

August 17, 2018

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED:

Subject: Classroom Connectivity Initiative: Take action on E-rate Category 2 Funds

For a third year in a row, the Governor's Office, the Texas Education Agency, and the Education Service Centers have teamed up with EducationSuperHighway on the [Classroom Connectivity Initiative](#).

A key part of this Initiative was the establishment of the \$25 million state matching fund to help districts cover the cost of fiber construction projects. Over the past two years, we received 103 distinct applications from districts and ESCs. More than 460 school districts - many of which never thought they could get high-speed fiber to their schools - stand to benefit from the funding to support their Internet infrastructure upgrades. Although the application window for state matching funds has now closed, there are still free tools, resources, and support available through the Initiative to help with upgrades, which over 200 school districts took advantage of last year. The same support is available to school districts at no cost this year, and we encourage schools in need of fiber or other scalable infrastructure to [get in touch](#) to learn more.

In addition, robust Wi-Fi is key to supporting digital learning in the classroom. As part of E-rate modernization, the Federal Communications Commission allocated \$150 per student to every school to support internal network upgrades. For school districts that have not yet started spending these Category 2 funds, this is the last year to apply or your funds will be forfeited. Similarly, for those that started taking advantage of these funds in 2015, this is the last of five years to spend your funds.

To learn more about your available budget and learn how to make best use of the funds, join us for a webinar sponsored by the Classroom Connectivity Initiative on either day:

[September 5 @ 1:30PM \(CST\)](#)

or

[September 6 @ 1:30PM \(CST\)](#)

Please contact classroomconnectivity@tea.texas.org if you are unable to access the webinar.

Our partners at EducationSuperHighway will be in touch this fall to support your district in taking advantage of your available E-rate Category 2 funding. As a reminder, all assistance through the Classroom Connectivity Initiative is free of charge. 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,
Melody Parrish
Deputy Commissioner, Technology