

October 10, 2017

**TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED**

**Subject: Classroom Connectivity Initiative Update – State Match**

We are pleased to announce that the Governor’s Office, the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and the Education Service Centers have teamed up with EducationSuperHighway for the second year in a row on the Classroom Connectivity Initiative.

Last year, through the Classroom Connectivity Initiative at the TEA, more than 100 local education agencies (LEAs) received assistance to upgrade their Internet access in support of digital learning technologies. Many districts took advantage of our partnership with EducationSuperhighway to receive assistance throughout the E-rate cycle.

We are proud to announce the 85th Texas State Legislature approved \$25 million for the TEA to provide State Matching funds to LEAs for E-rate eligible Category 1 special construction network projects. State Matching funds reduce the local funding share for Category 1 fiber projects by providing a dollar-for-dollar match with funding from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Therefore, if Texas provides \$25,000,000, the FCC will provide \$25,000,000. LEAs with an E-rate discount of 80% to 90% can have their approved Category 1 fiber project fully funded. LEAs with an E-rate discount rate less than 80% can receive an additional 20% of their project costs. The State Matching funds program is available for the E-rate funding year 17 (FY17) and funding year 18 (FY18) cycles. The 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature created this fund to ensure schools facing connectivity challenges can secure the scalable infrastructure needed to support digital learning.

The TEA and EducationSuperHighway are here to help LEAs take advantage of the state matching program and find viable options to upgrade school networks this year. Our partners at EducationSuperHighway can assist with research on potential network upgrade options, contact service providers, and provide RFP/ Form 470 guideline assistance for E-rate and state match applications. All assistance through the Classroom Connectivity Initiative is provided free of charge.

To get started, contact our partners at [EducationSuperHighway](http://EducationSuperHighway) at [julie@educationsuperhighway.org](mailto:julie@educationsuperhighway.org). You can also register for upcoming informational [webinars](#). Contact the Classroom Connectivity Initiative staff at [classroomconnectivity@tea.texas.gov](mailto:classroomconnectivity@tea.texas.gov) or check out the [Classroom Connectivity Information](#) on the TEA website.

We will continue to provide progress updates on the Classroom Connectivity Initiative throughout the school year. We look forward to working with you to achieve our vision of a world-class K–12 public school system that provides high-quality digital learning opportunities for all students.

Sincerely,

Mike Morath  
Commissioner of Education