



OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN BRENDAN CARR

With Excessive Screen Time Linked to Poor Educational Outcomes, Chairman Carr Opens Review of FCC’s E-Rate Program to Ensure it Fulfills Congress’s Vision for Great Educational Outcomes

WASHINGTON, June 3, 2026—Today, FCC Chairman Brendan Carr launched a proceeding that aims to empower parents and better protect children when using networks and services subsidized by the FCC’s multi-billion-dollar E-Rate program. The Notice, if adopted by the Commission at its June 25 Open Meeting, would seek to ensure that E-Rate-funded networks and services are being used for educational purposes, while also strengthening E-Rate program integrity and streamlining program administration to support learning opportunities.

Chairman Carr issued the following statement:

“Over the last several years—and especially during COVID—many schools dramatically increased screen time for kids, with many students now swiping for hours every day. Research has now been pouring in that America’s experiment with heightened screen time in schools may be related to the negative educational outcomes we are now seeing in classrooms across the country—from declining academic performance to diminished reading comprehension skills. Indeed, a 2026 [Advisory](#) from the Trump Administration’s HHS and U.S. Surgeon General catalogs the links between excessive screen time and poor educational outcomes. The important role that technology plays in schools should support learning, not distractions or declining performance.

“For its part, the FCC has been subsidizing connectivity to and within schools for almost 30 years now—spending roughly \$3 billion annually at this point. So, today, I shared with my FCC colleagues a proposal aimed at empowering parents and ensuring that our E-Rate program produces the great educational outcomes stakeholders have intended. We will do so through a smart review of the FCC’s E-Rate program. While parents have the ability to supervise screen use and monitor Internet access at home, that parental control does not extend the same way into their kids’ classrooms and libraries.

“This FCC review is also informed by the actions being taken in states across the country. We are now seeing a movement to address excessive screen time in schools, with some school districts removing devices and reducing screen time, particularly for younger children. Additionally, a number of bills have been introduced in Congress that are aimed at reducing excessive screen time for children, including for E-Rate supported ones. So, with graduation season upon us and many parents now looking ahead to the new school year to come, the time is ripe to have these conversations at the FCC.”

Additional Background Information:

Under the FCC’s E-Rate program, eligible schools, libraries, and consortia that include eligible schools and libraries, may apply for discounted eligible telecommunications, Internet access, and internal connections services.

The Notice shared today seeks comment on actions to ensure the E-Rate program advances student learning outcomes and to better protect the online safety of children when using E-Rate-funded networks and services, given the number of hours children of all ages spend online. Recognizing the increased use of the Internet and connected devices by children in educational settings, the Notice seeks comment on measures the Commission can take to ensure that E-Rate program funds are being spent consistently with the universal service principles established by Congress.

In addition, the Commission seeks comment on whether the Commission's current interpretation of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) is the best reading of that statute and whether existing CIPA requirements sufficiently protect children from inappropriate and harmful content when using school and library computers to access E-Rate-funded networks and services. Lastly, the Notice seeks comment on potential legal and policy considerations for assessing children's screen time and protecting children and empowering parents, guardians, and teachers in decision-making involving children's access to E-Rate-funded networks and services.

The Notice also seeks comment on ways the Commission can ensure the E-Rate program complies with the statutory goals established by Congress and directs limited federal funding where it is needed most.

A Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, also shared today, proposes further actions to strengthen E-Rate program integrity by increasing oversight, streamlining administrative processes, including establishing a June 30th deadline for the submission of the FCC Form 473, as well as further modifications to submission requirements.

Under Chairman Carr, the FCC's E-Rate program is undergoing a "top-to-bottom" evaluation. During his tenure, Chairman Carr has rolled back unlawful COVID-era expansions, such as E-Rate funding for off-campus Wi-Fi hotspots and school bus Wi-Fi, as those programs exceeded the FCC's congressional authority and wasted federal funds. These continuing efforts are part of a larger effort to implement tougher oversight of all USF programs to combat waste, fraud and abuse, and ensure strict program integrity.

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**Media Contact: MediaRelations@fcc.gov / (202) 418-0500
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