

Alaska House of Representatives

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House Transportation Committee

Sponsor Statement HB 82 Sponsor Statement

The 28th Legislature passed an omnibus bill that, among other things, provided support for schools with internet service of less than 10 megabits/sec who qualified for the federal universal services program. That qualifying service level was based on the bill's effective date. Unfortunately schools who had, in good faith, brought their service level up to 10 megabits before that date, were forever left out of the program. Nome Public Schools (NPS) was one of these schools. Their three year contract for internet service expired on June 30th 2013, when they had three megabits/sec of service. At the time they were negotiating for a new contract, the Department of Education made it clear that online state testing would become mandatory. In order to comply with this mandate, NPS negotiated for eleven megabits/sec of service. Their bill for service is now \$80,810/yr, a considerable strain on a school their size. This adds to an overhead that is already so high that the State grants the school a waiver on the 70/30 instructional requirement.

HB 82 would allow schools in a similar situation to NPS to participate in the program established by House Bill 278. This comes down to a question of timing. Had NPS's contract been on a different cycle, they could have qualified for the State's broadband funding program.