



Dear District Superintendents,

Last month, Commissioner Tony Wood and EducationSuperHighway CEO Evan Marwell shared with you the announcement of the Arkansas K-12 broadband access project. In an effort to keep you informed on our progress, we are writing to provide a brief project update.

### Update from EducationSuperHighway

In the two months since Governor Beebe announced the K-12 broadband access partnership with EducationSuperHighway, significant progress has been made to assess the current landscape of connectivity throughout the state and develop a plan to improve Internet access for every district in Arkansas.

As we transition from the initial data collection phase to upgrade planning, we would like to thank districts and Education Service Cooperatives for your participation, support, and many insights. Together we have created a comprehensive picture of K-12 broadband access in Arkansas. The information you provided is critical to helping determine the most effective way to deliver high-speed bandwidth to all districts.

### **Project Developments**

**85% of AR Districts Provided Complete Data.** In August and September, EducationSuperHighway worked closely with district technology coordinators across the state to collect Internet access and WAN speed and pricing data. We received complete data from 85% of Arkansas districts. This information demonstrated:

- APSCN accounts for 58% of Internet spend, but contributes only 5% of total connectivity: APSCN costs \$11 million annually and provides schools with 3 Gbps of connectivity; districts purchasing directly from vendors spend only \$8 million annually and receive over 18x more bandwidth (55 Gbps)
- Most districts supplement their APSCN connection: Less than 10% of districts rely solely on APSCN for connectivity
- There is an opportunity for Arkansas districts to reduce costs: Although districts that purchase directly from vendors pay \$16 per Mbps per month (~27% less than the national median), that is still 4x higher than best practice pricing, which can be as low as \$4 or less per Mbps

**Network Design Planning Underway.** The next phase of our work is to analyze potential state network designs that can provide the opportunity to scale to or beyond 1 Mbps per student by 2018. We are working to ensure that the proposed solutions would be at no additional cost to districts and roll out would begin for the 2015-16 school year.

### **Frequently Asked Question**

#### Who is CT&T and how is EducationSuperHighway working with them?

Last month, the Bureau of Legislative Research hired CT&T, a telecommunications consultancy, to conduct a separate broadband study. Understanding the importance of minimizing requests to districts, EducationSuperHighway shared the information we collected with CT&T and suggested that they focus their study on internal connections to complement the Internet access and WAN analysis we conducted. If you have questions about the CT&T study, please contact the Bureau of Legislative Research at (501) 682-1937.

We are excited by the progress made thus far and to be uncovering network options that will allow districts to get high-speed Internet access as efficiently as possible. In the coming weeks we will be in touch with further updates on our progress as well as opportunities for Q&A with technology coordinators.

In the meantime, please email us with any questions and visit ADE's new project [webpage](#) for more information and real time updates.

Sincerely,

The EducationSuperHighway Team

cc: Co-op and District Technology Coordinators

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