



June 17, 2014

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler,

As CEOs and innovators working to unlock the power of technology to personalize learning, empower teachers, connect parents, and ensure equal educational opportunity for all, we are writing to urge swift action to modernize the E-rate program and connect America's students to high-speed broadband and ubiquitous Wi-Fi.

In schools with robust broadband infrastructure, technology is already transforming how teachers teach and students learn. Gigabit speeds are enabling one-to-one learning technologies that let students learn at their own pace; two-way video that beams in experts and experiences from around the globe; blended learning models that let teachers spend more time in small group instruction; immersive learning games as engaging as the best video games; online assessments that provide real-time feedback to address issues before students fall behind; and collaboration tools that give parents daily access to their children's homework and grades. In short, broadband is the foundation for the 21st century classroom.

Unfortunately, nearly 40 million of America's K-12 students are being left behind without the Internet access and Wi-Fi they need to take advantage of the power of digital learning. If we want our students and teachers to have the opportunity to utilize the next-generation educational applications and content our companies are creating, America's schools need 100 Mbps or more of Internet access today and 1 Gbps by 2017.

High-speed broadband can help us out-educate, out-innovate, and out-compete the world. It can help us better prepare our kids for the jobs of the future, foster a domestic educational technology industry that creates new jobs, and help the nation become more competitive on the world stage. Already, an estimated \$4 billion a year is being invested in digital learning tools in America's K-12 schools, a market that could grow to \$10 billion by 2017 – helping to create a vital new industry focused on fueling our future while creating new jobs at home.

Yet, instead of leading the world in digital learning, we are putting our students, teachers, and educational technology innovators at a significant disadvantage. Countries around the world already recognize that high-speed broadband is not just an educational necessity; it is a competitive imperative. In South Korea, all schools are already connected to the Internet with high-speed connections, all teachers are trained in digital learning, and printed textbooks will be phased out by 2016. Australia, Finland, Ireland, New Zealand, and Singapore are close behind with programs to connect their children to world-class educational technologies. To win the

future, we need not only to connect our kids with high-speed learning opportunities, we need to make sure that the technologies that will fuel this future are being designed, developed, and deployed right here in America.

That is why it is imperative that the Commission act quickly to modernize, expand, and strengthen the successful E-rate program by: 1) focusing the E-rate program on broadband connectivity and infrastructure to ensure that we maximize the impact of E-rate on learning; 2) investing in upgrades, starting with the FCC's \$2 billion E-rate down payment to connect every school to fiber and every classroom to Wi-Fi; 3) improving the affordability of broadband for America's schools by maximizing competition and the broadband options available; and 4) increasing transparency and accountability to reduce costs and improve efficiency by collecting and releasing more data about existing network infrastructure, how funds are spent, and the prices paid by schools for their E-rate services.

Strategic innovation in the E-rate program will set the stage for America's innovators to unlock the power of technology to ensure equal educational opportunity for all of America's K-12 students. Expanding access to high-speed broadband is perhaps our generation's single greatest opportunity to provide every student with access to the most effective and engaging educational content, applications, and tools ever developed. Nowhere is the opportunity so vast, the need so urgent, and the policy so vital for advancing a brighter, more connected educational future.

Sincerely,

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cc: Commissioner Clyburn
Commissioner O'Rielly
Commissioner Rosenworcel
Commissioner Pai