

July 15, 2011

Ms. Marlene Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th St. SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: Connect America Fund - WC Docket No. 10-90
A National Broadband Plan for Our Future – GN Docket No. 09-51
High-Cost Universal Service Support – WC Docket No. 05-337**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On behalf of our members, the Consortium of School Networking and International Society for Technology in Education respectfully writes in support of the comments submitted in this proceeding by the Schools, Health and Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition to enhance the broadband capabilities of community anchor institutions in rural areas.

CoSN and ISTE share a similar mission of working with communities and schools to provide high-capacity broadband to K-12 students. Through our work, we know that providing broadband to rural K-12 schools benefits entire communities. The Commission's Schools and Libraries Program (known as the E-Rate) Order last year recognized the value of schools as community hubs for broadband usage by making permanent its interim decision to allow community members access to E-Rate supported services during non-school hours. As noted by the Commission in publishing that Order, "Increasing community access to the Internet is particularly critical in communities where residential adoption of broadband Internet access has historically lagged, including many rural, minority, and Tribal communities." Moreover, E-Rate support has served as a catalyst to bring broadband services to entire communities. Thanks to the E-Rate program, the small town of Edinburg, Mississippi, which consists of just two convenience stores, a pawn shop, a bank, and a single school, now has access to broadband fiber. Broadband service was made available in Edinburg when local service providers were forced to lay fiber between the county seat and Edinburg's school to establish an E-Rate supported Internet connection. Because the fiber was government-owned and part of the area's public infrastructure, local Edinburg businesses were able to tap into that new line and can now have fiber access.

The current proceeding to reform the High-Cost Fund and to create a new Connect America Fund focused on broadband deployment in rural areas provides an important opportunity for the

FCC to ensure that anchor institutions are able to serve the needs of their rural populations. We understand and agree with the desire to build broadband networks to residential consumers in rural areas but respectfully request that the Commission include community anchor institutions in its rural broadband strategy. Our members need high-capacity broadband to provide rural students and teachers the same opportunities that their counterparts in more populated areas have. High-capacity broadband facilitates online classes and student collaboration, web-based student data collection, and long distance professional development opportunities.

The National Broadband Plan established as a national goal that “every American community should have affordable access to at least 1 gigabit per second broadband service to anchor institutions. . . .” By requiring those companies who receive financial support to build rural broadband networks to provide affordable, high-capacity broadband to anchor institutions, the FCC will go a long way toward achieving this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith Krueger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Keith" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Krueger".

Keith R. Krueger, CEO
Consortium for School Networking (CoSN)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Knezek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Don" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Knezek".

Donald Knezek, CEO
International Society for Technology in
Education (ISTE)