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ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell, Commissioner

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Arkansas Digital Learning Study to Be Released May 6

LITTLE ROCK — A new study about high-speed Internet accessibility for Arkansas' K-12 public schools will be released at 10 a.m. May 6, 2014.

The Quality Digital Learning Study Committee, comprised of education and telecommunication leaders, prepared the report. The committee will provide an overview of the report at the Joint Senate and House Committee on Education meeting that will be held in the Arkadelphia High School Auditorium, 401 High School Drive.

According to TechNet's 2012 Broadband Index, Arkansas ranks 50th for broadband access. The QDLS report is expected to show that public schools' broadband connectivity is inconsistent across the state, with the current system needing major improvements in order to provide a quality 21st century education to Arkansas students. The report will highlight the committee's findings, as well as its recommendations.

"The 460,000 children in our public schools deserve equal access to a 21st century education that prepares them for the jobs of the future," said Dr. Ed Franklin, chair of the Quality Digital Learning Study Committee. "Arkansas lags behind in providing high-speed Internet tools, but it's not too late to catch up."

The committee met from July to December 2013 and was tasked with gathering information about Internet services and accessibility at Arkansas' K-12 public schools. Individuals representing K-12 education, higher education, telecommunications service providers, legislators and other community organizations served on the committee.

To learn more about the study, go to <http://bit.ly/1iBpZJy>. To see an agenda for May 6, go to <http://bit.ly/1j17HX>. To learn more about the STEM information that will be

presented at Tuesday's meeting, go to <http://bit.ly/1rYjsu5>.

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