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## **Las Vegas City Schools joins high-speed internet network**

ALBUQUERQUE – Las Vegas City Schools has connected all five schools and its Early Childhood Center to the state's new broadband education network, giving more than 1,000 students and nearly 400 teachers and staff access to faster, more secure internet.

The district is the latest to join the Statewide Education Network (SEN), a comprehensive broadband system that launched in July 2024 to provide school-centric high-speed internet across New Mexico. The network will eventually allow students to share classes and resources throughout their district and beyond and gives schools access to more secure platforms for addressing academic, social and health needs.

“The SEN network connection has been very stable. It also seems a lot faster than the last connection we were on,” said **Eric Benavidez**, Las Vegas City Schools cybersecurity/IT support specialist. “The increased security also is a very nice key point for us as we have been attacked before.”

With Las Vegas district now connected, 222 schools or sites have access to the network, serving nearly 94,000 students and more than 22,000 teachers and staff. Other school districts using the system include Albuquerque, Farmington, Gadsden and Santa Rosa, along with several Albuquerque charter schools.

The SEN handles daily operations and cybersecurity of the system while taking the administrative burden of procuring, contracting and paying for internet service off individual schools. It also manages applications for federal E-rate subsidies.

“This connection again exemplifies how New Mexico is committed to improving education through technology,” said **Ovidiu Viorica**, SEN’s broadband and technology manager. “SEN is an important achievement that will see productive returns for our children and our state.”

The New Mexico Office of Broadband Access and Expansion oversees SEN and is currently working to connect 10 more school districts and charters, which would add 103 schools and nearly 49,000 students to the network. Participation is optional for the schools.

The network aims to interconnect all New Mexico schools by 2027. SEN worked with the Public School Facilities Authority and local internet service providers to create and deploy the system.

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*The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion is dedicated to serving New Mexico with a commitment to make high-speed broadband accessible to all New Mexicans. OBAE’s mission is to expand and improve high-speed internet service with passionate leadership that drives bold, equitable, affordable and inclusive broadband solutions. OBAE seeks results that honor the state’s rich heritage and elevate quality of life for all.*