



November 7, 2017

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

Re: WC Docket No. 13-184

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

We, the undersigned school and district leaders, write in response to the Public Notice, which requests comments on the sufficiency of budgets for category two services under the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC’s) E-rate program. Category two services that support high-speed internet access, including reliable Wi-Fi, are vital for providing all students with a quality education to prepare them for today’s modern economy. As such, many of us supported the FCC’s E-rate Modernization Orders, adopted in 2014 and implemented in 2015, that set a target of providing \$1 billion annually for five years to support category two services. Indeed, since adoption of the E-rate Modernization Orders, thousands of the nation’s schools have been connected to high-speed Wi-Fi through the E-rate program.

Specifically, a recent analysis conducted by Funds for Learning[®] and the Alliance for Excellent Education finds in 2015 the FCC provided more than \$1 billion to 42,705 schools nationwide to support Wi-Fi services and infrastructure.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 category two services, but that these funds are supporting the highest-need schools.

Nonetheless, there still is work to be done to ensure that *all* students attend a school with access to high-speed Wi-Fi. According to EducationSuperHighway, 6.5 million students still lack high-speed broadband for digital learning and 10,000 schools report having insufficient Wi-Fi in their classrooms. According to EducationSuperHighway, 6.5 million students still lack high-speed broadband for digital learning and 10,000 schools report having insufficient Wi-Fi in their

¹ For more information, see Alliance for Excellent Education and Funds for Learning[®], “E-rate Support for Wi-Fi By State, 2015” (Washington, DC: Alliance of Excellent Education, 2017) <https://all4ed.org/erate-wifi-state-data/>.

² Ibid.

classrooms.³ Therefore, it is essential that the FCC maintain its commitment through the E-rate Modernization Orders to provide support for category two services for the next five years and beyond. The FCC's role in supporting access to high-speed Wi-Fi in schools and classrooms is critical to preparing the nation's students to compete in an increasingly global workforce.

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