



State of Vermont
Department of Public Service
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<http://publicservice.vermont.gov> [tdd] 800-734-8390

July 6, 2020

Re: Your Help Needed for the Get Vermonters Connected Now Program

Dear Superintendents:

The COVID-19 Pandemic has underscored the importance of improving internet connectivity for our students and teachers. To this end, H.966 passed into law last week, thereby establishing the Get Vermonters Connected Now program. The \$17 million appropriation for this program will be used to expand broadband networks for students and other affected groups who lack physical access to broadband today for purposes such as remote learning and telehealth during the COVID-19 Emergency.

Since early April, the Department of Public Service has been collecting data on student access to broadband in your respective school districts. To date, ten districts have provided such address data. This is a good start, and with your help the response rate can be pushed up higher to maximize the odds of success for the Get Vermonters Connected Now program.

The Department has put together a survey and map that your students, teachers, and administrators can use to identify and report specific locations that need broadband service. To obtain robust data for the program, I would ask you to encourage folks in your communities to participate in this survey, which can be found here:

<https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/interactive-broadband-map>.

Survey data can also be reported verbally to the Department by calling the Consumer Affairs and Public Information Division at 800-622-4496 (callers should leave a message with their phone numbers and staff will return their calls promptly).

Alternatively, please send the Department (psd.telecom@vermont.gov) any list of addresses that you may have or can put together that identifies your district's broadband needs, to include any

list of student addresses – the Department will merge such lists with its existing broadband availability data set to identify areas of need. Finally, Supervisory Unions and Supervisory Districts can also upload existing lists into the forthcoming Annual Technology Survey from the Agency of Education. Please do not provide either the Department or the Agency of Education with any identifying information about students other than their physical addresses.

Should you have any questions about this letter, please contact Clay Purvis at the Department of Public Service (clay.purvis@vermont.gov) or at (802) 371-9655) or Jess DeCarolis at the Agency of Education (jess.decarolis@vermont.gov).

While it would be most helpful to receive your district's data **by July 15, 2020**, the data is also welcome for submission on a rolling basis as well.

Thank you for all you have been doing to help Vermont students learn and thrive under these difficult pandemic conditions. Please be in touch if there is anything we can do to assist you in the important work of providing data in support of the Get Vermonters Connected Now program.

Kind Regards.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "June E. Tierney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "June" being the most prominent.

June E. Tierney
Commissioner

Cc: Secretary Daniel French, Agency of Education