

**From:** [Debbe Lancaster](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Increase BAG Cap to 100Mbps - SB 140 HB 193  
**Date:** Saturday, May 06, 2023 5:43:22 PM

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Good afternoon Senators,

I have been the superintendent in the Yukon Flats School District for two years. YFSD currently receives the BAG grant. Whereas we are grateful to have the funding to support our schools' internet service, it would be even better if the cap could be raised from 25 Mbps to 100 Mbps.

I say this because we have to stagger online lessons and assessments to accommodate our limitations. This is just one of several issues that we brainstorm for as workarounds. I would rather brainstorm about student learning than internet connectivity to do our jobs. It is hard to convince our students they are just as important as any other student in Alaska.

As I said in 2018, I am dismayed that superintendents need to beg for help to fund what is needed for students. Can we get predictable and timely help with this?

As you know, the Districts apply for discounted internet through the E-rate program, the annual filing window to apply is the end of March each year – which is before the legislature finishes its business. It's important to pass the bill THIS YEAR so NEXT SPRING the department of education can tell BAG eligible recipients they can apply for 100 megabits per second rather than 25. This whole process is wearisome and takes our focus off of student learning and teacher support.

You have heard this before, but here it is again...

- Digital equity is what is needed.
- Alaska's students need and deserve the full transformative power of technology and equitable access to online resources.
- Our students, teachers and school leaders live in one of the most remote areas of the world, and require access to modern technology in order to transform learning, create efficiencies, provide online health services, and keep pace with their peers globally.
- This funding leverages federal e- rate funds at 8:1 and up to provide our students and educators fair access to the digital world.
- Reliable access to the internet is a critical component of modern learning. YFSD students can't access the internet at levels which meet FCC minimum connectivity goals.
- We want to help ensure our schools have equitable access to educational opportunities.
- We need to have better internet so our teachers, paras, building administrators can take the required online learning for the Alaska Reads Act. Personally, I signed up for Keys to Literacy and NWEA Science of Reading Leadership classes. Our other staff are signing up for required classes as well. This will add to our digital burden.
- Today's quality education requires connectivity, passing this bill will help us achieve our goal of ensuring every Alaska school has the access they need to provide our students with the education they deserve.

Please help us...we are doing our best here. I thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours and mahsi',  
Dr. Debbe Lancaster  
Superintendent YFSD  
907.662.2515 x 24



*Leadership is found in becoming the servant of all. Richard J. Foster*