

May 4, 2021

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street, NE
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Ex Parte – In the Matter of the Emergency Connectivity Fund, WC Docket No. 21-93

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On May 3, 2021, the following representatives of the Education & Library Networks Coalition held the following three meetings to discuss the above captioned matter -- with Danielle Thumann of Commissioner Carr's office; Commissioner Simington and Carolyn Roddy, Erin Boone, Adam Cassidy and Michael Sweeney of his staff; and Austin Bonner of Commissioner Starks' office:

- Jon Bernstein, representing the American Federation of School Administrators
- Corey Williams of the National Education Association
- Megan Stockhausen of the American Federation of Teachers
- Zach Scott of the National Association of Secondary School Principals
- Jennifer Daniels of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Dale McDonald of the National Catholic Educational Association
- Whitney Silverman of the National Association of Independent Schools
- Danny Carlson of the National Association of Elementary School Principals

At all three meetings, the group discussed overall support for the Wireline Competition Bureau's draft Order and urged the Commission to vote to approve it by the statutory deadline of May 10th. Specifically, EdLiNC members told the Commissioners' offices that it supported the following:

- 1) The draft Order's recommendation that Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) distribute support from via an application-based program where school and library applicants submit eligible service and equipment requests to support connecting to the Internet those students and patrons that lack any or sufficient Internet access in their homes or dwelling places, a device suitable for remote learning, or both.
- 2) The draft Order's recommendation that, if demand outstrips available funding, the Commission would use the existing E-Rate Category I discount matrix to rank funding requests, with applicants possessing the highest E-Rate discount rate receiving priority.
- 3) The Commission's considering additional measures to support rural applicants, including increasing rural schools and library E-Rate discount rates for the narrow purpose of ranking funding requests, which is not recommended by the draft Order.
- 4) The draft Order's recommendation that the Commission adopt program metrics and goals focused on measuring the number of students and educators that ECF is helping to connect at sufficient speeds to the Internet from their homes or temporary dwelling places to engage in remote learning and to provide devices appropriate for educational and remote learning purposes. EdLiNC also supports the draft Order's proposal to adopt metrics measuring the program administrators ability to process applications and reimburse eligible applicants.

- 5) The draft Order recommending that ECF eligibility be restricted to schools, libraries, states, and consortia of schools and libraries currently eligible for support under the E-Rate program.
- 6) The draft Order's recommendation that ECF funding be focused on eligible services and equipment that are needed to provide the connectivity required to enable and support remote learning for students, school staff, and library patrons and devices suitable for remote learning and video conferencing platforms.
- 7) The draft Order's recommendation that ECF support a per device cap of \$400 for eligible connected devices but that ECF also permit eligible applicants to purchase more expensive devices with other, non-ECF funds used to pay costs above \$400.
- 8) The Commission's considering allowing applicants to purchase additional devices to account for damage and breakage to permit uninterrupted learning.
- 9) The draft Order recommending that the ECF provide reimbursements for eligible equipment and services back to July 1, 2020.
- 10) The draft Order recommending that the Commission waive the competitive bidding process rules and not establish an alternative streamlined competitive bidding process.
- 11) The Commission's considering allowing eligible applicants to use the same invoicing processes available under the E-Rate program for the ECF.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Jon Bernstein