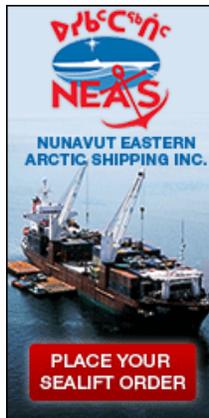


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Internet speeds to triple at schools

Jeanne Gagnon

Northern News Services

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NUNAVUT

Nunavut schools will soon have access to triple the Internet speed, the federal and territorial governments announced in Iqaluit on Feb. 14.

The bandwidth at the territory's 43 schools will triple this spring under the Classroom Connect project, from the current 7.5 megabits per second to some 21 megabits per second, announced both levels of government. The increased bandwidth will translate into faster and more reliable connections to the Internet and enable video-conferencing, for instance, something Nunavut MP Leona Aglukkaq took advantage of as the weather prevented her from traveling to Iqaluit for the announcement.

"Staying connected to the world means easier banking, better health care and stronger bond with family members moving in different parts of Canada," she said. "We are very proud to be part of this great initiative that will encourage communication as well as facilitate learning among our young people in Nunavut."

The federal government invested up to \$2.1 million into the project and the territorial government has committed \$1.8 million.

The Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation and SSi Micro Ltd, which operates the Qiniq network, also participated in the project.

Premier and Education Minister Eva Ariak said she wants territorial students to have access to the same resources available to students in the south.

"Improved Internet access will help our students share ideas and become more active learners, leading to greater academic success," she said.

Two of the schools that will benefit from the increased bandwidth are Ataguttaaluk High School (AHS) in Iglulik and Qiqirtaq Ilihakvik in Gjoa Haven.

Pickett, the principal at AHS, said the students lose their concentration and focus when they can't get through to the Internet.

"It's so frustrating not to be able to get through to find the information you want and it becomes very difficult," he said from the teachers' conference in Iqaluit.

"But with a better Internet system, the learning process will be a lot better, easier on everybody, including teachers and students."

Sallerina, who teaches at Qiqirtaq Ilihakvik, said the increased broadband will enable them to attend



Nunavut MP Leona Aglukkaq, left, appeared via video for a press conference with Nunavut Premier and Education Minister Eva Ariak in Iqaluit on Feb. 14 to announce Nunavut schools will have access to a larger bandwidth starting this spring. - Jeanne Gagnon/NNSL photo



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Jarema, who teaches at Qiqiitaaq Inuvik, said the increased broadband will enable them to attend chats or video chats with museums, for instance.

"Having a faster Internet, I think, for me personally as a teacher, means accessibility to things that other students across Canada would have for my students. So (it will assist the) ability to access websites or the ability to add to the lessons, such as publishing or establishing contact," she said from Gjoa Haven.



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