

## CoSN NEEDS YOUR HELP TO CLOSE THE HOMEWORK GAP

### BACKGROUND

Far too many students, especially learners from rural and low-income families, lack access to the home broadband connectivity required for learning. This “Homework Gap” is a longstanding problem but one that has widened to a massive learning gap during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supporting schools’ efforts to close the Homework Gap is a top CoSN priority. Given the urgency and importance of resolving this challenge, CoSN recently filed Comments responding to the FCC’s request for public about the new \$7.1 billion Emergency Connectivity Fund. Specifically, we asked the FCC to ensure that the new emergency program: (1) empowers local and state leaders to make decisions about how to best address unique community broadband and device needs; (2) encourages the acquisition of connections and devices of sufficient capacity to support robust digital learning (25 Mbps download and 12 Mbps upload speeds for each student in the home); and (3) distributes the program’s limited funding efficiently and equitably using a budget cap model consistent with policy strategies already proven to work through E-rate Category 2.

### HOW CAN ED TECH LEADERS HELP?

Ed tech leaders can help by filing Reply Comments asking the FCC to support CoSN’s comments in the Emergency Connectivity Fund proceeding. **Public Reply Comments must be submitted to the FCC no later than April 23, 2021.**

If you are interested in following comments with the FCC, we recommend the following steps:

1. Use the model talking points below to craft a locally tailored one or two paragraph message describing how the FCC should structure the Emergency Connectivity Fund
2. Visit the FCC’s “Express Comment” filing page: <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filings/express>
3. Complete the form on the Express Comment page (see example below).
  - a. In the “Proceeding Field” type “21-93”.
  - b. Provide your contact information as requested
  - c. Insert your message in the “Brief Comments” Field and click “Continue to review screen” and then submit your comments.

## **MODEL TALKING POINTS FOR RESPONDING TO THE FCC'S REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

- The FCC should adopt a per-student budget cap model for the Emergency Connectivity Fund that favors rural school districts and districts serving large numbers of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals. The program application should be minimally burdensome and understandable
- The commission should encourage the acquisition of broadband connections (25 mbps download for each student and 12 mbps upload speeds for each student), up to date routers, and connected devices, of sufficient capacity to support digital learning.
- School districts' home connectivity needs can vary, so we urge the FCC to support a range of technologies, including wired or wireless network equipment and services for learning so long as they are the most cost-effective approach. This includes wireless hotspot devices and fixed or mobile wireless towers.
- As a local education technology leader, I strongly urge the FCC to allow E-rate funded services and equipment to be used off-campus to enable remote learning.