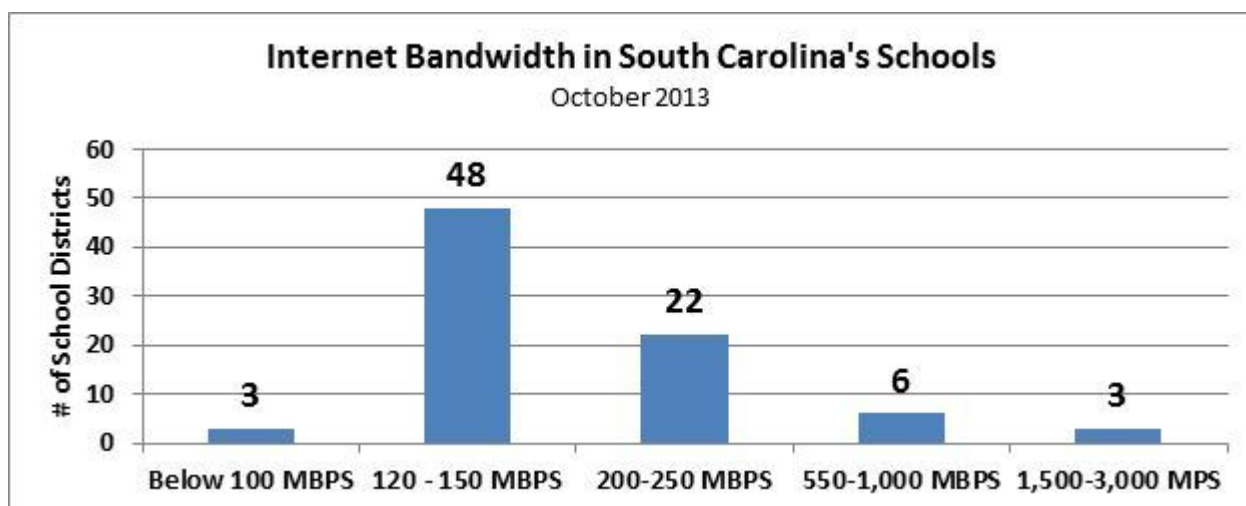


From: SC Gov Research <govresearch@gov.sc.gov>
To:
Date: 1/8/2014 4:30:10 PM
Subject: K-12 Education Reform Initiative - Investing in Educational Technology and Connectivity



Investing In Educational Technology And Connectivity

Modernizing Technology In Our Schools And Improving Bandwidth Will Give Students Greater Access To Educational Content And Also Critical Computer Skills Their Future Employers Will Demand



The Challenge

Access to high-speed internet connections, modern educational technology, and digital instructional materials such as electronic software and textbooks varies widely in our schools – simply put, many of our schools do not have the adequate technology to teach our children in the 21st Century.

- The K-12 Technology Initiative Committee has determined that it would cost \$97.2 million to address the current technological needs of our public schools. (K-12 Technology Initiative Committee, 2013)
- Internet bandwidth in South Carolina ranges from three districts that are below 100 megabits/second (MBPS) to the top three districts, which fall between 1,500 and 3,000 MBPS. (K-12 Technology Initiative Committee, 2013)
- Countless studies have shown that enhanced educational technology can have a positive impact on student achievement. For instance, 14 of the 19 studies reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences showed that educational technology had "strong positive effects" on student achievement. Similar results have been obtained in math, science, and other fields. (International Society for Technology in Education, 2008 / Johns Hopkins University Center for Data-Driven Reform in Education)

- One of the major findings of a 2007 review of digital equity in the K-12 setting was that "educators are receiving inadequate technology professional development." This view was echoed by a number of teachers who have joined the conversation in the past year. (International Society for Technology in Education, 2007)

The Response

Gov. Haley's FY 2014-15 budget calls for an unprecedented investment in K-12 technology and related teacher training as the first step in a multi-year commitment. While every district in South Carolina will benefit from this investment, funds will be allocated based on poverty indices to ensure that we are truly bridging the digital divide.

- The FY 2014-15 Executive Budget dedicates one-quarter of the Capital Reserve Fund (\$29.3 million) to improving bandwidth to school facilities, bolstering wireless connectivity within school walls, and launching or enhancing the push to ensure that every student has a computer or tablet. School districts will be allocated funds based upon their average daily membership and their poverty indices; the poorest districts will receive twice as much per-student as the wealthiest.
- The \$10.2 million already provided for technology within the EIA will also continue.
- The current year's budget contained \$4 million in one-time funding for digital instructional materials; the 2014-15 spending plan raises this to \$12 million.
- To ensure that these investments will be translated into improved student achievement, Gov. Haley is also proposing to use \$4 million in one-time funds for technology-related professional development – it makes no sense for us to provide the technology to our schools and not the training that allows our teachers to get the most out of that technology, and in turn, our kids.

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