

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.

Share of Households With Broadband Availability			
<i>As of December 31, 2018</i>			
	Statewide	Urban	Rural
6 mbps down and 1 mbps up	97.1%	98.1%	78.5%
25 mbps down and 3 mbps up	96.3	97.9	67.0

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.

