



August 11, 2020

Chairman Ajit Pai
Commissioner Mike O’Rielly
Commissioner Brendan Carr
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Geoffrey Starks
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai and Commissioners:

The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) and the State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) strongly encourage you provide additional fiscal year 2020 E-rate funding to help schools acquire the on campus broadband connectivity that will be required to respond to the unprecedented demand for online learning created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tens of millions of American students will begin the next school year completely or partially online. States and school districts are working tirelessly to marshal the devices, broadband connectivity, and other supports that will be required to make the nearly universal transition to online learning work effectively and safely for all students and their families. Our members – the state and local leaders working on the front lines of this herculean effort - have identified a number of challenges that require policy leaders’ attention. Among them, is the urgent need for additional 2020 E-rate funding to help schools purchase the bandwidth that will be required to carry the extraordinary levels of data that must pass through their networks this school year.

Schools’ heightened on campus broadband needs were not foreseeable when applicants filed their fiscal year 2020 Form 471 application, so the Commission must – as it has during past responses to natural disasters – step in to help program participants adjust to their radically changed circumstances. With this goal in mind, CoSN and SETDA specifically endorse the possible distribution mechanisms (appeals, waivers for late submitted applications, or opening a new window) and waiver suggestions submitted by the State E-rate Coordinators Alliance to the Commission (SECA) on August 3, 2020.

It is not an exaggeration to say that millions of students may be unable to collaborate effectively – or at all - with their teachers and peers if sufficient resources are not provided to help school districts build their online learning systems, including significantly expanding on campus broadband capacity to handle increase demand. As a result, we urge the Commission to act quickly and decisively to address this national educational challenge.

Sincerely,

Keith Krueger
Chief Executive Officer
Consortium for School Networking

Christine Fox
Deputy Executive Director
State Educational Technology Directors Association