

**To: Members of the State Board of
Education & Early Development**

July 1, 2024

From: Dr. Deena Bishop, Commissioner

Agenda Item: 4

◆ ISSUE

The board is being asked to open a public comment period on regulation changes in 4 AAC 33.600-4 AAC 33.690 to increase internet speed for districts through the Broadband Assistance Grant (BAG) program under AS 14.03.127(a).

◆ BACKGROUND

- The proposed regulations are in response to the passage of House Bill (HB) 193, Internet for Schools, which became law on March 27, 2024 (Chapter 1, SLA 2024). The effective date of this new law is immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).
- The Alaska School Broadband Assistance Grant (BAG) program was created to assist schools in increasing internet download speeds. Initially established in 2014 by the Alaska State Legislature, this grant allowed schools to reach download speeds of 10 Mbps. In 2020, the State Legislature revised the statute to help schools reach 25 Mbps download speeds.
- The proposed changes for Funding for Internet Services are as follows: Increase funding for schools up to a maximum of 100 Mbps. Under previous AS 14.03.127(a), “[e]ach fiscal year,” a district that qualifies for a discount under the E-Rate program is eligible to receive “an amount for each school that is equal to the amount needed to bring the applicant’s share to 25 megabits of download a second of the Internet Service.” With the recent amendment by HB193, AS 14.03.127 now funds Internet support for less than or equal to 100 Mbps and requires amendments of the corresponding regulations, specifically 4 AAC 33.600 – 4 AAC 33.690.
- The proposed regulation can be found behind this cover memo.
- Dr. Deena Bishop, Commissioner and Ryan Bravo, Assistant Attorney General, will be present to brief the board.

◆ OPTIONS

Open a period of public comment on the proposed regulation changes.
Amend the proposed regulations and open a period of public comment.
Seek more information.

◆ ADMINISTRATION’S RECOMMENDATION

Open a period of public comment on the proposed regulation changes.

◆ SUGGESTED MOTION

I move the State Board of Education and Early Development open a period of public comment to change regulations to increase internet speed for districts through the Broadband Assistance Grant (BAG) program under AS 14.03.127(a).