

## **Opinion-Editorial for the Editor**

*You may tailor this OP-ED to fit your district and distribute it to your local media, capitalizing on the media's interest in high technology issues when it comes to improving education. 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.*

### **Insert Your Letterhead**

#### **Growing the Digital Edge in our Schools**

Trying to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to high technology isn't easy. In order for the students attending (name of school district) to become college ready and stay globally competitive, it's imperative that we, as educators, deliver digital learning experiences so they can positively engage in quality instruction.

As the information age continues to reshape education around the world, we are proud that innovative technological solutions are taking place in our schools in an effort to maximize teaching and learning excellence.

For example, (discuss specific programs or initiatives the school district is implementing that provides high technology/digital resources to teachers and students. Programs/initiatives could take place on the district level, school level or classroom level).

We are pleased that these online learning platforms are readily available to support our faculty, staff and most importantly, our students. As the superintendent of our schools, I pledge to grow our capacity for using technology to drive academic success. To compete with other school districts across (name of state) and the country, it is critical for teachers and students to have available high-speed Internet access.

The Federal Communications Commission continues its leadership toward supporting school connectivity. In a move I wholeheartedly support, the FCC recently approved the E-Rate Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM). This action reflects the thoughtful comments, response and leadership of community leaders, parents, educators and students about the need to both preserve and update the E-Rate program.

E-Rate is a federal program, funded through telecommunications companies, that helps school districts afford their communications connectivity, including the Internet. E-Rate provides schools and libraries with discounts that support affordable telecommunications and Internet connectivity. The FCC's decision compliments the ConnectED initiative to provide high-speed broadband access to 99 percent of the nation's students.

E-Rate supplies just under \$2.5 billion in discounts each year for advanced, affordable connectivity. As designed, the promise of E-Rate is to assure that all Americans, regardless of income or geography, can participate in and benefit from new information technologies, including distance learning, online

assessment and enriched curriculum. This program represents the single-largest source of education technology funding for the nation's schools and libraries and the students and communities they serve.

Moving forward, I call on my fellow superintendents in our state to support the FCC with respect to this rule making. The conversation needs to shift from establishing connectivity to expanding connectivity, especially for the benefit of students from low-income families. This expansion will only happen with increased investment in the E-Rate program, whose funding has remained virtually unchanged since the program was created. The FCC can bolster digital learning by investing \$5 billion in E-Rate, an amount that would meet current demand.

The new academic year is always an exciting time. Classrooms throughout (name of school district) provide models of excellence when it comes to the way teachers teach and how students learn. I look forward to working with our staff and the community to maintain our high standards at the district level and at the school building level. At the same time, I look forward to enhancing our digital-based learning tools that are essential in helping us get to where we want to go.

###

Name of superintendent

Title

School district

City, state abbreviation

Contact information