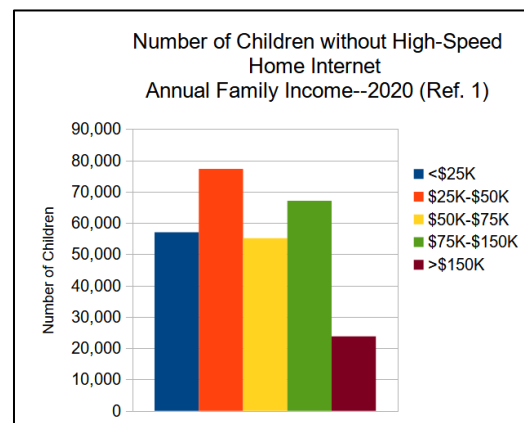
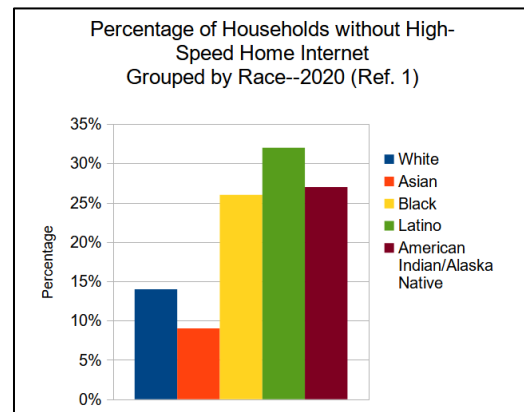


**WSPTA recognizes that to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, ALL students must have access to the communication tools and technology needed to facilitate learning and post-secondary opportunities.**

### Background

Providing high-speed internet access and technology to effectively use internet-based resources for education is a diversity, equity and inclusion issue. According to a 2020 analysis of the American Community Survey data, more than 345,000 children in Washington State do not have high-speed internet access at home due to these key barriers:<sup>(1)</sup>

- **Location:** This digital divide affects both metropolitan and rural children; 15% of metro households (242,899 children) and 26% of rural households (34,348 children) have no high-speed connectivity.<sup>(1)</sup>
- **Income:** Annual household income also affects access. More than 189,000 children in households with \$75,000 annual income or less have no connectivity.<sup>(1)</sup> A family of four in Washington State needs an annual income of \$72,673 before deducting taxes, housing and food. This living wage enables families “to meet basic needs without dipping into poverty or relying on outside help.”<sup>(2)</sup>
- **Race:** Children who identify as Black, Latinx or Native American/Alaska Native are twice as likely to lack access to broadband at home.<sup>(1)</sup>
- According to OSPI, there are five significant reasons why Washington needs statewide broadband access:<sup>(3)</sup>
  - Access to native language speakers
  - More sources of data
  - Offer special education services off-site
  - Attract and retain STEM and AP teachers
  - Increase family and community engagement (FACE)



### Proposed Solutions

Washington State PTA shall support legislation, policies, and funding that ensure equitable digital inclusion and access for all students, families, and staff by implementation of a statewide digital equity plan, including adoption of best practices and strategies for use of technology to improve student education and behavioral outcomes.

### Citations

- (1) All4Ed. Homework Gap (July 2020). “16.9 Million Children Remain Logged Out Because They Don’t Have Internet at Home.” <https://all4ed.org/publication/homeworkgap/>
- (2) CNBC. “This map shows how much money a family of 4 needs to get by in every US state.” (May 2019) <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/05/16/how-much-money-a-family-of-4-needs-to-get-by-in-every-us-state.html>
- (3) Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. “K-20 Network in Washington State.” <https://www.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/school-technology/k-20-network-washington-state>