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Brian L. Mitchell  
Director

Before the  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20554

_____	)	
In the Matter of	)	
	)	WC Docket No. 21-31
Addressing the Homework Gap through	)	
the E-Rate Program	)	
_____	)	

**REPLY COMMENTS ON PETITIONS FOR  
EMERGENCY RELIEF TO ALLOW THE USE OF E-RATE FUNDS  
TO SUPPORT REMOTE LEARNING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC  
(WC Docket 21-31; DA 21-98)**

The State of Nevada first would like to recognize and thank the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for seeking comments on our petition<sup>1</sup> in addition to those submitted by the Schools, Health & Library Broadband Coalition<sup>2</sup> and the State of Colorado<sup>3</sup>. We applaud the display of commitment through the expeditious nature of this proceeding which gives our State, and the applicant community in whole, hope of much needed relief.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Elaine Wynn, President, Nevada State Board of Education, to Chairman Pai, FCC, CC Docket No. 02-6 (filed Aug. 10, 2020), <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filing/108212219529231> (Nevada Petition)

<sup>2</sup> Petition for Expedited Declaratory Ruling and Waivers filed by the Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition, et al., WC Docket No. 13-184 (filed Jan. 26, 2021), <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filing/101260036427898> (SHLB Petition)

<sup>3</sup> Petition for Waiver on behalf of the State of Colorado, WC Docket No. 13-184 (filed Sept. 2, 2020), <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filing/10902218280692> (Colorado Petition)

The waiver filed to remove restrictions on the use of E-rate funded broadband connectivity extending beyond school property is still an important issue within our State. The Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB) specifically asks, “We seek comment on the specific equipment and services that E-Rate should support to fund off-campus access to broadband services for students, staff and patrons who lack adequate home Internet access.” Additionally, WCB states, “We also seek comment on the cost of the services and equipment needed to support remote learning.”

## I. Two Sample Fixed Wireless Solutions Viable in Nevada

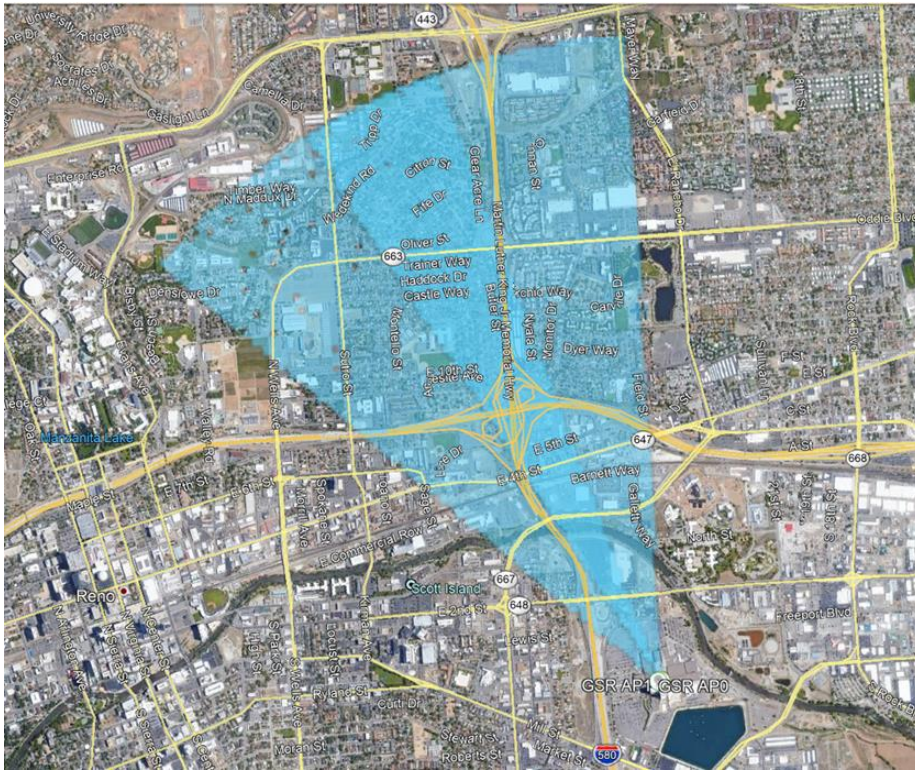
As cited in our original waiver request, erecting fixed wireless hotspots on roofs of school buildings would allow students to take advantage of the robust fiber connections that E-rate and the Nevada Connect Kids Initiative have made possible. Rooftop fixed wireless hotspots could leverage school sites which have a dense cluster of unserved or underserved students nearby to the school itself. Thirteen of the seventeen public school districts in Nevada utilize non-E-rate funded internet access from the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE). The utilization of rooftop fixed wireless hotspots using NSHE supplied internet reduces costs of the monthly recurring charges to simply the maintenance fee. In this example, school districts would leverage their existing E-rate funded fiber Wide Area Networks (WANs) to transport the Internet to their schools and then propagate a wireless signal to school district registered devices. This framework would approximately cost a one-time \$15,000 charge for construction and equipment and \$600 per month for maintenance.

A second solution that does not rely on construction at school sites is installation of fixed wireless student community hotspots to provide indoor, line of site service to students within a 1/2 mile to a mile of the fixed wireless antenna. The total bandwidth of this service can scale to 300Mbps download and 100Mbps upload and support 30-40 student connections per hotspot. This solution is applicable for rural communities where there is concentration of students in a one-mile radius area or urban neighborhoods where there are a cluster of users in a one or two square block area.

Fixed wireless student community hotspots have the potential to be a more permanent solution providing cost-effective broadband service to an area of low broadband adoption or a rural underserved area. For school children, the school district would provide individual device Media Access Control addresses for each device (Chromebook, Windows Laptop, Tablet) issued to a student who would be authorized to use the fixed wireless student community hotspot. The community hotspot would be programmed to allow connections. This has the advantage of relatively straightforward CIPA compliance.

Prices for student community hotspots include a one-time charge of \$15,000-20,000 and monthly recurring costs of \$1,800 for the internet. School Districts would only pay about \$600 per month for maintenance charges during periods where the fixed wireless student community hotspots were not in use (school breaks, etc).

Here is a sample coverage map of the fixed wireless community in a Washoe County neighborhood. The same pole could support an additional radio pointing in a different direction. The second radio would support another 30-40 users with a smaller installation charge (~ \$10,000 ) and \$1,800/Month charge for bandwidth.



## II. Eligible Equipment and Services

The State of Nevada agrees with many commenters such as SHLB<sup>4</sup>, WISPA<sup>5</sup> and the Council of Great City Schools<sup>6</sup> that support for off-campus learning should be provider and technology neutral. While the aforementioned examples highlight cost-effective fixed wireless solutions, the rural landscape of Nevada necessitates a variety of solutions to solve the gap. For many rural Nevada students, mobile hotspots are the most cost-effective option for service to the home. In the most extreme cases, satellite service is the only option. The E-rate program should afford flexibility in the determination of what services are deemed effective at the local level.

## III. Prioritization

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<sup>4</sup> SHLB Remote Learning Petition, WC Docket No. 21-31 (filed Jan. 26, 2021)

<https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/101260036427898/SHLB%20Remote%20Learnng%20Petition%201-26-21%20FINAL.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Comments by the Wireless Internet Service Providers Association, (Filed Feb. 16, 2021)

<https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/1021631514934/Comments%20on%20Petitions%20for%20Emergency%20Relief%20to%20Use%20Erate%20Funds%20for%20Remote%20Learning.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Comments by the Council of Great City Schools, (filed Feb. 16, 2021)

<https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/102162874404526/CGCS%20E-Rate%20comments%20-%20202.16.21%20-%20Docket%2021-31.pdf>

The State of Nevada believes that funding should be prioritized for those students who lack internet access at home or those who have insufficient internet access at home. The question of determining the need of students dovetails with a bill currently being considered by the Nevada Senate, Senate Bill 66<sup>7</sup>. S.B.66 is designed to include a focus on the identification and reporting to the State a list of students in need of internet access. School districts would be responsible for reporting back to the Office of Science, Innovation, and Technology the demand for home connectivity support.

#### IV. Cost-Effective Purchases

The applicant community understands that competitive bidding is a core tenet of the E-rate program. We do not believe there is significant risk of waste fraud or abuse of E-rate funds to support these devices and recommend suspending the Form 470 filing requirement for these services. E-rate applicants are legally required to follow our state and their local procurement laws<sup>8</sup>. Adherence to state and local procurement laws will still encourage and foster competitive bidding thus limiting exposure to the Universal Service Fund.

In conclusion, we hope these examples and recommendations help shape the conversation at the Commission. We believe that E-rate applicants should have the ability to select a cost-effective solution that will achieve the educational goals and requirements for all of their students, especially their students in need. We appreciate your continued consideration and commitment to ensure students in our State, and nationwide, have the resources necessary not only to survive, but to also thrive during this public health crisis.

If you have any questions or require more detailed information regarding this request or these examples, please contact Brian Mitchell, Director of the Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology at 775-687-0987 or [blmitcehl@gov.nv.gov](mailto:blmitcehl@gov.nv.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brian Mitchell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian Mitchell, Director- OSIT

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/81st2021/Bill/7255/Text>

<sup>8</sup> [https://purchasing.nv.gov/local\\_gov/Regulations/](https://purchasing.nv.gov/local_gov/Regulations/)