



# STATE OF IOWA

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR  
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

## STEM ADVISORY COUNCIL BROADBAND COMMITTEE

Co-Chair John Carver, Superintendent, Howard-Winneshiek Community School District  
Co-Chair Robert von Wolfradt, Chief Information Officer, State of Iowa  
Amy Kuhlers, Program Manager, Connect Iowa  
Robert Denson, President, Des Moines Area Community College  
Dave Duncan, President, Iowa Telecommunication Association  
Philip Groner, Iowa Communication Network  
Karl Hehr, Director of Technology Services, Ames Community Schools District  
Galen Howsare, Chief Financial Officer, Iowa Association of School Boards  
Karen Randall, Keystone Area Education Association  
Michael Sadler, Assistant VP for Public Policy  
Larry Siegel, Iowa School Finance and Information System Services  
Jeff Weld, Executive Director, Governor's STEM Advisory Council  
Josh Byrnes, State Representative, District 14  
Steven Soddors, State Senator, District 36

September 19, 2013

The STEM Advisory Council Broadband Committee is soliciting input from stakeholders all across Iowa who can offer insights into the unique broadband challenges facing the state, as well as provide thoughts on possible solutions. This input will help enhance efforts in developing effective policy recommendations to expand broadband access, adoption and use for all Iowans.

To offer comments, please address the questions below. All responses are considered public information, so please do not include confidential information in your response.

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- I. What barriers or other issues can you identify that may impede the increase of broadband access, adoption and use across the state?
  - a. Multiple owners of the various pieces of the system that connects the ICN from the hub to the classroom make it difficult to find a good solution to speed issues. It requires all entities involved to buy in and resource the work properly and in the cases of local telecoms, there may be no way to "ensure" that they will do what they need to do.
  - b. Schools are dependent on pipeline speed and access. The new accountability assessments being developed are electronic. We are now collecting most information from schools electronically. Low pipeline capacity produces barriers to getting work done effectively and efficiently. We can't produce 21<sup>st</sup> century learners with 20<sup>th</sup> century equipment.
- II. If you had to choose one *primary* barrier, what would that be?
  - a. We need the pipeline speed to be consistent from the hub to the student. 100MB speeds across the system are a good goal. Unfortunately, this involves at least three different pieces of system to work in harmony; 1) the pipeline from the hub to the district, 2) the Local Area Network (LAN) connecting buildings in the district (street to building) and 3) the infrastructure from the outer wall of the building to the classroom.



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- III. What recommendations do you have to overcome these barriers?
- Keep the ICN as a state property and adequately resource it. Having the ICN as state property allows the state to access e-rate funding for school districts in the amount of \$18 million per year. There is a federal move to more than double the amount of e-rate funding available, so this state resource is necessary to keep other resources flowing. Pipeline speed from the hub to district boundaries should be no less than 100MB.
  - Adjust existing School Infrastructure Local Option (SILO) tax to include as a standard permissive item technology infrastructure both within school buildings and to support local IT LAN upgrades. It is possible for voters to approve this use in the use statements they support – this step could be skipped by the legislature simply approving the use of these funds for this purpose in all cases from the state level. This would allow districts to upgrade local pipelines to ensure 100MB speed from the district boundary to the school and from the school walls to the classroom.
  - Create a stand-alone appropriation for the “last mile” issue of upgrading local LANs. This fund would be used to incent local telecoms that are not up to speed requirements to upgrade their systems to a minimum 100 MB speed to ensure that there is not a weak point between the ICN pipeline and the school building. The fund could also be used to incent private vendors to provide access at a more consistent and reasonable cost to school districts.
- IV. What are your expectations for future access needs?
- We expect that broadband speed or access will not be a barrier to providing students with a world class, 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning experience. The demand will only grow. We must address this issue now to ensure it will not continue to be a barrier.

V. Other comments?

The State Educational Directors of Technology Association (SEDTA) recommends a minimum bandwidth of 100 MB per school. In Iowa, of the 1,565 schools that reported their current bandwidth,

- 58.7% of the schools report they have 50 MB or less,
- 16.5% report they have between 51 MB and 100 MB,
- 24.8% report having greater than 100 MB.
- The Department of Education has 12 MB

