



Meetings with Federal Communications Commissioners

June 11-16, 2014

**Sunne Wright McPeak, President and CEO, California Emerging Technology Fund
In the Matter of Modernizing the E-Rate Program for Schools and Libraries
WC Docket No. 13-184**

- 1. FCC leadership is a key to technology integration in programs by other federal agencies.**
 - a. CETF urges the FCC Commissioners to articulate a vision for how E-rate modernization and additional funding for broadband connectivity to schools and libraries can achieve the highest “return on investment” to close both the Achievement Gap and Digital Divide.
 - b. CETF encourages the FCC Commissioners to engage other federal agency leaders to better coordinate E-rate and other FCC funding with relevant federal programs to achieve increased impact from broadband infrastructure, digital literacy, and technology training programs. Examples of opportunities for leverage of federal resources and efforts include: (1) Integrate broadband capability and community technology centers into neighborhood transformation programs from the U.S. Department of Education (Promise Neighborhoods) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (Promise Zones); (2) Provide grants for technology operating costs and teacher training from the U.S. Department of Education to low-performing schools with a plan to close both the Achievement Gap and Digital Divide; (3) Encourage integration of ICT skills training into the U.S. Department of Labor grants; and (4) Develop more economic development grants involving broadband infrastructure to anchor institutions and rural communities from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
 - c. CETF recommends that the FCC Commissioners encourage ConnectED to reach out to schools in low-income and rural communities to align donated corporate resources with the highest subsidies from E-rate.

- 2. High-capacity broadband is needed to and within all schools and libraries, with focused priority attention for schools and libraries serving low-income communities.**
 - a. CETF has deep experience with development of the successful School2Home program, which focuses on the lowest-performing middle schools to close both the Achievement Gap and the Digital Divide for low-income families. School2Home integrates broadband and computing technologies into the teaching and learning processes with significant parent or guardian engagement. School2Home successes show that it is critical for schools to be connected to high-capacity broadband such that each student may optimize his or her learning time with connectivity via wireless broadband delivered to a computing device.
 - b. Affordable home broadband access is critical to optimizing the impact of School2Home so that students may do Internet-enabled schoolwork at home. E-rate providers should be required to offer a stand-alone, low-cost Internet service for low-income families with school children. CETF also supports the establishment of an affordable “lifeline-like” program for broadband access for low-income people with disabilities, seniors, and returning veterans.

- c. CETF supports removal of E-rate funding for outdated technologies in order to focus on funding high-capacity broadband technologies in a technology-neutral manner.
- d. Internal connections for schools and libraries should be Wireless Area Networks or WiFi-enabled technology with adequate per student/user bandwidth to enable one-to-one learning. E-rate funding should include equipment, internal wiring, switches, routers, wireless access points, software supporting these components, plus technology that improve the efficiencies of the broadband networks such as caching through content servers.
- e. The FCC should allow E-rate to fund wireless service to be made available after school hours in outdoor areas of eligible libraries and schools, to promote public access to the Internet for students and their families who have participated in a digital literacy program that has the essential core components (such as School2Home) for closing both the Achievement Gap and the Digital Divide.
- f. CETF supports budgeting Priority 2 allocations separately to ensure internal connections are funded each year, with priority for schools and libraries serving low-income communities. The definition of “low income” can be determined as a percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunches in a particular school. It would be reasonable to rotating eligibility over a five-year cycle for upgrades of technology infrastructure.
- g. CETF recommends that the FCC raise the E-rate annual cap to levels that are equal to recent annual requests to USAC for infrastructure.

3. E-rate should reward school districts and libraries that use cost-effective technology approaches and seek to close both the Achievement Gap and Digital Divide.

- a. CETF supports issuance of joint requests for proposals from providers and technology companies for school districts and libraries to ensure the best use of E-rate and other public funds.
- b. CETF recommends a requirement that school districts and libraries receiving E-rate have publicly-available technology plans with metrics to promote accountability and transparency for the use of ratepayer funds in the E-rate program.