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We are an independent school for students with learning disabilities. Our school is small and our costs are high, so we need to control costs in any way we can in order to help as many students as possible. One way we do that is through our technology costs.

So when we learned that our primary Internet couldn't support the bandwidth we needed to run all of our school's iPads, we needed to supplement it with low-cost high-speed broadband which we received from Mobile Citizen. The service helps us control our costs in other ways by providing an affordable back up for our phone systems which are Voice over Internet (VoIP). When our primary Internet goes down, so does our ability to connect with parents, so this back up is important for basic school operations.

Having affordable, reliable Internet is also important for our students. Because of their special learning needs, repetition, or tools that support repetitive learning methods, are even more important than with traditional students. Computers and Internet access allow teachers to use multiple learning methods such as web-based programs to reinforce direct instruction.

These days, we assume students know how to use the computers and the Internet. That is not always the case for our population. For example, our students tend to be more impulsive, so safety concerns are higher. Access to the Internet and computers are necessary teaching tools for digital literacy.

This year, we had hoped to do even more with our mobile Internet by loaning modems to our teachers so they can do curriculum planning from home. Our loaner program will require bandwidth for all teachers, when they need it. It won't be successful, or even possible, if only some of the teachers can use our allotted bandwidth, or if they have to squeeze in their curriculum planning before the access runs out.

Both our teachers and our students need to be able to rely on the Internet. It is a tool of today that helps prepare our students for tomorrow.



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