

FCC CHAIRMAN JULIUS GENACHOWSKI
REMARKS AT BACK TO SCHOOL FORUM
COLUMBIA HEIGHTS EDUCATIONAL CAMPUS
WASHINGTON, DC
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Good morning, Griffins! Let me try that again. Buenos dias, Griffins!

Thank you Principal Tukeva for that introduction and for welcoming us to your school. Thank you to today's panelists for joining us, and thank you to those watching the live streaming on fcc.gov. Most important, thank you to all of the audience members for joining us, in particular the students of Columbia Heights.

First, some quick questions for the students. How many of you use the Internet? How many of you use the Internet to do your school work? How many of you use the Internet to do things like check your Facebook page or play video games, which keep you from doing your school work?

High-speed Internet, what we call broadband, is changing not only the way students learn and do homework, but virtually every aspect of our lives. The opportunities of broadband Internet – wired and wireless – are almost limitless. With broadband, a student anywhere can have access to the best libraries, the best teachers, the best tutors in the world.

How many of you are sick of carrying 50 pounds of textbooks in your backpacks? With mobile broadband, you can have a digital textbook, with up-to-date materials and cutting-edge interactive learning tools.

The Internet enables anyone, anywhere to dream big and bring those dreams to life. Mark Zuckerberg was only a few years older than many of you when he invented Facebook in his dorm room. Who knows, the creator of the next Facebook or Google or Amazon could be in this room.

People are talking a lot about jobs - as they should. Well, broadband is a job creator. And not just jobs for engineers - though I hope you all will consider that path. Broadband means jobs at small businesses all over the country. It means jobs in lots of different sectors, as long as you have basic digital literacy.

As with every revolutionary new technology, broadband Internet brings not only real opportunities, but some real concerns.

One challenge is equal access. One-third of Americans still haven't adopted broadband at home. For Latinos or African-Americans, that number is closer to one-half. The FCC administers a program called E-Rate, which has already helped to connect almost every school and library in America to the Internet. And we're modernizing that program to make sure schools can get higher speeds at lower costs, as well as piloting a program to support off-campus connectivity for wireless devices.

Of course, we want all Americans to be connected to the Internet at home. That's why we've launched a task force with leaders of the private sector to increase broadband adoption and boost digital literacy, so that all Americans can enjoy the benefits of broadband. But today's forum is more focused on the challenges faced by those who have already adopted broadband and the latest digital technologies.

One study found that the average teenager consumes eleven hours of media content a day. The average teen sends a text every ten minutes he or she is awake. 54% of teen mobile users have received unwanted texts. And 52% of teens admit to texting while driving. We need to get that number to zero.

These changes in teen behavior can have real consequences – consequences for schoolwork, consequences for friendships and relationships, consequences for careers.

Today, we've convened a panel of experts to talk to you about how we can seize the opportunities of broadband Internet, while avoiding these pitfalls.

We are joined by:

- René Cadogan, Bilingual Counselor at Columbia Heights Educational Campus.
- Deborah Harrison, the parent of a Columbia Heights student, who will help provide a parent's perspective.
- Stephen Balkam, the Chief Executive Officer at FOSI – The Family Online Safety Institute. Stephen is a leading online safety advocate at FOSI, whose mission is to make the online world safer for kids and their families.
- Dr. Nicol Turner-Lee, Vice President and Director of the Media and Technology Institute at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. The Joint Center is one of the nation's leading research and public policy institutions and Nicol's work focuses on digital empowerment.
- Alan Simpson, the Vice President of Policy at Common Sense Media. Alan's background combines experience as an advocate for children and education issues, as well as work within media organizations.
- Jason Rzepka, Vice President of Public Affairs at MTV. Jason serves as a resource for MTV on issues including youth mobilization, social media for social change and online safety.

And Jason, we are happy to have you kick off this panel with some audience interaction around the digital lifestyle of students.