



# THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

1620 EYE STREET, NORTHWEST  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006  
TELEPHONE (202) 293-7330  
FAX (202) 293-2352  
URL: [www.usmayors.org](http://www.usmayors.org)

President:  
SCOTT SMITH  
Mayor of Mesa

Vice President:  
KEVIN JOHNSON  
Mayor of Sacramento

Second Vice President:  
STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE  
Mayor of Baltimore

Past Presidents:  
ELIZABETH B. KAUTZ  
Mayor of Burnsville  
MICHAEL A. NUTTER  
Mayor of Philadelphia  
DONALD L. PLUSQUELLIC  
Mayor of Akron  
JOSEPH P. RILEY, JR.  
Mayor of Charleston, SC

Trustees:  
STEPHEN K. BENJAMIN  
Mayor of Columbia, SC  
J. CHRISTIAN BOLLWAGE  
Mayor of Elizabeth  
JAMES BRAINARD  
Mayor of Carmel, IN  
MICHAEL B. COLEMAN  
Mayor of Columbus, OH  
JOY COOPER  
Mayor of Hallandale Beach  
MICK CORNETT  
Mayor of Oklahoma City  
T.M. FRANKLIN COWNIE  
Mayor of Des Moines  
BOB FOSTER  
Mayor of Long Beach  
MITCHELL J. LANDRIEU  
Mayor of New Orleans  
BRENDA L. LAWRENCE  
Mayor of Southfield  
JOHN R. MARKS III  
Mayor of Tallahassee  
PEDRO E. SEGARRA  
Mayor of Hartford  
ASHLEY SWEARENGIN  
Mayor of Fresno

Advisory Board:  
GREGORY A. BALLARD  
Mayor of Indianapolis  
BRYAN K. BARNETT  
Mayor of Rochester Hills  
RALPH BECKER  
Mayor of Salt Lake City  
ARDELL F. BREDE  
Mayor of Rochester, MN  
ALVIN BROWN  
Mayor of Jacksonville, FL  
CHRISTOPHER L. CABALDON  
Mayor of West Sacramento  
ROBERT CLUCK  
Mayor of Arlington, TX  
BUDDY DYER  
Mayor of Orlando  
BILL FINCH  
Mayor of Bridgeport  
GREG FISCHER  
Mayor of Louisville  
CAROLYN G. GOODMAN  
Mayor of Las Vegas  
SYLVESTER "SLY" JAMES, JR.  
Mayor of Kansas City, MO  
WILLIAM P. KENOI  
Mayor of Hilo  
EDWIN M. LEE  
Mayor of San Francisco  
KIM McMILLAN  
Mayor of Clarksville  
KENNETH D. MIYAGISHIMA  
Mayor of Las Cruces  
LORI C. MOSELEY  
Mayor of Miramar  
FRANK C. ORTIS  
Mayor of Pembroke Pines  
MIGUEL A. PULIDO  
Mayor of Santa Ana  
MICHAEL S. RAWLINGS  
Mayor of Dallas  
RAUL G. SALINAS  
Mayor of Laredo  
JAMES J. SCHMITT  
Mayor of Green Bay  
FRANCIS G. SLAY  
Mayor of St. Louis  
PAUL SOGLIN  
Mayor of Madison  
MARK STODOLA  
Mayor of Little Rock  
BETH VAN DUYN  
Mayor of Irving  
BRIAN C. WAHLER  
Mayor of Piscataway  
SETTI WARREN  
Mayor of Newton

CEO and Executive Director  
TOM COCHRAN

March 17, 2014

Chairman Tom Wheeler  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Connecting Our Kids to Higher-Speed Learning Opportunities

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

As leaders of The United States Conference of Mayors, we are writing to urge swift action to modernize the E-rate program in order to connect 99 percent of our schoolchildren with high-speed broadband over the next five years. This critical update is absolutely needed to bring high-speed broadband to every school and library and Wi-Fi to every classroom. It's the single most important step we can take to connect our children to digital learning opportunities that will give them the technological skills they need for the future.

Ensuring that our schools and libraries have high-speed educational opportunities means every child has the chance to reach for their dreams. Experts agree that to enable students to take full advantage of digital learning, America's schools need 100 Mbps or more of Internet access today and 1 Gbps by 2017. Today, however, too many of our children are trying to learn skills for tomorrow, with dial-up speeds from the past. The average American school has about the same bandwidth as the average American home, even though schools have 200 times as many users. It means that 72 percent of our schools do not have the Internet infrastructure they need to take advantage of digital learning opportunities today, and less than one percent have the infrastructure they will need in the future. As a result, 40 million of our kids are being left behind without access to the broadband speeds they need to succeed.

Around the world, countries are recognizing that these high speed Internet connections aren't just an educational supplement, they are a competitive necessity. For example, South Korea, Ireland, Finland, Singapore, New Zealand and Australia, among others, either have or are well on their way toward connecting their schools at fiber speeds. These countries understand that in today's global economy, high speed broadband in schools is just as important as a chalkboard and textbooks.

Chairman Wheeler, Federal Communications Commission  
March 17, 2014  
Re: Connecting Our Kids to Higher-Speed Learning Opportunities  
Page 2

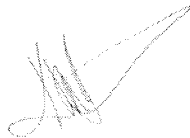
We need to modernize and expand the successful E-rate program by 1) focusing the E-rate program on broadband connectivity and infrastructure to ensure that we maximize the impact of the E-rate on learning; 2) create a one-time upgrade fund within the E-rate program, to connect every school and library to fiber optic cables and every classroom to Wi-Fi; and 3) reform the way the program is managed to reduce costs, improve efficiency, and ensure that all students have access to the connectivity they need. By taking these strategic steps to deploy fiber to our schools and libraries and Wi-Fi to every classroom, we will be investing today, to save money tomorrow. By investing in future-proof technologies like fiber, we can help ensure that these investments make a difference not just for the next semester, but the next generation.

We simply can't prepare our kids to compete for 21st century jobs by leaving them stranded with 20th century technologies. Therefore, we ask you to support swift action to modernize the E-rate program to help bring transformative learning opportunities via fast fiber connections to every K-12 school and library in America.

Sincerely,



Scott Smith  
Mayor of Mesa  
President



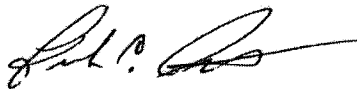
Kevin Johnson  
Mayor of Sacramento  
Vice President



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake  
Mayor of Baltimore  
Second Vice President



Kasim Reed  
Mayor of Atlanta  
Chair, Transportation  
and Communications  
Committee



Frank Ortis  
Mayor of Pembroke Pines  
Chair, Jobs, Education  
and the Workforce  
Committee



Edwin M. Lee  
Mayor of San Francisco  
Chair, Technology and  
Innovation Task Force