New Jersey Digital Readiness for Learning & Assessment Project
The power of cooperative technology purchasing

Piscataway, New Jersey, Year Seven Report, January 20, 2022

The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey (ESCNJ) and Dellicker Strategies are pleased to announce results from the seventh year of the New Jersey Digital Readiness for Learning and Assessment Project (NJDRLAP). Launched in 2014 with support from the NJ Dept. of Education, NJDRLAP has become a model of success for using cooperative purchasing close the digital divide. So far, the NJDRLAP initiative has helped hundreds of schools and municipalities save millions of dollars while significantly increasing their Internet access, and it is still going strong.

2021 Co-op Contract Highlights

- The 2021 procurement was the biggest ever, helping **794 educational institutions** purchase better broadband, including districts, charters, non-public schools, & private organizations.

- The NJDRLAP co-op added 78 organizations last year, **an increase of 22%.** New participants include 43 school districts, 18 independent schools, 15 municipalities, a library, and a college.

- No district is left behind. The 2021 program offers **high-speed Internet access to every school district in New Jersey**, plus fiber connectivity to hundreds of schools statewide.

- Speeds are faster than ever before. Compared to the 2018 contract, which set the previous record for statewide K-12 Internet speeds, **average bandwidth is up 47%,** from 1,177 Megabits per second (Mbps) to 1,729 Mbps. That's almost 2 Gigabits per second (Gbps).

- While bandwidth is up, costs are down. The **average price for Internet access is 29% less than the previous contract**. The co-op reduced prices from $1,991 to $1,405 per month.

- The co-op delivers tremendous value for critical technology tools. The 2021 contract reduces the average monthly price per Mbps for Internet access by 52% from $1.69 to just 81 cents. **That's enough to keep 100 more teachers in New Jersey classrooms.[1]**

- **Municipal agencies and local governments may participate too**. Since the last report, 15 new local jurisdictions signed up for NJDRLAP services, bringing the total to 39 participants.

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[1] The $0.88 differential in price per Mbps applied to the 738,200 Mbps total bandwidth proposed to the 427 school entities in the regional buying groups equates to $7.8M in annual savings. At $78K per teacher that is 100 teachers.

Key Facts about the First Seven Years of NJDRLAP

Here are some facts and figures about the NJDRLAP program, current as of December 31, 2021.

Equitable Access

One of the main objectives of the NJDRLAP co-op was to make high-speed Internet access available to every student in New Jersey. The program is well on its way to achieving that goal.

In the first year of the program, 137 school districts signed up for faster and cheaper broadband access through the NJDRLAP program, a promising start for the cooperative. By the end of 2021, 329 school districts were using the program, **almost 55% of all school districts in New Jersey**.

In addition, **58 public charter schools, non-public schools and educational non-profits** have taken advantage of the program. Participants are from every county in the state, representing schools big and small, rural and urban, wealthy and poor, from pre-kindergarten to high school.

Altogether, that's **427 educational and government institutions** using the NJDRLAP co-op. The contract has helped thousands of citizens get better government services and **benefited more than 730,000 students** by delivering world-class Internet access to their classrooms.

NJDRLAP also helped schools adapt to the Covid-19 pandemic. Through its creative partnerships with local broadband providers, New Jersey school districts were able to use the co-op to provide new opportunities for at-home teaching and learning. For example, NJDRLAP provider **Altice helped 84 New Jersey school districts connect 195,000 student devices** last year.

Better Infrastructure

Before the NJDRLAP program began, more than 17% of participating schools were struggling with copper lines to connect to the Internet. Today, at least **98% of K-12 districts are on fiber**.

By bundling the demand for advanced telecom services, the ESCNJ co-op helps local telecom providers make more productive investments in the New Jersey economy, which benefits businesses, hospitals and individual citizens, as well as schools and government organizations. The NJDRLAP co-op in on-track to facilitate **$125 million in telecom contracts** for the shared benefit of our public sector members, approved service providers and New Jersey citizens.

Faster Speeds

The NJDRLAP program has significantly enhanced the availability of high-speed Internet access to K-12 schools. Before the program began, the average Internet connection for participating

school entities was 348 Megabits per second (Mbps). Today, they are averaging 1,940 Mbps. That exceeds **five times more Internet bandwidth per organization- a 457% increase!**

Besides faster Internet access, co-op members are using the NJDRLAP contract to connect multiple campus locations and government buildings together for super-fast information exchange. The NJDRLAP program is delivering fiber-optic circuits of at least 100 Mbps each to hundreds of schools and municipalities, with **average bandwidth approaching 2 Gbps.** These upgraded circuits are meeting the "need-for-speed" for schools and municipalities statewide.

Lower Costs

The ESCNJ works hard to deliver the lowest-possible prices to public organizations, and the NJDRLAP program has been successful in reducing technology costs for taxpayers statewide.

As the co-op increased Internet bandwidth to participating school organizations by an average of 457%, **NJDRLAP decreased the monthly price of Internet by 60%.** On a cost-per-unit basis, **NJDRLAP has driven down the Internet price per Mbps by 94%.** Before NJDRLAP, schools paid an average of $26.17 per Mbps for Internet access. Today they pay just $1.06.

Bottom Line

NJDRLAP co-op contracts for high-speed Internet access and advanced telecom services are servicing **more than 1,000 education and government facilities** with world-class technology. If these organizations had to pay pre-NJDRLAP prices for their current levels of service, they would have needed to make very difficult decisions: buy less Internet, cut spending elsewhere or raise taxes. Fortunately, the ESCNJ helps them buy more for less with the NJDRLAP co-op.

The ESCNJ estimates that **NJDRLAP has saved $375 million for school districts** in reduced costs per Mbps for Internet access through the first seven years of the program. That's more than $50 million annually, **enough money to keep 600 teachers in New Jersey classrooms.**

What's Next?

The ESCNJ is continually working to improve the NJDRLAP program. Co-op members can purchase a range of services from the various NJDRLAP contracts, from residential broadband for at-home work and learning to ultra-fast connections to connect enterprise locations.

The latest round of E-Rate purchases is underway right now. Districts can receive deep discounts on their Internet purchases using the Universal Service Administrative Company discounts offered by the Federal Communications Commission. NJDRLAP contracts have their own E-Rate Forms 470s already posted to make purchasing safe and convenient for schools.

Purchasing from the NJDRLAP co-op contract is easier than ever. Visit the ESCNJ's new member's website (https://www.escnj.us/members) and select "Telecommunications" from the drop-down menu to access all the NJDRLAP contracts. NJDRLAP-approved vendors also can work with schools and municipalities to sign up for service. Or you may get in touch with a representative from the ESCNJ using the contact information on the next page.

Our NJDRLAP telecommunications providers are essential to the NJDRLAP Broadband initiative. Thank you to our providers, who deliver outstanding service at an affordable price: **Altice/Lightpath, CherryRoad, Comcast, DNS, PenTeleData, Planet Networks, and Xtel.**

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About Us

The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey | Leading the Way in Shared Services

The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey operates the most trusted and most comprehensive cooperative purchasing consortium in the state (NJ State-Approved Co-op #65MCESCCPS). **Every NJDRLAP purchase is an investment in NJ kids**. Visit: www.escnj.us

Visit the new Digital Divide Solutions Center at https://www.techmarket.escnj.us/digital-divide. This website consolidates many innovative services available to help ESCNJ co-op members deliver outstanding instruction whether on-campus, at-home, or in a mobile environment.

 Dellicker Strategies | We Get Results

Dellicker Strategies is the consultant to the NJDRLAP program and an approved co-op provider (RFP 18/19-18). The company delivers Internet and technology services with a 10% discount for co-op members. Dellicker Strategies specializes in helping public organizations **upgrade their technology infrastructure, improve their cybersecurity, and manage complex technology programming.** The company is veteran-owned with 16 years of experience serving more than 3,000 schools and municipalities. Visit: https://dellicker.com/escnj-contract