



NSBA 2021 Talking Points

The Homework Gap and Education Digital Divide

Millions of students lack home broadband connections for remote learning. This digital divide in education -- commonly referred to as the “Homework Gap” -- greatly disadvantaged these learners before the pandemic. When schools were forced last year to transition to virtual or hybrid learning models, the problem became even more serious. A July 2020 study released by the Alliance for Excellent Education (All4Ed), National Indian Education Association (NIEA), National Urban League (NUL), and UnidosUS found 16.9 million children lack high-speed broadband access at home.¹ The report showed that 34% of Native American students, 31% of Latino students, 31% of Black students, 21% of white students, and 12% of Asian students lacked high-speed internet access. Similarly, when it came to a lack of computers, 17% of Black and Latino students, 16% of Native American students, 8% of white students, and 4% of Asian students do not have a device. Students from families with lower incomes also face pressing access needs. The report showed that 45% of households making less than \$25,000 lacked high-speed internet access, while 29% lacked a computer. In households making \$25,000 to \$50,000, only 29% had high-speed internet access, with 16% without a computer.² NSBA believes that opportunities growing out of the pandemic’s challenges can help public schools transform learning for their students. As innovation and modern instruction options such as personalized learning increase, students’ access to technology and high-speed broadband is imperative.

NSBA’s position on the Homework Gap and Education Digital Divide

- President Biden has proposed \$100 billion in the American Jobs Plan (AJP) to build high-speed broadband infrastructure. NSBA urges Congress to provide a minimum of that much-needed funding to help build better connections in any new infrastructure legislation.
- NSBA appreciates Congress’ decision to provide dedicated emergency funding of \$7.1 billion for connecting students and staff to home broadband as part of the American Rescue Plan’s Emergency Educational Connections Fund. However, this does not permanently solve the problem; and more must be done long-term to permanently close the Homework Gap.
- Closing the Homework Gap permanently is an urgent issue for public schools and NSBA. Therefore, NSBA calls on the administration, Congress, state policymakers, businesses, and other education and civil rights organizations to work with school board members to finally close this digital divide impacting millions of students.

¹ Future Ready Schools, “Students of Color Caught in the Homework Gap” (July 2020), available at <https://futureready.org/homework-gap/> (Future Ready Schools Report). Accessed May 26, 2021.

² Ibid.