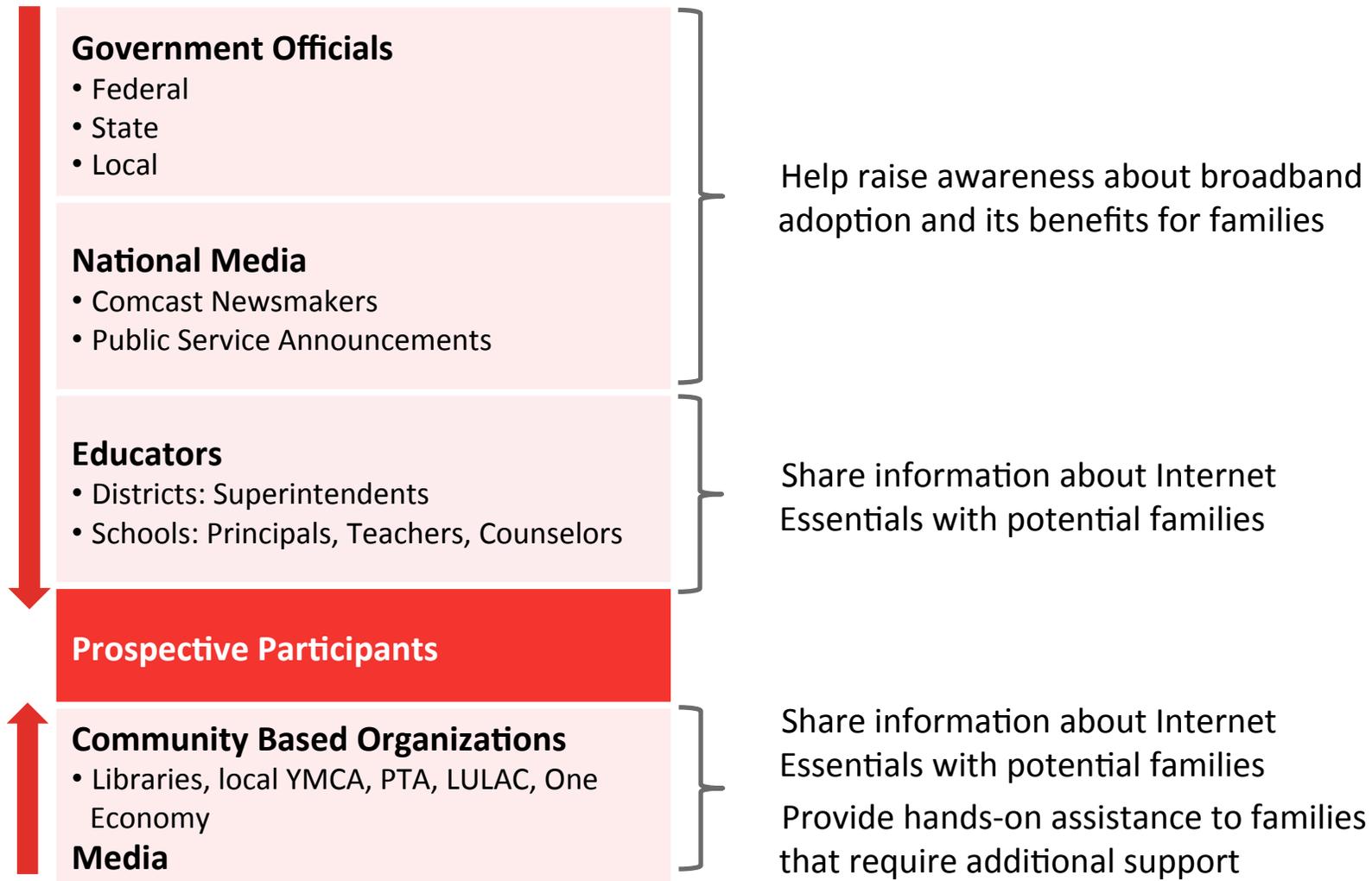
Source: Based on data from National Center for Education Statistics, 2008-09 School Year

Internet Essentials: How it works



A community effort

Comcast is working with various partners to close the digital divide



Benefits to communities

Internet Essentials can help in several ways

Districts / Schools



- Provide low-income students opportunity to access the Internet at home
 - Enable teachers to use online resources and tools to expand the flow of information and personalize learning opportunities for students
 - Serve as an added incentive for parents to enroll children in NSLP
-

Students



- Reduce barriers to improved school performance through access to online tools and resources such as books, encyclopedias, tutorials and much more
-

Families



- Allow parents to become more engaged with their children's education
- Bridge digital divide in lower-income and diverse communities.*
 - More likely to say that a lack of home broadband access is a "major disadvantage"

*Source: Pew Center, Home Broadband, August 2010

How we can partner to drive broadband adoption

1. Convey the importance of broadband adoption
2. Raise awareness of Internet Essentials
3. Facilitate communication with the Department of Education; Superintendents of school districts; Principals; and community organizations
4. Provide a call to action (for Superintendents of school districts)
5. Please visit the partner portal at <http://www.internetessentialspartner.com/> and sign up to access the material; urge the schools to do so also
6. Let us know what we're missing?

For More Information Contact

Marie Schuler

Dir of Govt & Community Affairs

Marie_schuler@comcast.com

703-567-4488

Thank you!

Questions?

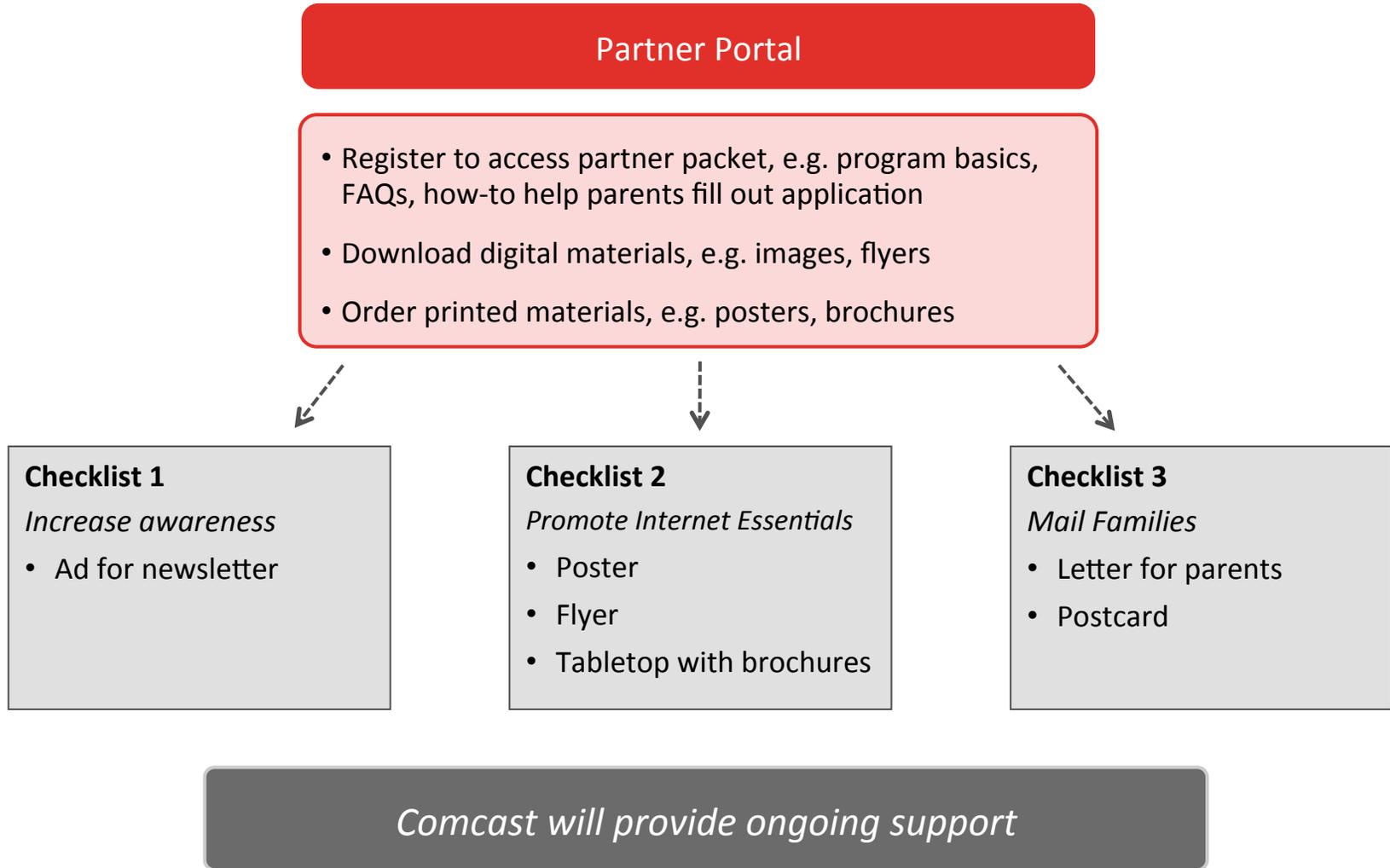
Suggestions?

Defining Next Steps...

APPENDIX

Making it easy for partners to get involved

Comcast is developing an online website to allow partners to easily access, download and print materials to increase awareness of Internet Essentials



For Superintendents: How can they get involved?

1. Include insert in NSLP enrollment mailing

- Register on partner portal as of June 1, 2011
- Choose from one of two insert sizes to meet your needs

2. Notify school Principals about the Internet Essentials insert

3. Equip Principals to respond to questions from teacher and parents

- Principals will be able to download materials from partner portal as of July 1, 2011

4. Volunteer a school as a training site

How can you get involved?

State Partners

- City Year
- National Urban League,
- National Council of La Raza,
- City Year,
- Big Brothers Big Sisters,
- One Economy,
- Partnership for a Drug Free America ,
and
- Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA)

Example

1. Register for access to materials

- Register on partner portal as of June 1, 2011
- Notification email will be sent to confirm when you can download or order materials

2. Let your constituents know about Internet Essentials

- Distribute materials, Mention program in your newsletter

3. Equip your staff to help potential participants with questions

- Download partner packet that will provide information on how to assist potential participants to apply for Internet Essentials

4. Volunteer as a training site

Approach to participant education

- Create a basic curriculum for getting started with computers and the internet, leveraging best practices, customized content and materials from experts in the field
- Make it available in the forms that participants will find most convenient

