

## Arkansas Broadband Coalition for Kids

May 28, 2014

Joint Committee on Advanced Communications and Information Technology  
Senate Committee on Education  
House Committee on Education

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Arkansas Broadband Coalition for Kids

## History

- In 2012 “Digital Learning Now” report, Arkansas graded “F” (48th/50)
- Act 1280 of 2013 creates “Arkansas Digital Learning Act”
- July 2013 – Broadband providers meet with governor to discuss broadband access status and agree to participate in QDLS/FASTER study groups
- Providers abstain from recommendations based on three areas of concern: problems with inaccurate data, unknown costs, and statutory concerns
- 2013 “Digital Learning Now,” Arkansas’s ranking jumps 20 spots to 28th/50. Considered one of two states to have “huge” gains.

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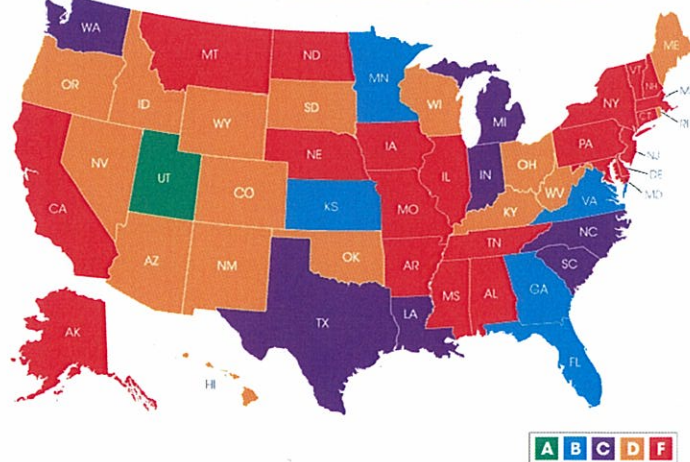
## About the Grade

- There were 39 factors that went into determining a state's grade.
- The availability of all schools to have high-speed broadband internet access was only one of those 39 factors.

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## Broadband Grades by State 2012

Broadband Grades by State



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## Arkansas Digital Learning Act

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.  
Act 1280 of the Regular Session

1 State of Arkansas *As Engrossed: H3/18/13 H3/26/13 H4/4/13*

2 89th General Assembly

3 Regular Session, 2013

4

5 By: Representative D. Douglas

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### For An Act To Be Entitled

8 AN ACT TO PROVIDE DIGITAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN

9 PUBLIC SCHOOLS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.]

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### Subtitle

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TO PROVIDE DIGITAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

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IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

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## Concerns with Recommendations

1. Initial data flawed/self-reported data/incomplete data.
  - For example, report indicated ALL state schools “deficient” in broadband access.
  - Less than ½ of Arkansas schools are listed on the DoE website.
2. Unknown costs
3. Statutory concerns

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## ACT 1050

- Introduced in 2011 as bi-partisan effort to address government and government-subsidized competition in the state.
- 22 similar laws in other states today.
- Amended existing statute prohibiting competition for telephone services.
- Amendments made to “grandfather” existing ventures.
- No dissenting votes.

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# “Digital Learning Now” 2013 Report Card



## Advances

Arkansas and Nevada made huge gains on the Report Card in 2013. Arkansas emphasized increasing student eligibility for digital learning, making huge strides in policy with **HB 1785** in April. The bill clearly establishes an approved provider list for digital learning and ensures that — in the 2014-2015 school year — every student will have the opportunity to take at least one digital learning course.

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## Solutions

1. Identify schools in need and allow private enterprise to invest its capital where feasible. In some cases, government funding may be appropriate (e-rate can address up to 90% of some costs).
2. Identify school needs and customize solutions for each school based on school specific needs. One size does not fit all.
3. Allow the providers - who have worked to deliver broadband to Arkansas schools - to continue to expand broadband accessibility. Arkansas's broadband providers have deployed more than 150,000 miles of fiber-optic cable throughout the state.

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## Private Industry Fiber

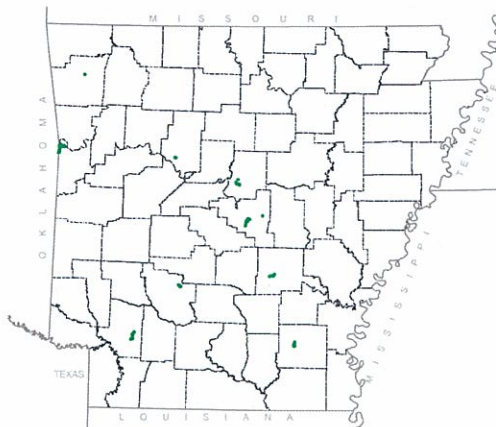


As of January  
2014

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## ARE-ON Owned Fiber



As of January  
2014

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## Conclusion

- The rollout of broadband in Arkansas has spread further and faster than that of other utilities, including telephone, electricity, and even water. By conservative estimates, 94 percent of Arkansans now have access to broadband.
- Additionally, Arkansas broadband providers have been delivering communications services to every corner of the state for more than 125 years and have invested billions of dollars in the infrastructure's backbone in a strategic effort to deliver high-speed Internet access throughout Arkansas.

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