Getting Schooled: Partnering with Arizona's largest school district to issue public library cards

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Hello my name is . . .

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Overview (or let's get oriented)

- Background and Planning

- The Process

- Results

- Lessons Learned

Background and Planning

Background (Literacy Matters)

- "Up to half of the printed fourth-grade curriculum is incomprehensible to students who read below that grade level, according to the Children's Reading Foundation."

- "three quarters of students who are poor readers in third grade will remain poor readers in high school according to researchers at Yale University"

Source: Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters

Background (Inspiration)

- Charlotte Mecklenburg Library launched a program in 2015 to allow students to access library services using their student ID.

- Kansas City Public Library enrolled about 10,000 of Kansas City Public Schools' 14,000 K–12 students into the library system using their student ID.

- Buckeye Public Library System registered over 400 students using a Google form sign up process.

Initial Brainstorming

- Pilot Project

- Automated sign up as part of registration

- How to build a partnership

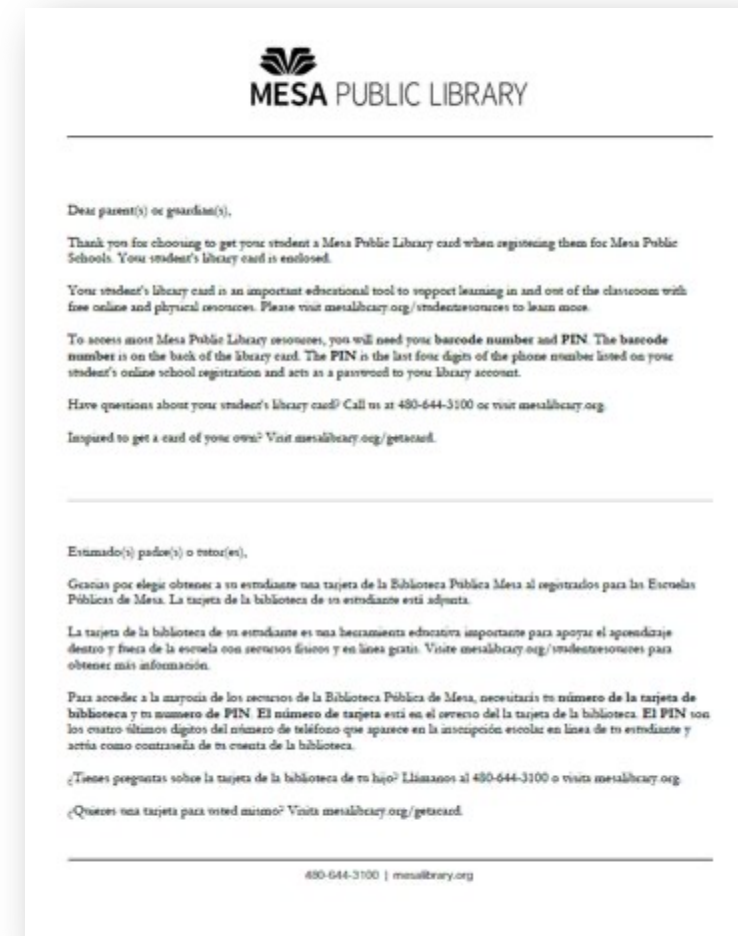# Approaching Mesa Public Schools

- Built a relationship with MPS staff doing outreaches for their school summer programs.

- Began having meetings to explore how to partner further

- Identified which MPS staff was interested in making this happen

Getting Buy In from Mesa Public Schools

- Proposed the card idea as a pilot with a single grade

- MPS was excited to try it out

- Decided to start with Kindergarten class only

- Registration is year-round so we began in Feb 2023

Solidifying a plan

- Marketing team developed a letter to go out

  with the card

- Library IT developed a process for bulk imports

- Operations staff developed a workflow to stuff

  the envelopes

Getting City Buy In

- Fit well with the city's larger

  literacy initiatives

- Easier to get buy in and approval

  from City Management

Legal considerations

- Drafted an IGA with Mesa Public Schools to define the data transfer that parents/guardians opted into

- This step took a few weeks to get ironed out.

The Process

How do they sign up?

How do we get info from the school?

- SFTP (secure file transfer protocol)

- Batches are uploaded monthly

- In compliance with the IGA

How do we get info into ILS

- Information is downloaded from SFTP

- Information must be formatted

- Information is bulk imported into ILS (Polaris)

How do we get the cards to students?

- Cards are mailed

- Welcome letter is included

- Student resource flyer is included

Results!

Cards issued!

- 1400 cards issued to Mesa Public Schools' Kindergartners!

- This was out of over 3700 registered Kindergartners

- 37% of parents / guardians opted in *

Usage

- 12% of those who registered have used their card

- Of that group, 23% used in person, 77% online

- Comparison group (in-person signups) had around 10% usage

Marketing

- Cost: $1400 total

- About a dollar per card (57 cents was for postage alone)

- About $8.67 per active user (cost per acquisition)

Lessons Learned

Challenges

- Duplicates

- Renewals

- Returned mail

- Getting wrong info from the school

- Student already had a card

- Cost to scale

Bonus Challenge

- We have 1400 Kindergartners registered

- Back checked with Mesa Public Schools they are showing that 2400 kindergartners opted in!!

- This would be a 65% opt in rate!

- We must investigate

Future Ideas

- Use student ID as card

- Opt out approach??

- Distribute through schools

- Print cheaper cards to mail?

Questions?

Holler at us!

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Why is this presentation so short?

Links

- https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2016/01/04/student-id-linking-students-to-libraries
- https://www.cmlibrary.org/oneaccess
- https://www.ccf.ny.gov/files/9013/8262/2751/AECFReporReadingGrade3.pdf