

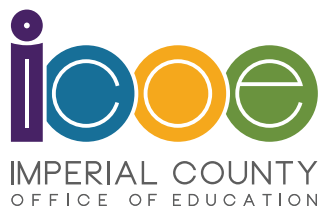
BorderLink

Connectivity Beyond the Classroom: Connecting Students... Anytime, Anywhere.

Imagine the possibilities if all students were using digital resources and advancing their education well-beyond school hours. Imagine if teachers were able to assign projects that require rich investigation and online research without worry of students who may be disadvantaged due to their lack of internet connectivity at home. Imagine backpacks without textbooks, replaced with devices that provide students anytime, anywhere access to interactive and adaptive curriculum.

Technology is revolutionizing teaching and learning, but nationwide, more than 5 million households with school-age children are not equipped with high-speed internet service at home, according to the Pew Research Center. The problem is even more acute in rural communities, where it is often not cost-effective for major carriers to build out the infrastructure needed for high-speed internet access.

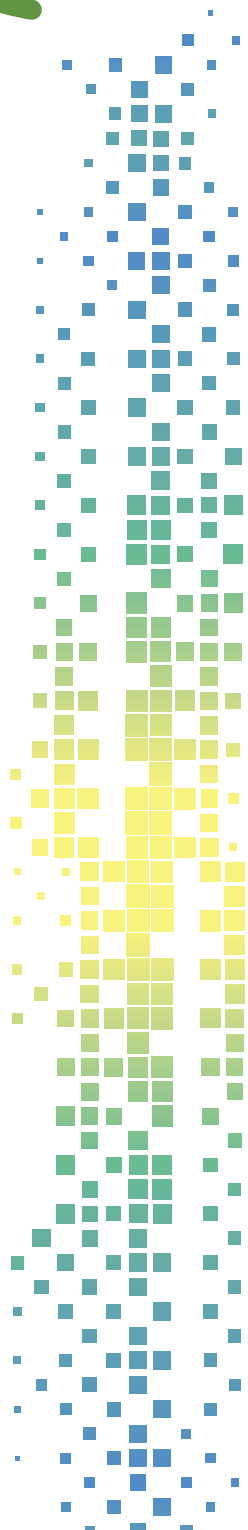
Two decades ago, the Imperial County Office of Education (ICOE) was instrumental in establishing a state-of-the-industry fiber optic communications network in Imperial County.



Today, thanks to these efforts, Imperial County teachers and students enjoy the educational benefits of having reliable, high-speed internet access at school.

While educators and students are able to make the most of high-quality online tools and resources at school, students face new inequities at home. As schools turn to digital learning, teachers increasingly assign homework requiring Internet access at home. The "Homework Gap" refers to the difficulties some socioeconomically disadvantaged students face when working on school assignments without a reliable Internet connection at home. With no Internet connection at home, some of our students lack the tools they need to succeed academically. This disparity in access creates an uneven playing field for students who are unable to do online research, collaborate on group projects, or submit online assignments from home.

Fortunately, this important equity issue will soon be solved in our county. The goal of ensuring that every student is connected to the Internet, regardless if at school, home, or elsewhere in the community, is about to become a reality in Imperial County.

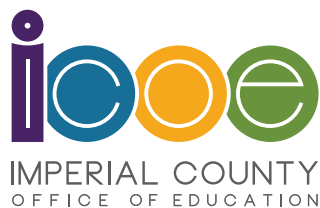


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Recognizing the need to bridge the Homework Gap to allow students to reach their full academic potential, the Imperial County Office of Education has launched an infrastructure initiative that will help ensure equal access to internet services throughout our county.

To get started, ICOE has teamed up with local school districts to bring wireless internet connectivity to students in ten of our local communities: Brawley, Calexico, Calipatria, El Centro, Heber, Holtville, Imperial, Niland, Seeley and Westmorland. The countywide build-out of this private wireless network will blanket our communities and serve more than 35,000 students countywide.

The BorderLink pilot relies on Long Term Evolution (LTE) technology, the same wireless technology that connects mobile phones and devices from all of the major carriers. LTE enables connectivity to mobile devices such as laptops, tablets and smartphones. It allows our smartphones to be connected to the internet anytime, anywhere, at high-speeds and with the same protections and policies that schools maintain for students at school. It can also connect smart meters, vehicles, traffic signaling, video surveillance, and many other devices that will change how our municipal and county government envisions its services in the community.



"WE WANT IMPERIAL COUNTY TO BE THE MOST CONNECTED COMMUNITY IN THE NATION. OUR STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND COMMUNITIES DESERVE IT, AND WE'RE FORTUNATE TO HAVE THE RESOURCES AND PEOPLE TO MAKE IT HAPPEN."

Dr. Todd Finnell, Imperial County Superintendent of Schools

BorderLink will deploy a private education wireless network infrastructure that complements the existing fiber-optic infrastructure throughout Imperial County that connects our schools and public agencies to each other and the internet. Students, teachers, and others will be provided devices to ensure this high-speed connectivity is with them as they leave school grounds. Whether at home or elsewhere in the community, students will no longer worry about having the access they need to further their education, engage with other students or teachers, or access their digital curriculum or other resources.

BorderLink is Imperial County's response to the increasing needs of our schools and students as we work to prepare our students for college and the workforce. We expect to close the Homework Gap and much more, as we focus on improving the quality of life in our community and make Imperial County an ideal place to live, learn, and work.

For more information about this incredible opportunity for our community, contact:

**Imperial County Office of Education
Phone: (760) 312-6440
Web: borderlink.org**