OCTOBER 14, 2020

Broadband Internet Access for Distance Learning

PRESENTED TO: Assembly Education Committee
Hon. Patrick O’Donnell, Chair
and
Assembly Communications and Conveyance Committee
Hon. Miguel Santiago, Chair

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST’S OFFICE
Broadband Availability in California

More Than 97 Percent of Households in California Have Access to Broadband Internet

- Defined as having download speeds of 6 megabits per second (mbps) and upload speeds of 1 mbps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Share of Households With Broadband Availability</th>
<th>Statewide</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 mbps down and 1 mbps up</td>
<td>97.1%</td>
<td>98.1%</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 mbps down and 3 mbps up</td>
<td>96.3%</td>
<td>97.9%</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: California Public Utilities Commission. mbps = megabits per second.

Rural Availability Varies Depending on Benchmark Speed Used

- When using standard of 25/3 mbps, rural availability decreases to 67 percent.

Majority of Unserved Households Are in Urban Areas

- At 25/3 mbps benchmark, state has 263,000 unserved households in urban areas and 227,000 unserved households in rural areas.
Broadband Adoption in California

- **State Has 80 Percent Broadband Adoption Rate**
  - Results from adoption gap analysis conducted by the California Public Utilities Commission.
  - Defined as the share of households with available broadband internet that subscribe to a broadband internet service.

- **High Correlation Between Household Income and Adoption Rates**
  - 53 percent adoption rate in census tracts with a median annual household income less than $20,000.
  - 86 percent adoption rate in census tracts with a median annual household income greater than $80,000.

- **Other Demographic Characteristics Associated With Lower Broadband Adoption**
  - Lower adoption rates in census tracts with higher proportions of Latino households and limited English-speaking households.
Broadband Access for Distance Learning

▶ State Lacks Specific Data on Access Related to Distance Learning
  - State does not regularly collect information regarding students’ home internet access.

▶ California Department of Education Collected Survey Data in Spring 2020
  - More than 800 local education agencies reported total need for over 400,000 mobile hotspots for students.

▶ Teacher Survey Suggests Low-Income Students Had Difficulty Accessing Internet in Spring
  - A national survey of teachers conducted by the RAND Corporation in spring 2020 found that only 30 percent of teachers in high-poverty schools thought “all or nearly all” of their students had access to the internet at home.