

## Talking Points for Platform 2010: Broadband Task Force

### Platform point...

#### **Minnesota's Libraries support:**

- *The recommendations of the **Ultra High-Speed Broadband Task Force** in regard to implementing increased broadband capacity to K-12 schools and public libraries.*

### Talking points...

#### **Broadband Network Essential for K-12 Schools and Public Libraries**

- The Ultra High-Speed Broadband Task Force has set goals in Minnesota for download speeds of 20 megabytes per second and upload speeds of between 5 to 10 megabytes per second by 2015. These speeds would serve K-12 schools and public libraries well for the applications currently being used.
- The Learning Network of Minnesota, which was created to allow students, staff and library users equal access to worldwide learning resources, including those available on the Internet, remains a viable network for Minnesota schools and public libraries. However, the infrastructure will need to begin to be replaced to provide for the higher speeds required for higher levels of connectivity.
- While the volume, quality and relevance of instructional and informational content has greatly increased over the last ten years, many schools and libraries cannot afford to increase the capacity of their connections and cannot take full advantage of these resources. Some districts and libraries have decreased their capacity due to budget constraints.
- As schools increase the use of online learning techniques to meet their instructional needs, particularly to serve special populations, connection capacity is being further strained and degraded. Similarly, as library users access the full powers of the Internet including video streaming, the bandwidth capacity of the library network is severely taxed.
- Accountability reforms spawned by No Child Left Behind and Minnesota statute require rapid, secure access to student performance data. The use of network-based programs and regional servers for online testing and data warehousing and data-driven decision making is increasing.
- A stable, efficient and secure telecommunications infrastructure is essential to continued productivity gains in the administration of both K-12 schools and public libraries. E-mail and web posting of documents allows asynchronous communication. The mailing of printed reports between MDE and school districts or the State Library and public libraries has been replaced with digital data transmission, and videoconferences for both entities and electronic field trips for students are saving time and reducing travel costs.

- **Regional cooperation and collaboration for K-12 education and public library telecommunications and Internet access infrastructure development has proven to be cost effective and service efficient and should be recognized and fostered by legislative funding.**
- **While the unit cost of telecommunications capacity has generally decreased, telecommunications costs are distance-sensitive and cost disparities exist throughout Minnesota. Telecommunications equity aid and Regional Library Telecommunications Aid reduce those disparities for both urban and rural schools and libraries, allowing them to afford the connection capacity necessary to achieve their education and information goals.**
- **There are also disparities between the number and size of broadband lines needed depending on the number of students or library users being served. The Minnesota Legislature should look at the possibility of funding a statewide K-12 schools/public library network based on use in the near future.**