



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

AzLA Conference

October 20, 2023



Hello my name is . . .



Polly Bonnett – Library Director, Mesa Public Library



Jesse Simms – Assistant Library Director,
Mesa Public Library

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"

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

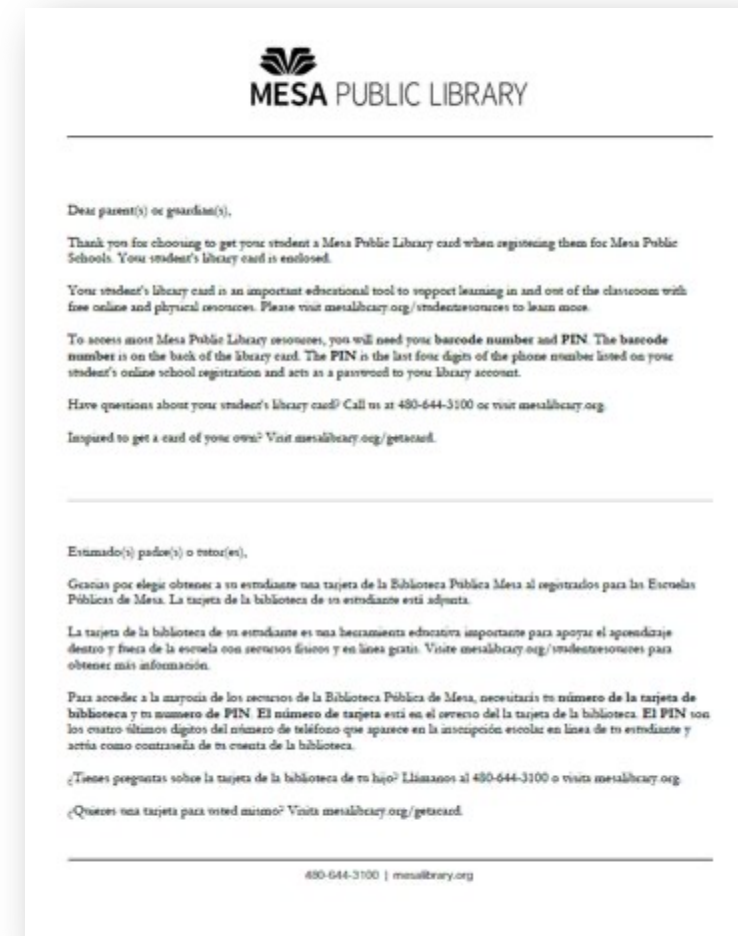
- Built a relationship with MPS staff doing outreaches for their school summer programs.
- Began having meetings to explore how to partner further
- Identified which MPS staff was interested in making this happen

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.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL GOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT

Between the

CITY OF MESA PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

And

MESA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #4

for

PUBLIC LIBRARY CARD SIGN UP THROUGH SCHOOL REGISTRATION

This Intergovernmental Agreement (Agreement) made this 22nd day of November, 2022 by and between the City of Mesa, Arizona, a municipal corporation, (City) by and through the Mesa Public Library (Library), and the Mesa Unified School District #4 (District), an Arizona political subdivision; (Party or Collectively Parties)

A young girl with long dark hair is smiling and holding a smartphone. The phone screen shows a home screen with a date of 24/7, a search bar, and several app icons. The background is a classroom with other children sitting on the floor, slightly out of focus. The text "The Process" is overlaid in the center in a white, bold, serif font.

The Process

How do they sign up?

Mesa Public Library Card:

Mesa Public Schools has partnered with Mesa Public Library to issue library cards to students. If you would like your child to be issued a Mesa Public Library card, please select yes in the box below:

I understand that by selecting yes, I agree to allow Mesa Public Schools to share the following information with the Mesa Public Library: my name and email address, mailing address and phone number, and my child's name and date of birth.

[< Previous](#)

[Save And Continue >](#)

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)


A young girl with long brown hair is smiling and holding a smartphone. The phone screen shows a home screen with various app icons, a date '24 / 7', and the word 'MESA' at the bottom. In the background, other children are sitting on the floor in a classroom setting. The text 'Lessons Learned' is overlaid in the center of the image.

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!

Polly.bonnett@mesaaz.gov

Jesse.simms@mesaaz.gov

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>