



# NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See *MCI v. FCC*, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
July 10, 2000

## **COMMISSIONER SUSAN NESS ISSUES STATEMENT APPLAUDING E-RATE PROGRESS**

Commissioner Susan Ness issued the following press statement on July 10, 2000, coinciding with the release of the Education and Library Networks Coalition's (EdLiNC's) second annual report, *E-Rate: Keeping the Promise to Connect Kids and Communities to the Future*:

I commend EdLiNC for this informative study of the extraordinary benefits that the E-Rate has brought to communities throughout the nation. By chronicling the critical need for delivery of Information Age tools to our nation's schools and libraries, this report underscores the wisdom of the Snowe-Rockefeller-Exon-Kerrey provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

The E-Rate has been a great success by almost any measure. To date, this program has helped connect well over one million classrooms. Almost two-thirds of our public school classrooms and almost all of the more than 17,000 community libraries now offer direct access to the Internet.

The communities highlighted in this EdLiNC report put a human face on these numbers. These anecdotes demonstrate why we have worked so hard to make this program a reality: We are providing our communities and our children with the skills and information necessary to prosper in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We are addressing the digital divide by targeting the largest discounts to economically disadvantaged and rural communities -- where the need is greatest. We are providing our nation's classrooms with direct access to a wealth of resources. And, we are renewing the role of the library as a community education center. EdLiNC's survey demonstrates that we are on the right course.

Educators and librarians have played a key role in making the E-Rate a success. We have provided them with the flexibility to select the services that they can best use to meet the needs of their communities. But it is their tireless efforts to implement this critical program that have made all of the difference.

I also applaud EdLiNC, and its member organizations, which have been an unwavering voice for our nation's communities and schoolchildren. Working together, we can prepare all of our children for success in the global information economy.