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Public Comments on Modernizing the E-rate Program for Schools and Libraries:=====

Title: Modernizing the E-rate Program for Schools and Libraries

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Comment: The Digital Promise League of Innovative Schools (the League), is a national coalition of 40 public school districts that partner with entrepreneurs, researchers, and one another to demonstrate, evaluate, and scale up innovations that deliver better results for students. The League districts are transforming teaching and learning through the power of digital technology. They are implementing early childhood blended learning programs, summer virtual academies designed to prevent summer learning loss, “bring your own technology” programs to incentive anytime, anywhere learning and much more – all resulting in advancements in student engagement and achievement.

These transformative learning environments wouldn't be possible without access to high-speed broadband. In order to replicate the successes in League districts, all schools must have access

to high speed broadband. This is essential for an education that prepares students for college and a globally competitive workforce.

For this reason, the Digital Promise League of Innovative Schools urges the FCC to seize this opportunity to modernize E-Rate and ensure that all students have access to a high-quality, twenty-first century education.

Specifically, we support all strategies that promote efficiency, including simplifying the application process and creating electronic systems that enable transparency of information. We support strategies and systems that will ensure the best service at the most affordable price. And, as these efficiencies are designed and adopted, we support predictable and sufficient funding for all schools.

Two months ago, President Obama launched the ConnectED initiative in Mooresville, NC supporting the modernization of school infrastructure to support 21st Century learning for all students in this country. Mooresville Graded School District, a founding member of the League of Innovative Schools, is a testament to the impact of learning powered by technology as all students in grades 3-12 are issued laptops as part of a transformation to a more personalized learning environment. High school graduation rates climbed from 73 to 90 percent since the “digital conversion” began and students scoring at grade level increased from 73 to 89 percent. Despite being near the bottom in per-pupil funding in the state of North Carolina, Mooresville ranks second in student achievement. Mooresville could not have achieved this success without sufficient broadband connectivity and interior wireless networks that enable modern teaching and learning with technology.

The FCC must act now to ensure all students in the country have access to the bandwidth necessary to efficiently access modern learning technologies and resources. This may be the most important education policy act of the decade and should set the US education system up for advancing learning opportunities into the future.

We look forward to continuing to support and inform the FCC throughout the E-Rate modernization process.

Karen Cator

President and CEO, Digital Promise

On behalf of the Superintendents of the Digital Promise League of Innovative Schools (please see attached letter for full list of names)

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