

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

*Re: Schools and Libraries Universal Service Support Mechanism, CC Docket No. 02-6, A  
National Broadband Plan for Our Future, GN Docket No. 09-51*

Many of the millions of Americans who do not have broadband rely on their local schools and libraries – our nation’s critical community anchor institutions – for basic broadband access. Such access has been made possible by the incomparable E-rate program. Without it, our Nation would be lagging even further behind in terms of broadband adoption.

For us to continue to support broadband adoption in our local communities, we must update the E-rate program to meet our current needs. Today’s Further Notice proposes a number of ways in which we can maximize our use of E-rate funds in order to better prepare our students and citizens to succeed. For example, increased flexibility for recipients to choose the most cost-effective and educationally useful broadband services may enable recipients to better leverage and stretch their E-rate dollars. In addition, by streamlining the application process, we can likely reduce the cost of participating in the program, potentially making it more accessible to schools and libraries that have not previously participated. We also may want to index the E-rate funding cap to inflation in order to protect the purchasing power of recipients, thereby allowing them to acquire critical broadband elements they need to serve and educate.

These are all constructive ideas as we look to modernize the program and ensure that we are making the most of what it has to offer.