

## E-Rate Talking Points

*As part of the **Back to School Toolkit: E-Rate**, these talking points are designed to assist AASA members in their ongoing E-Rate communications with education reporters and community members. AASA grants permission to its members to use and reproduce this material, in whole or in part and by any means, without charge or further permission.*

- E-Rate is a program that works.
- One strength of the E-Rate program is the simplicity and clarity of its goal: connectivity.
- The single biggest obstacle threatening the E-Rate program is a lack of adequate funding.
- E-Rate provides funding that is vital to establishing, upgrading and maintaining telecommunications access to schools and libraries.
- E-Rate funding represents the only federal funding for education technology.
  - USED provides a limited amount of funding to support the development of online assessment and ZERO funding for education technology–related professional development, connectivity and curriculum.
- E-Rate represents the single-largest source of education technology funding for the nation’s schools and libraries and the students and communities they serve.
- E-Rate funding is critical to helping schools and libraries afford teleconnectivity.
- E-Rate provides Internet access to 95 percent of the nation’s students.
- Schools build from and leverage E-Rate resources as part of their comprehensive education technology plans.
- As schools deferred, delayed and cancelled connectivity and infrastructure updates within their own budgets in response to the recession, E-Rate dollars proved vital in helping schools keep their fiber ‘lit.’
- Nearly all (92 percent) of respondents in a 2012 survey described the E-Rate discount as critical to their success.
- Demand for E-Rate has regularly exceeded the program’s funding cap, currently at \$2.34 billion.
- In fact, FY12 demand was not only more than double the cap (\$5.2 billion), but the available funding was only enough to provide for Priority 1 services, leaving virtually nothing to support schools’ internal connections.
- E-Rate is responsible for the rapid expansion of connectivity to the nation’s schools. Despite its early, rapid, and continued success, high-speed access in classrooms remains inadequate in too many districts.
- E-Rate will continue to play a critical role to ensure that schools and libraries continue to both maintain and expand their teleconnectivity.
- It is imperative that the FCC permanently raise the E-Rate cap.
- E-Rate bolsters schools’ efforts to provide students with access to robust digital learning and education technology.
- The looming implementation of online assessments will highlight both how far our nation has come in connecting schools and how far we have yet to go.
- The initial E-Rate conversation needs to shift from merely establishing connectivity to expanding connectivity.