

## Building Language Skills with The Seattle Times

February 25, 2016

**Article: “Plan would bridge digital divide keeping schoolchildren behind”**

**Tuesday, February 23, 2016** in the e-Edition of The Seattle Times, Main, page A3

### **Pre-Reading:**

Read the title of this article. What does it mean if something is “digital”? What are some things you use at school or for school work that use digital technology? Why do you think having access to digital technology would be helpful to students? How could not having access keep schoolchildren behind?

### **Vocabulary:**

As you read, look for the following vocabulary words that appear in today’s article. Write down what you think the words mean based on the “context,” or how the words are used in the sentence in which they appear. Next, look up the definitions in a dictionary and see how close your guess was for each word.

*broadband*

*cited*

*clapboard*

*connectivity*

*criticism*

*deploying*

*disparity*

*download*

*hot spot*

*grappling*

*monitor*

*municipalities*

*overhaul*

*repurposing*

*subsidy*

*tailor-made*

### **Comprehension:**

1. The federal government is now grappling with a disparity in access to technology. It is estimated that 5 million families in the U.S. are without what?
2. What do some students in Coachella, California and Huntsville Alabama, depend on school buses for?
3. The buses are sometimes parked where overnight so students can do what?
4. Members of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) are expected to vote next month on repurposing a roughly \$2 billion-a-year \_\_\_\_\_ program, known as Lifeline. **(Fill in the blank)**
5. Jessica Rosenworcel, a Democratic member of the commission cited research showing that 7 in 10 teachers now do what?
6. The Lifeline plan has drawn strong criticism from two Republicans among the five FCC commissioners, and from some lawmakers, who say the program, which was introduced in 1985 to bring phone services to low-income families has been what?
7. In July the Obama administration announced its own program to help address the problem of Internet access. What did that program propose doing?
8. In the McAllen Independent School District, each school location runs wireless \_\_\_\_\_ 24 hours a day so that students can sit in parking lots or crouch against school walls to do homework at night. **(Fill in the blanks)**

### **Post-Reading:**

Read the two following passages from the article and discuss the following questions in a group:

***“Marla M. Guerra, superintendent of the school district, said that it had little choice but to require more technology in class work, even though many families did not have broadband access.”***

***“We try to accommodate those without access in every way we can.” she said, “but we can’t hold back on our use of technology in the classrooms because we have to prepare our children for the world that is waiting for them.”***

How does your school or teacher use technology in the classroom? How do you think technology and social media has changed the way educators teach students and how has it changed the way students learn? In what ways does your school or district support the use of technology in the classroom and do you think enough is being done to make sure that every student has the same access to technology in order to learn and succeed – why or why not?

### **Building Language Skills:**

Read the following passage, and complete the activity below:

***“With many educators pushing for students to use resources on the Internet with class work, the federal government is now grappling with the stark disparity in access to technology, between students who have high-speed Internet at home and an estimated 5 million families who are without it and who are struggling to keep up.”***

In small groups make a list of every idea, plan, or program presented in the article for providing access to students who do not have access to high-speed Internet at home. Next to each idea put down at least one reason why your group is for or against it. Then vote on which idea you think provides the best solution to the problem. Share each group’s voting results with the class.

### **Comprehension Question Answers:**

1. It is estimated that 5 million families in the U.S. do not have high-speed internet access.
2. Some students depend on school buses with free Wi-Fi to complete their homework.
3. The buses are sometimes parked in residential neighborhoods overnight so students can connect and continue studying.
4. subsidy
5. They assign homework that requires Web access.
6. They say the program has been wasteful and abused.
7. It proposed deploying free and affordable broadband into public housing.
8. hot spots