

**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*

Without a doubt, the E-rate program has made a significant impact on the provision of broadband to millions throughout this nation. Our primary anchor institutions—schools and libraries—have encouraged broadband deployment and adoption in many geographic areas that might not otherwise have been offered broadband, but for the program.

By providing broadband access, the E-rate program offers consumers who are unserved at home, some opportunity to get online through their local libraries. In addition, this program has encouraged digital literacy and broadband adoption as both teachers and librarians have taught many students and constituents how to navigate and use the Internet. For teachers and students, E-rate has allowed them to be integrated into the digital world and has expanded their educational opportunities at school. For example, the interactive nature of some educational websites can enhance the learning experience of elementary school students. They can improve their math skills using innovative games offered online. They can explore the wonders of science and be introduced to other countries and cultures currently out of reach, right from their desktops. As educators increasingly integrate the Internet into their lesson plans, faster speeds and additional bandwidth are needed to accommodate all of the interactive, educational uses the Internet offers.

The adjustments we make today to the E-rate program have countless benefits for schools, libraries and their surrounding communities. By indexing the E-rate funding cap to inflation, we are protecting the purchasing power of recipients so they can continue to acquire the critical broadband elements they need to serve and educate our fellow citizens. We also are encouraging faster speeds and more bandwidth to be delivered by permitting schools and libraries to take advantage of fiber networks that have already been built, and through additional competition we advance in this Order, E-rate dollars can be maximized to provide much needed services to more schools and libraries. Finally, by permanently changing our rules to permit E-rate funded services to be used after school hours without reducing benefits, we are encouraging schools to make their facilities available so that more citizens can be served. It is my hope that this will spur further digital literacy and broadband adoption in local communities throughout the nation.

I am a strong proponent of us making the most of what our Universal Service Fund has to offer, and I want to thank the Chairman for his leadership on these issues, and the staff of the Wireline Competition Bureau for their significant and meaningful work on this item.