



October 6, 2017

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

Re: Thirteenth Section 706 Notice of Inquiry

Dear Chairman Pai, Commissioner Clyburn, Commissioner O’Rielly, Commissioner Carr, and Commissioner Rosenworcel:

We, the undersigned organizations, write in response to the Thirteenth Section 706 Notice of Inquiry, which requests comments on the current state of deployment of advanced telecommunications capability to schools and classrooms. High-speed internet access, including reliable Wi-Fi, is vital for providing all students with a quality education to prepare them for today’s modern economy. The Federal Communications Commission’s (the FCC’s) E-rate Modernization Orders, adopted in 2014 and implemented in 2015, have since connected thousands of the nation’s schools to high-speed Wi-Fi.

Specifically, according to a recent analysis conducted by Funds for Learning[®] and the Alliance for Excellent Education, in 2015, the FCC provided more than \$1 billion to 42,705 schools nationwide to support Wi-Fi.¹ This is important because in the two years prior to the adoption of the E-rate Modernization Orders, no E-rate funds were disbursed to support Wi-Fi. Moreover, of the E-rate funds disbursed for Wi-Fi in 2015, more than 80 percent supported low-income schools and one-third supported rural schools.² This analysis shows that the FCC is not only meeting the E-rate Modernization Orders’ target of providing \$1 billion annually to support Wi-Fi infrastructure and services, but that these funds are supporting the highest-need schools.

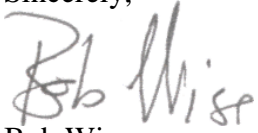
Nonetheless, according to EducationSuperHighway, 6.5 million students still lack high-speed broadband for digital learning and nearly 20 percent of schools report having insufficient Wi-Fi in their classrooms.³ This means that there still is work to be done to ensure that *all* students attend a school with access to high-speed Wi-Fi. It is essential that the FCC maintain its commitment through the E-rate Modernization Orders to provide five years of support for Wi-Fi services and infrastructure to schools and classrooms.

¹ For more information, see <https://all4ed.org/erate-wifi-state-data/>.

² Ibid.

³ For more information, see EducationSuperHighway, *2017 State of the States: Fulfilling Our Promise to America’s Students*, https://s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/esh-sots-pdfs/educationsuperhighway_2017_state_of_the_states.pdf (accessed October 2, 2017).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Wise". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Bob Wise
President
Alliance for Excellent Education

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Harrington". The signature is very stylized and cursive.

John Harrington
Chief Executive Officer
Funds for Learning®