
CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF THE CITY AUDITOR



Audit of the Office of Innovation and
Information Technology Services Department

Connected Beyond the Classroom Initiative

Project No. AU22-029

August 23, 2023

Kevin W. Barthold, CPA, CIA, CISA
City Auditor

Executive Summary

As part of our annual Audit Plan approved by City Council, we conducted an audit of the Office of Innovation and Information Technology Service Department, specifically the Connected Beyond the Classroom initiative. The audit objective, conclusions, and recommendations follow:

Determine if contracts supporting the Digital Inclusion program (specifically, the Connected Beyond the Classroom Initiative) are monitored to include deliverables and project management.

Contracts supporting the Connected Beyond the Classroom (CBtC) initiative were monitored to verify deliverables and project management efforts. CBtC initiative expenditures were properly supported, approved, and accurate. The installation of the infrastructure within each school district were built in proper locations and according to contract specifications. The CBtC initiative was adequately monitored for completeness and timeliness. In addition, project schedules for each of the three phases of CBtC initiative were tracked with a start and completion date for all tasks.

Finally, future maintenance and development of CBtC initiative is secured with a maintenance contract for 5 years and an infrastructure contract for 10 years through Motorola Inc.

We make no recommendations to the Office of Innovation or Information Technology Services Department; consequently, no management responses are required. Management's Acknowledgement of these results is in Appendix B on page 5.

Other Matters

During the audit, we determined execution of the CBtC initiative was effective, however, the Independent School Districts (ISD) have experienced difficulty distributing Customer Premise Equipment (CPE) units to students and getting them connected to the network. Distribution of these CPE units is essential as they connect the students to the network providing broadband data access. **Table 1** below displays the number of CPE units received, distributed, and connected to the network by each of the participating ISD's as of May 2023.

| Table 1 - CPE Distribution & Connection by ISD's as of May 2023 | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| ISD | CPE's Received from City | CPE's Distributed to Students | Average CPE's Connected to Network¹ |
| Harlandale ISD | 400 | 140 | 18 |
| San Antonio ISD | 1585 | 149 | 13 |
| Edgewood ISD | 1600 | 0 | 0 |
| Totals | 3585 | 289 | 31 |

The Office of Innovation has assisted the ISD's in raising public awareness about the CBtC initiative and CPE distribution by connecting with students through outreach events. These included Harlandale ISD's Back to School Bash and Spurs Event and San Antonio ISD's Back to School Event.

However, ISD Technology Officers have not been able to distribute or connect CPE units to the network as planned. They explained that students and their parents have expressed concern with the network being limited for educational purposes. However, due to contract agreements, the CBtC initiative network only provides access to resources needed for educational purposes. In addition, parents have expressed skepticism of receiving free CPE units and are concerned they may be charged as the Initiative progresses.

The CPE units are essential for students obtaining network access and without them the CBtC initiative cannot achieve its goal of mitigating the digital divide.

¹ Average number of units connected to the network between January and June 2023.

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Background

In 2020 the Office of Innovation, in collaboration with Bexar County, performed a Digital Inclusion Survey and Assessment (DISA). The DISA concluded about twenty percent of San Antonio households at the time did not have access to broadband internet in the home thereby creating disparities between those that were connected and those that were not. COVID-19 aggravated those disparities, especially for K-12 and colleges/universities. As such, the City of San Antonio committed to closing this internet disparity by supporting the Connected Beyond the Classroom (CBtC) initiative. The CBtC initiative is managed by the Information Technology Services Department (ITSD) and the Office of Innovation.

The City established Joint Use Agreements with Harlandale ISD, Edgewood ISD, and San Antonio ISD to build a collaborative, citywide, multi-government agency network. The network expands fiber capability and student access in San Antonio, helping mitigate digital divide issues in the community, specifically in student populations, K-12 and colleges/universities. The goal of the CBtC initiative is to improve digital equity throughout San Antonio and provide in-home school systems access for up to 20,000 students.

To execute this CBtC initiative, Motorola Inc. was hired to install the infrastructure and software. The budget and actual costs as of May 2023 are as follows:

| Connected Beyond the Classroom Initiative Expenditures by Category as of May 2023 | | | |
|--|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| CBtC Category | Category Description | Budget | Actual |
| Core Infrastructure and Fiber Connections | The network interconnecting the school districts. | \$4,000,000 | \$169,104 |
| Network Access and Wireless Mesh | The wireless connection between the student's home and their home school. | \$17,000,000 | \$13,346,700 |
| Student Connectivity in the Home | The equipment installed in the student's home that allows access to the distance learning network. | \$6,000,000 | \$3,338,696 |
| Recovery Portal | Production of COVID Website | \$0 | \$273,372 |
| | | \$27,000,000 | \$17,127,872 |

Source: SAP

ITSD and the Office of Innovation monitor the CBtC initiative together. ITSD is responsible for daily oversight of the CBtC initiative and monitors initiative progress with daily meeting updates and management of the project schedule. Innovation is responsible for the communication and facilitation of the relationships with the ISD's as well as coordinating vendor meetings. In addition, the City hired CP&Y to verify Motorola Inc. installed all broadband network infrastructure according to contract requirements.

Audit Scope and Methodology

The audit scope was from July 2021 through May 2023. The scope included Connected Beyond the Classroom (CBtC) initiative deliverables, contract compliance, and project management.

To obtain an understanding of the CBtC Initiative, we interviewed ITSD and Office of Innovation personnel and conducted walkthroughs of relevant processes. We reviewed pertinent documentation related to the CBtC initiative such as contracts with Harlandale, Edgewood, and San Antonio Independent School Districts (ISD). The contracts between the City of San Antonio and the ISD's were the primary criteria for our audit.

We assessed internal controls relevant to the audit objective. This included a review of each contract with the ISD's. In addition, as part of our testing procedures we examined the following areas:

- Reviewed expenditures to determine if they were approved, supported and accurate,
- Determined whether infrastructure was built in proper locations and according to contract specifications,
- Reviewed project schedules to determine CBtC initiative completeness and timeliness,
- Confirmed distribution of customer premise equipment to ISD's, and
- Evaluated if there is a plan in place for CBtC initiative transition from the City to the ISDs.

We relied on computer-processed data in the SAP system to validate the initiative expenditures. Our reliance was based on performing direct tests on the data rather than evaluating the system's general and application controls. Our direct testing included reviewing invoices and approvals in SAP. We do not believe that the absence of testing general and application controls had an effect on the results of our audit.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Audit Results

Contracts supporting the Connected Beyond the Classroom (CBtC) initiative were adequately monitored to verify deliverables and project management execution.

We reviewed CBtC initiative expenditures and determined they were supported, approved and accurate. The review included 25 invoices valued at approximately \$6M related to Motorola Inc. and 20 invoices valued at approximately \$896k for other vendors.

We confirmed the installation of the infrastructure within each school district and determined they were built in proper locations and according to contract specifications.

We determined the CBtC initiative was adequately monitored for completeness and timeliness. We reviewed project schedules for each of the three phases of the CBtC initiative and determined each phase was tracked with a start and completion date for each project task. In addition, we reviewed bi-weekly meeting minutes and project updates between ITSD and City management.

Finally, we evaluated if there was a plan in place for CBtC initiative transition from the City to the ISDs. Per review of agreements, we determined continued maintenance is contracted for 5 years and the infrastructure is contracted for 10 years through Motorola Inc.

Appendix A – Staff Acknowledgement

Abigail Estevez, CPA, CIA, CISA, Audit Manager
Daniel Zuniga, CPA, CIA, Auditor in Charge

Appendix B – Management Acknowledgement



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

SAN ANTONIO TEXAS 78283-3968

July 24, 2023

Kevin W. Barthold, CPA, CIA, CISA
City Auditor
San Antonio, Texas

RE: Management's Acknowledgement of its Review of Audit of Office of Innovation and Information Technology Services Department (ITSD) Connected Beyond the Classroom Initiative

Office of Innovation and ITSD have reviewed the audit report and provided their comments to the auditors. As there are no recommendations for management, no management responses are required.

Office of Innovation and ITSD:

Fully Agrees

Does Not Agree (provide detailed comments)

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Brian Dillard in black ink.

Brian Dillard
Chief Innovation Officer
Office of Innovation

26 July 2023

Date

Handwritten signature of Craig Hopkins in black ink.

Craig Hopkins
Chief Information Officer
ITSD

7 August 2023

Date

Handwritten signature of John Peterek in blue ink.

John Peterek
Assistant to the City Manager
City Manager's Office

8/9/23

Date

Handwritten signature of Ben Gorzell in blue ink.

Ben Gorzell
Chief Financial Officer
City Manager's Office

8/10/2023

Date