



Nome Public Schools

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on reductions in Broadband Program funding. My name is Shawn Arnold and I am the Superintendent for Nome Public Schools.

While technological advancements in schools have provided incredible new opportunities to learn, there is a digital learning gap in Alaska. Affordable access to high-quality technology is still slow to reach many communities, especially in rural areas such as Nome, where both economic and geographic factors are restricting. This trend puts our schools at risk. Technology is crucial for conducting research, connecting with the world, and applying for colleges and careers. With funds scarce, this significant part of our public education system could fall even further behind.

Alaska is a great state but some of the things that make it great also cause great problems. Due to the climate, vastness, terrain, and lack of roads, our district, and others like us, we are hundreds of miles from the source of Internet connectivity. Satellite and microwave solutions are all we have. These solutions are expensive to deploy and maintain. Our rural schools do not have the purchasing power to meet with the need. Broadband is great the equalizer and our rural students need and deserve the same access as their urban counterparts. However the expense is not equitable with our urban counterparts.

I ask that you please consider restoring Broadband Program funding and not penalize us because we happened to live in rural Alaska.

Please feel free to contact me if you need further clarification or information. I can be reached at sarnold@nomeschools.com or 907-443-6191.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Shawn Arnold
Superintendent
Nome Public Schools