



## Let's Talk Broadband & Education

Welcome to *Let's Talk Broadband*, a newsletter published by the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF), a statewide non-profit established at the direction of the California Public Utilities Commission. The mission of CETF is to close the Digital Divide in California by promoting and accelerating broadband deployment and adoption. This issue focuses on the intersection of education and broadband.

### In the News

[The Broadband Imperative II: Equitable Access for Learning](#) September 12, 2016

[Why Smartphones Alone Won't Close the Digital Divide](#) August 21, 2016

[Disconnected in Silicon Valley's Shadow](#) August 14, 2016

[Too Poor to Afford the Internet](#) August 12, 2016

[The 'Smartphone Only' Problem](#) August 11, 2016

[Gap Between U.S. Rural Urban Internet Persists Over 17-Year Period](#) August 10, 2016

[We Must Bridge the Digital Divide](#) August 4, 2016

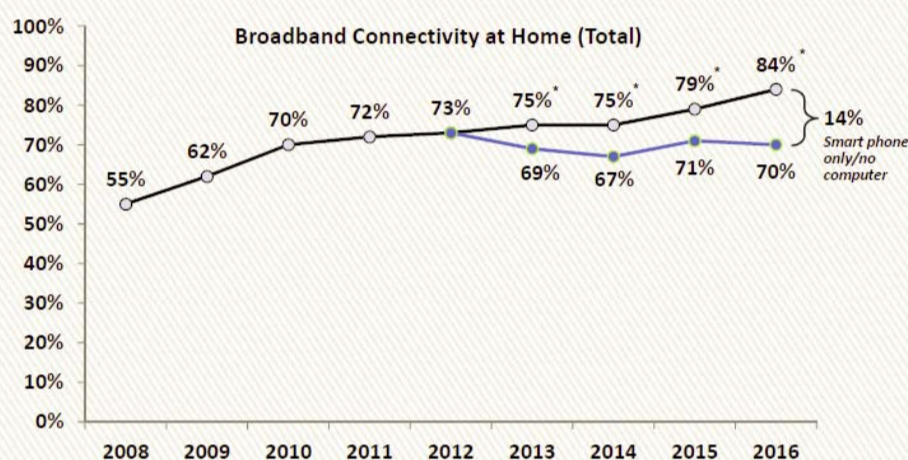
[The Growth in 'Under-Connected' Californians Should Alarm Us](#) August 1, 2016

[Poll Finds Many Californians Lack Internet Access](#) August 1, 2016

### Annual Survey on California Broadband Adoption

There is good news and bad news in [2016 Annual Survey](#) on Broadband Adoption conducted by the Field Research Corporation. The good news is that 84% of California households have a broadband connection at home, up from 55% in 2008.

#### Trend of California Households with Broadband Internet Connectivity (2008 - 2016)



\* For all years prior to 2013, broadband Internet connectivity included those accessing the Internet through DSL, cable, satellite or fiber optic connections to a home desktop, laptop or tablet computer. For 2013 and thereafter, this also includes those connecting to the Internet at home solely through a smart phone.  
Source: 2014-2016 surveys conducted for the California Emerging Technology Fund by The Field Poll, while prior years' surveys conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California.

### Funding Opportunities

[Frontier-CETF Broadband Adoption Grant Opportunity](#)

Applications are due on September 16, 2016 and December 7, 2016.

[California Advanced Services Fund \(CASF\) Broadband Public Housing Account](#)

Applications are accepted on a quarterly basis with an upcoming deadline of October 1, 2016.

[California Advanced Services Fund \(CASF\) Infrastructure Grant and Revolving Loan Accounts](#)

Applications are being accepted on a rolling basis.

### Affordable Broadband

[Everyone On](#)

[Cheap Internet](#)

[Internet Essentials \(Comcast\)](#)

[Access \(AT&T\)](#)

### Resources

[K-12 High Speed Network](#)

[National Broadband Plan: Education](#)

[Opportunity for All? Technology and Learning in Lower-Income Families](#)

[Digital Learning in California's K-12 Schools](#)

The bad news, as illustrated in the chart above, is that 14% of Californians are connecting only through a smart phone, a near doubling of smart phone-only users since last year. Smart phones are incredible devices, but students can't write term papers on them or use them to upload class assignments. For households with children who need an Internet-enabled computing device to do their school work, this increased smart phone reliance is worrisome and evidence of what FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel calls the "Homework Gap."

#### Broadband Internet Connectivity at Home



The California subgroups connecting to the Internet through a smart phone only are the most economically disadvantaged. As the chart above illustrates, just 43% of Californians with incomes of less than \$22,000 can access the Internet at home through a computing device, compared to 94% among those with incomes of \$100,000 or more.

The survey finds that **among households with children under 18, only 73% have home broadband through a computing device.** At the same time, survey responses indicate that broadband is crucial to student academic outcomes and parent engagement in education. A full **84% of poll respondents say they use broadband to assist children with their homework.**

The results of the 2016 Annual Survey underscore why CETF will be sponsoring the [Internet For All Now Act](#) in the next session of the Legislature. If you are a local government official, we urge you to take a few minutes to anonymously [respond to this questionnaire](#) about broadband needs and policy in California.

Sincerely,



Sunne Wright McPeak, President and CEO  
California Emerging Technology Fund

### **Progress on School2Home**

In 2011, CETF and The Children's Partnership launched an educational program designed to help close the Digital Divide and the Achievement Gap by integrating technology into teaching and learning at low-performing middle schools throughout California. [School2Home](#) was founded on the simple recognition that 30% to 40% of low-income California households do not have high-speed Internet and, as a result, the state's academic achievement divide will unnecessarily grow.

For that reason, School2Home has set out to: get students connected to the Internet at home through affordable broadband programs and low-cost computers; provide parents the digital literacy skills they need to engage with teachers, schools and their children's learning; and train teachers to use the increasing abundance of hardware and software to the benefit of their students' education. For a brief overview of School2Home and its impact, watch this [video](#):

  
<https://youtu.be/kJdUNQBjjuo>

School2Home is now operational in 12 California districts and 30 schools. As Delaine Eastin, former California Superintendent of Public Instruction, wrote in a recent [EdSource article](#): "There are plenty of other nonprofit programs providing digital literacy skills to students and teachers--but School2Home is the only initiative in California with a major focus on parent engagement coupled with educational technology training."

Among the findings in the 2015-2016 evaluation of School2Home by Education Support Systems is that, as a result of the program, 82% of participating parents report their children's grades and interest in school have improved and 83% report increased involvement in their children's education.



Micah Studer (above), Coordinator of Educational and Informational Technology of the Winters Unified School District, has worked to implement School2Home in the district's middle and high schools, providing Chromebooks and digital literacy skills to 800 students and their parents and teachers. In a [recent Q&A](#) on School2Home, Studer said:

"There is just no reason not to put this technology in the hands of kids, other than it's too hard and you don't want to do it. If we believe it is the mandate of the school to educate all children regardless of who, what and where they are from, then we as educators and administrators need to provide the necessary resources for our students to succeed at high levels. Yes, it is hard. Yes, it is difficult. But the outcomes are amazing."

### **School Districts Connect Households with Internet and Chromebooks**

School districts in Frontier Communications' service area should be aware that the company is awarding \$3 million in grants to non-profits that work toward closing the Digital Divide. Frontier's goal is to enable 200,000 new broadband adoptions among low-income California households by August 2018. In addition, Frontier is donating 50,000 laptops to be distributed by grantees to participating low-income households. The program is administered by CETF at no cost to Frontier.

So far, grants have been made to the Pond and McFarland School Districts, which are connecting qualified low-income households to high-speed Internet for \$13.99 per month and distributing hundreds of free Chromebooks.

The next deadlines for grant applications is December 7 (for a January 1 start date). [CETF's Frontier grant page](#) has further details and information.