

Bridging the Digital Divide – Help to Close the Achievement Gap in California Schools

SAN DIEGO, Calif., July 22, 2011 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – In a workshop held at the California Latino Superintendent’s Association, Summer Institute, Business Management Consultant, and Publisher of Family Literacy Journal, Cyndi Fischer, addressed school administrators on the impact of the digital divide on California’s Latino students.

Fischer said, “California, is home to Silicon Valley, and the world’s largest technology corporations, like Google, Apple, Facebook, and Twitter, and yet millions of California’s most precious assets – its children, are without access to technology.”

The digital divide separates predominantly white, middle class students, from predominantly minority, lower income students. While California schools are becoming more connected, home computers, and access to Internet are still out of reach for many.

According to a study by the Pew Research Center, 32 percent of Spanish-dominate Hispanics use the Internet, as compared to 76 percent of bilingual Hispanics. Fischer cited key barriers including Internet access, affordability, education and social equity. Perceptions that computers are too complicated, and a lack of understanding as to how to get started, are nearly as important as access, and cost barriers.

“Should we, in good conscious produce such abundant technology in California, and yet be so ambivalent about our youth, and our neediest families?” Fischer asked calmly, and emphatically. “If conscious does not motivate us to action, we will continue to pay for our neglect.”

Overall, one out of every four students in California quit school. Parents, who dropout are more likely to have children who dropout. Generational dropout leads to generational poverty. Youth who drop out of high school are unlikely to have the minimum skills required to participate in today’s increasingly technology dependent society.

Innovative new companies, offer promise to help bridge the digital divide, and provide real hope for students. TVtextbook, is one such company. At a fraction of the cost of a computer, or tablet, it turns any television into an interactive learning station. TVtextbook connects school-to-home, and provides 100 percent access to all students, regardless of their connectivity, or geographic location. Simple solutions like this one, can be a powerful catalyst to help California schools close the achievement gap.

One California Latino parent conveyed their family’s experience, “We don’t have a computer or a game console at home. My son spends more time doing

homework on TVtextbook because he is excited to have technology. I usually feel uncomfortable helping with homework, because the language is hard for me, but having his homework on TV, made me feel like I could support my son, just by sitting beside him in our living room. Our relationship is stronger. And, he feels better about school, and even himself. He is learning more.”

The digital divide is not just about policy. It’s about people. Fischer plans to host a summit on The Digital Divide and Solutions For California Families, in Summer, 2012.

Cyndi Fischer is a media and technology business management consultant to TVtextbook. She is also publisher of Family Literacy Journal (www.familyliteracyjournal.com).

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– Photo Caption: Cyndi Fischer, Business Management Consultant, TVtextbook, and Publisher of Family Literacy Journal.

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