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EMBARGO UNTIL NOON ET / 9AM PT ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19

79 PERCENT OF ARKANSAS SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVE HIGH-SPEED INTERNET ACCESS FOR DIGITAL LEARNING; GOVERNOR HUTCHINSON FURTHER COMMITS TO TAKE ACTION TO CONNECT ALL ARKANSAS STUDENTS

EducationSuperHighway Releases First Annual State of the States Report on School Broadband Connectivity

SAN FRANCISCO – November 19, 2015 – Today, [EducationSuperHighway](#), the national non-profit dedicated to upgrading the Internet access in every public school classroom in America, released the first annual *State of the States* report on K-12 broadband connectivity. The data and insights in the report unveil a comprehensive state by state review of broadband challenges and opportunities for K-12 public schools across the country.

In Arkansas, 79 percent of school districts are meeting the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) 100 kbps per student goal for digital learning readiness. We commend Governor Hutchinson for his leadership and commitment to take action to connect all students. Particularly, the Governor has overhauled the Arkansas Public School Computer Network contract, upgrading school bandwidth from 5 kbps per student to 200 kbps per student by 2017.

To finish the job and connect all students to the promise of digital learning, the Governor must further his actions to get the final 21 percent of school districts to the minimum 100 kbps per student goal and then look to the future. A typical school district in Arkansas will need to grow bandwidth at least threefold to meet expected increase in demand by 2018.

"Digital learning has the power to transform education in this country, but that can't happen without first connecting all of our students to high-speed Internet. By working together to put a broadband foundation in place, we can ensure that every student, in every state has equal opportunity for a world-class education," said Evan Marwell, CEO of EducationSuperHighway.

In 2013, EducationSuperHighway reported that only 30 percent of school districts nationwide were meeting the FCC minimum Internet Access goal of 100 kbps per student, leaving 40 million students without the broadband they needed for digital learning. Since then, an additional \$2.5 billion per year in broadband funding from the FCC and extensive work by EducationSuperHighway, governors, school districts, state-level officials, service providers, and other partners has led to an additional 20 million students getting connected.

Despite this tremendous progress across the country, EducationSuperHighway's report finds that 23 percent of school districts nationwide are still not meeting the minimum Internet access goal, leaving 21 million students without the connectivity they need for digital learning.

As the *2015 State of the States* report shows, many states have made great progress toward ensuring every classroom has equal access to broadband. The gains that have been made in the last two years have been driven in part by dramatic improvements in the affordability of broadband, lowering the median cost of Internet access from \$22 per Mbps to \$11 per Mbps. To finish the job and prepare for the future, EducationSuperHighway is calling for governors in every state to take action:

- **Provide every school with access to fiber.** To meet federal connectivity goals, 92 percent of schools will need a fiber optic connection. Over the next three years, the E-rate program can

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provide the estimated \$1 billion it will cost to connect the schools currently without access to fiber.

- **Make bandwidth affordable.** A continued focus on affordability, with a goal of lowering the cost of Internet access to \$3 per Mbps, can enable another 12 million students across the country to utilize technology in the classroom.
- **Provide every classroom with robust Wi-Fi.** With over \$3 billion of funding for Wi-Fi connections available over the next 4 years, every school district should be able to upgrade their Wi-Fi to enable one to one digital learning in their classrooms.

Momentum is strong and with the federal resources in place and state-level commitments like Governor Hutchinson's, Arkansas' schools can achieve the connectivity goals today and in the future, bringing 21st century learning opportunities to every student in Arkansas.

About EducationSuperHighway

EducationSuperHighway is the leading non-profit focused on upgrading the Internet access in every public school classroom in America. We believe that digital learning has the potential to provide all students with equal access to educational opportunity and that every school requires high-speed broadband to make that opportunity a reality.

EducationSuperHighway's data-driven programs accelerate upgrades in America's schools. We help governors develop strategies to upgrade their schools, get fiber to schools that need it, and make broadband more affordable for school districts. Our work served as a catalyst for the modernization of the Federal Communications Commission's \$3.9 billion E-rate program, earning our CEO the 2015 Visionary of the Year award from the *San Francisco Chronicle*. For additional information, please visit <http://www.educationsuperhighway.org/>.