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Washington State School Directors' Association

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May 7, 1996

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**Together, for the
Children**

Reed Hundt, FCC Chr. & Jt. Bd. Chr
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street NW, Room 814
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Hundt:

I am the president of the Washington State School Directors' Association, representing all 1482 locally-elected school board members in my state's 296 school districts. My purpose in writing is to urge the Federal-State Joint Board and the Federal Communications Commission to adopt rules that fully and aggressively implement the universal services provisions of the 1996 Telecommunications Act for schools and libraries. I also support the comments filed by the National School Boards Association, et. al. Please include this letter in the formal record.

Specifically, I urge the FCC to include for deep discounts a range of telecommunications services that will give my state's districts more affordable access to the Internet as well as to interactive, voice, data and video capability necessary for distance learning. It is also important that these services be provided directly to the classroom where the learning actually takes place. Finally, I urge the Commission to address the affordability needs of both the capital expenses of services and the ongoing costs.

In Washington state, as is surely true in other states, the growth of technology is occurring at an alarming pace. The good jobs of today, not to mention tomorrow, demand technical skills unimagined just a few years ago. As school policymakers we simply must prepare young people for their tomorrows, not for our yesterdays. Our State Legislature has begun the process of connecting our schools, colleges, universities and libraries throughout the state to a common network. Students will be able to learn from a university while sitting in a high school classroom hundreds of miles away. But this process will take time and money. The decisions you will be making in 1996 will affect hundreds of thousands of learners in my state alone.

The actions by Congress also demonstrate a wonderfully strong commitment to assist our local efforts. If telecommunications rates are to be discounted for anyone, it must be for public information institutions such as schools and libraries.

Thank you for your willingness to address this important task. I urge the Commission to adopt rules that will help bring the broadest range of educational technology to our young people

Sincerely,

Barb Roder
President

BR/DS:kh