Connect Alaska School Broadband Audit Report Details
Substantial Broadband Gap in Alaska Public Schools

Validated data from all districts and nearly all schools document that 93% of K-12 schools do not meet the national benchmark for education connectivity

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Anchorage, AK – Today, Connect Alaska released its Final Report for the Alaska School Broadband Audit. The Audit finds that 93% of surveyed Alaskan K-12 schools do not meet the national benchmark of 1 Mbps for every student and faculty member. The Audit also shows wide disparities in prices paid for broadband by Alaska school districts, studies the impact different technologies have on the classroom learning experience, and explores the number and age of connected devices in schools, such as laptops and tablets.

"The Audit provides the public, educators, and policymakers a comprehensive picture of broadband connectivity and use at all public K-12 schools in Alaska," said Tom Koutsky, Chief Policy Counsel, Connected Nation. "The future of education is the connected classroom, and Alaska students, particularly those in rural and remote areas, stand to gain the most from broadband and digital educational tools. Unfortunately, too many students and teachers in Alaska are struggling today with inadequate broadband."

The Alaska School Broadband Audit initiative is a multi-faceted series of projects undertaken by Connect Alaska in partnership with the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development and the United States Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration. Every public school district in Alaska submitted important information on broadband connectivity, wireless and wired network

capacity, equipment, and district Wide Area Network connectivity as part of the initiative, and Connect Alaska field engineers visited every district to validate, verify, and confirm the data.

In addition to the Final Report, all of the data is available on the Alaska School Broadband Audit website, http://www.connectak.org/school-broadband-audit. That page contains summary reports for Alaska public school districts and a beta interactive web tool that allows the public to generate district and school specific queries and make peer-to-peer comparisons on topics such as

- Broadband connectivity and speed
- Total cost for broadband connections, on a monthly, per student-staff, and per Megabit basis
- Classroom connectivity (such as Wi Fi)
- Number and average age of connected classroom devices (such as tablets or laptops).

The information collected is the first of its kind and highlights essential information about the technology in Alaska's public schools and the widening gaps that threaten Alaska's goals to provide twenty-first century tools and learning content. Most importantly, this Report calls on the state and Alaska school districts to develop programs that will maximize the amount of funds that the federal E-rate program will pay for broadband connectivity for K-12 schools. Alaska is at risk of leaving millions of dollars of funding on the table – funding that could be used to connect schools and students.

A needs assessment study, *Broadband: A Critical Element of Education in Alaska*, released in February 2015, showed that nearly three-quarters of rural educators in Alaska – 73% – indicated that a lack of adequate broadband limits the educational opportunities offered to their students, and a majority of rural schools in Alaska need additional funding simply to keep up with educational broadband needs.

For more information about the Alaska School Broadband Audit, please visit http://www.connectak.org/school-broadband-audit. If you are interested in an exclusive interview regarding broadband technology in Alaska schools, please contact Kasey McCrary at kmccrary@connectednation.org.

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About Connect Alaska: Connect Alaska partners with technology-minded businesses, government entities, and universities across the state to accelerate broadband access, adoption, and use in Alaska. Connect Alaska is working with the Alaska Broadband Task Force, and this initiative is made possible through support from the state of Alaska and the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development.

For more information about Connect Alaska, visit our website at www.connectak.org. You can also follow Connect Alaska on Facebook and Twitter.