

July 7, 2014

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler, Commissioner Clyburn, Commissioner Rosenworcel,
Commissioner Pai, and Commissioner O'Reilly:

We, the undersigned organizations, write to express our support for Chairman Wheeler's proposal to modernize the E-rate program. This plan offers an important and timely first step toward achieving the critical national goal of providing at least 99 percent of America's students with access to high-speed broadband in their schools and libraries within the next five years. It is important that action begin this summer so the new rules are in place before the next round of funding.

High-speed Internet access, including reliable Wi-Fi, is vital for providing today's students with a world-class education in the twenty-first century. Unfortunately, half of E-rate applicants have slower Internet access than the average American home. Moreover, three out of five schools lack sufficient Wi-Fi to take advantage of digital learning opportunities to strengthen student instruction. The fact that no funding was available from E-rate last year to support Wi-Fi demonstrates that this program must be modernized and expanded, including ensuring sufficient resources are available over time to meet the Chairman's five-year goal.

Chairman Wheeler's proposal is a necessary first step toward providing students with the educational infrastructure they need to excel. It will provide initial resources to make sure high-speed Wi-Fi delivers connectivity within classrooms and libraries. The proposal will also allow for better use of E-rate's limited funding to meet current needs and make the overall program more effective and efficient through increased price transparency, consortia purchasing, electronic filing, and multi-year applications. While individual organizations may differ on the details, there is unanimity on the overall need to bring today's schools and libraries into the digital age by modernizing and expanding E-rate.

The improvements that will be made under Chairman Wheeler's proposal lay the foundation for the permanent expansion of the program that is required to provide

an effective education in the twenty-first century. We support the chairman's proposal as a critical first step, and look forward to working with the FCC as it continues to modernize and expand E-rate toward the goal of providing at least 99 percent of America's students with access to high-speed broadband in their schools and libraries within the next five years.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Excellent Education
Consortium for School Networking (CoSN)
Council of Chief State School Officers
Digital Promise
EducationSuperHighway
Funds for Learning
International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL)
Leading Education by Advancing Digital (LEAD) Commission
National Association of State Boards of Education
State Educational Technology Directors Association