



NEWS FROM THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

FCC to End Unlawful Expansion of COVID Spending Program

Action Reverses Prior FCC Decision to Fund School Bus Wi-Fi Through E-Rate Program

WASHINGTON, September 30, 2025—Today, the Federal Communications Commission made clear that school bus Wi-Fi is ineligible for E-Rate funding, reversing the agency’s 2023 decision permitting its use. In doing so, the agency will no longer support the use of scarce taxpayer dollars to fund unsupervised screen time for kids without accounting for the risks.

The Declaratory Ruling adopted today finds that funding Wi-Fi on school buses both exceeds the FCC’s statutory authority and does not promote sound policy choices. The agency determined that the best reading of section 254 of the Communications Act of 1934, is that the use and provision of these services on school buses does not serve an “educational purpose” as defined by E-Rate program rules and conflicts with the statute’s direction to enhance access to E-Rate-eligible services for classrooms and libraries.

Further, E-Rate funding for the use of Wi-Fi hotspots off-campus is inconsistent with the statutory authority provided to the Commission by Congress. Through today’s action, the Universal Service Administrative Company will be directed to deny year 2025 pending funding requests for E-Rate funds to support the use of Wi-Fi on school buses.

The E-Rate program was authorized by Congress in 1996 to enhance access to advanced telecommunications and information services for all public and nonprofit elementary and secondary school classrooms and libraries. Under the E-Rate program, eligible schools and libraries may request universal service discounts for internet connectivity.

Action by the Commission September 30, 2025 by Declaratory Ruling (FCC 25-63). Chairman Carr and Commissioner Trusty approving. Commissioner Gomez dissenting. Chairman Carr, Commissioners Gomez and Trusty issuing separate statements.

WC Docket No. 13-184

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