



State of Vermont
Vermont Department of Education
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

June 22, 2009

Dear Superintendent,

One of the most exciting opportunities for our state in terms of federal stimulus funding is in the area of broadband services and our schools will play a key role. The Department of Education (DOE), and the Vermont Telecommunications Authority (VTA) in coordination with the state's Office of Economic Stimulus and Recovery (ESR) have been collaborating to develop a high-capacity (primarily fiber optic) network proposal that includes connections to government and educational institutions. As one element of a comprehensive broadband strategy, ESR has called for a single multi-use backhaul and institutional network proposal from Vermont addressing the needs of broadband and cellular service providers, state government, electric utility operations, K12 and higher education users, and health care institutions. See recovery.vermont.gov/broadband for more information. Such a network can serve as a backbone for present and future telecommunications needs in Vermont.

Participation in this joint network development proposal represents the best opportunity for schools in Vermont to benefit from broadband stimulus funding. In preparation for a coordinated funding request for competitive stimulus dollars under the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP), we need to identify the schools which are ready to provide key information that will enable us to develop and finalize a proposal, and the schools which will commit to the network if funded. We are asking schools to submit "letters of intent" by **July 15th** to participate in this network. Please understand that the details of this network are evolving rapidly, (and we need your help to finalize them), but it is fair to state that our goal is to see delivery of data speeds to every school in excess of 100 Mbps up to multi-Gbps at spending levels comparable to your current budgets. Translated more succinctly, at many schools this means a goal of delivering at least 10 times the bandwidth for approximately the same price they currently pay. We believe this goal is achievable with this opportunity. Service levels and access to advanced applications, such as distance learning would also be offered over the network.

To further support this broadband effort, DOE will be issuing a Title IID Request for Proposal (RFP) for a Local Education Agency (LEA). See http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_edtech.html. This RFP is intended to solicit an interim "manager" that can help schools and the DOE articulate the business requirements of the network, recruit LEAs to the network and develop a bid for a service provider over the long term for this network. This entity will also be charged with maximizing and simplifying the state's "e-rate" reimbursement process for schools. In the long term, while the network will be open access and we anticipate your existing provider will have an opportunity to lease facilities, we will be seeking a provider as the primary operator of the network. This entity will package services and applications

in a way that best leverages our shared purchasing power and reflects the value of stimulus grant funding in lower rates to schools.

Your non-binding letter of intent to join this network is a necessary component of the state's stimulus request, and I ask that you quickly submit the letter to DOE in the format attached. We intend to hold a series of conference calls and meetings over the summer to update you on the funding requests and the service offerings. Schools that submit letters of intent will be prioritized in the network construction planning processes. We do not know that there will be sufficient stimulus funding available to provide enhanced broadband services at all schools or other locations, but we do believe that a coordinated request provides the best opportunity to serve the greatest number of users with the stimulus funding that Vermont is able to achieve. We hope to hear from as many of you as possible.

Please direct requests for information related to this project to Peter Drescher, Education Technology Coordinator, at (802) 828-5149 or peter.drescher@state.vt.us.

I appreciate your rapid response to this request and look forward to updating you as more details become available.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Armando Vilaseca".

Armando Vilaseca
Commissioner