



February 2, 2014

**VIA ELECTRONIC FILING**

Marlene H. Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: Modernizing the E-Rate Program for Schools and Libraries, WC Docket No. 13-184**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On January 29, 2014, Evan Marwell, CEO of EducationSuperHighway and Jim Kohlenberger of JK Strategies met with Commissioner Michael O’Rielly and Amy Bender, Wireline Legal Advisor. In the meeting, we provided an overview of EducationSuperHighway’s work and its thoughts on E-rate modernization. We also discussed the recommendations made by 50 of America’s CEOs in a letter sent to the Commission on January 30<sup>th</sup>. We emphasized the importance of competition and the need to eliminate outdated rules which prevent schools from being able to take advantage of all available options for obtaining the most bandwidth at the least cost.

During the meeting we underscored the importance of modernization the E-rate to help ensure that every child in America has access to high speed broadband in order to help transform the way teachers teach and students learn. We reviewed how our SchoolSpeedTest data shows that 72% of schools, and as many as 40 million of America’s K-12 students are being left behind without the Internet access and Wi-Fi they need to succeed in the global economy. We reiterated that the E-Rate has been a hero for our schools – ensuring that almost every student and library has access to the Internet. But now we need to modernize the successful E-Rate program in order to connect 99% of America’s students to high speed broadband within 5 years and deliver gigabit broadband to every school and Wi-Fi to every classroom.

To meet these bold goals, and to modernize, expand, and strengthen the successful E-rate program, we re-emphasized key points from our initial and reply comments in the docket. Specifically, we outlined ways that the commission can strengthen the E-rate and give our students access to a whole new world of opportunity by:

- 1) ***focusing the E-rate program*** on broadband connectivity and infrastructure and away from legacy technologies that are only capable of connecting at yesterday’s dial-up speeds to ensure that we maximize the impact of the E-rate on learning;
- 2) ***providing an upgrade fund*** to minimize the time it takes to give every school and library the opportunity to connect to fiber and Wi-Fi to allow all schools to meet the connectivity goals experts say our kids need, while putting in place the scalable infrastructure needed for a generation;
- 3) ***increasing transparency and accountability*** to reduce costs and improve efficiency by: ensuring schools and libraries have the choice to take advantage of every affordable, scalable high speed option; and by collecting and releasing more data about existing network infrastructure, how funds are spent and what providers are charging for their E-rate services.

In sum, we expressed how E-Rate Modernization can connect our schools and libraries with broadband, connect our classroom with Wi-Fi, and connect our kids to a brighter future. We urged the commission to take swift action, make a critical down payment on these goals, so that students and teachers can begin to benefit as soon as possible.

During the meeting we also provided high level results of EducationSuperHighway's SchoolSpeedTest program which concluded that 72% of schools do not meet the SETDA standards for digital learning. We noted that the SchoolSpeedTest data suggest that the median school has approximately 33 megabits of bandwidth. We reviewed EducationSuperHighway's Form 471 Item 21 analysis of E-rate spending and disclosed the following preliminary results: (1) approximately 51% of P1 spending is on data networks, with the balance distributed among voice service, wireless and other services; (2) The median school pays \$25 per megabit per month for bandwidth while the top quartile pays \$2 and the bottom quartile pays \$85; (3) Over half of the schools with fiber connectivity do not meet the ConnectED goals as a result of affordability issues; (4) districts with their own fiber networks pay significantly less per megabit than districts who lease services from service providers; and (5) districts with their own fiber networks are spread across urban, suburban and rural geographies but have in common that they are all wealthier districts with the ability to raise funds from their constituencies to pay for fiber investments. This last point led to a discussion of the need to ensure that all schools have the same broadband choices and that less affluent districts shouldn't have fewer choices than wealthy school districts.

Kindly direct any questions regarding this matter to my attention.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Evan Marwell*

Evan Marwell  
CEO

cc: Commissioner O'Rielly  
Amy Bender