

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

Steve Bullock
GOVERNOR



Mike Cooney
LT. GOVERNOR

September 28, 2017

Subject: Montana School Broadband Project - Year 3 Kick Off

Dear Superintendents and Technology Directors,

We are excited to announce that the Governor's Office, the Department of Commerce (DOC) and the School Administrators of Montana (SAM) have teamed up with EducationSuperHighway for the third year in a row on the Montana School Broadband Project.

Over the past two years, our work with EducationSuperHighway across 40 school districts has resulted in increased Internet speed and scalable connections for over 33,000 students in the state. For example, Red Lodge Public Schools upgraded their network from copper infrastructure to a scalable fiber Internet connection; they now receive three times the bandwidth speeds to their schools and hundreds of students may collaborate and learn in real time with one another. Similarly, Park City Schools worked with their service provider to increase their bandwidth by moving from a 20 Mbps cable modem to a 100 Mbps lit fiber solution, and Cayuse Prairie School also doubled their bandwidth with no installation cost to the district.

To ensure all Montana students and teachers experience these same high-speed benefits, we secured a \$2 million appropriation through House Bill 390 that will serve as a "state match" to leverage additional funding from the Federal Communications Commission's E-rate program. The Department of Commerce will also support E-rate consulting services for districts to assist you with your E-rate applications. These combined resources could trigger up to \$20 million in broadband investments for Montana schools, helping many of you get access to the bandwidth your students and teachers need.

EducationSuperHighway and the Department of Commerce stand ready to help you take advantage of this funding and find viable options to upgrade your school networks. **All assistance through the Montana School Broadband Project is provided free of charge.** To get started, visit <http://comdev.mt.gov/programs/broadband>.

Together, we will continue to support Montana students by improving access to educational opportunities through access to high-speed Internet connections. We look forward keeping you updated on this initiative over the school year.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Steve Bullock in black ink.

STEVE BULLOCK
Governor

Handwritten signature of Pam Haxby-Cote in black ink.

PAM HAXBY-COTE
Director, Montana Department of Commerce