



Education Technology

Education Technology & ESEA: The house bill does NOT include a program to reauthorize Title II Part D (Enhancing Education through Technology, or EETT). The Senate bill does include an education technology component that would enable schools to invest in infrastructure and professional development. The Senate version is, in part, based on a standalone bill introduced by Representative Miller. The Transforming Education through Technology Act (HR 521) helps speed adoption of innovative digital tools to improve student outcomes, close achievement gaps, boost educator skills and improve efficiency and productivity. The realities of providing a 21st century education require a dedicated, sustained investment in education technology supports from the federal level, like that in HR 521. EETT was once again zero-funded in FY13 and FY14, and we should anticipate the same for FY15.

E-Rate: AASA Executive Director Dan Domenech was nominated to the USAC Board, the entity that oversees the Universal Services Fund and E-Rate program. Former AESA Executive Director Brian Talbott is also on the USAC Board. This is impeccable timing: it is a period of great change at the FCC, with two new commissioners to be nominated in close proximity to each other. Further, President Obama announced his ConnectEd proposal, which aims to connect 99% of America's students to the internet through high-speed broadband and high-speed wireless within 5 years. The plan calls on the FCC to modernize and leverage its existing E-Rate programs to meet the goal. AESA applaud the focus on, and call for investment in, the E-Rate program. While some funding can come from program efficiencies, it is imperative that ConnectEd come with significant new money for E-Rate. Demand for the program is already more than double the available funding, a very disconcerting fact as schools prepare to implement online assessments in the 2014-15 school year.

Part of the ConnectEd discussion will involve programmatic changes to E-Rate. AESA was actively engaged in these conversations, submitting comments and supporting member responses. AESA filed joint comments with AASA. You can read a summary of the proposed changes, AESA's comments, access the template response, and utilize an E-Rate toolkit on line: <http://aasa.org/aasablog.aspx?id=29782&blogid=286>

Talking Points:

- Though Congress has no role in determining the changes to E-Rate, they do engage in conversations with the FCC Commissioners. As such, make sure your Senators and Representative know the critical role that E-Rate dollars play in school connectivity and how important those dollars will be as schools prepare for the online assessments.
- Talk to your Representatives and Senators about the importance of the E-Rate program and how much more you could accomplish if there was no longer a limitation on E-Rate funding to \$2.25 billion. Explain to them the importance of supporting a \$5 billion funding level for E-Rate.
- Urge your Representatives to support any amendment to HR 5 that would add an education-technology component to ESEA and invest in infrastructure and professional development. Dedicated, sustained investment in education technology supports state and local efforts

already underway to expand access to rigorous courses through online learning, to use education data to guide instruction and decision making, and to support teachers and administrators in implementing newly adopted college and career ready standards and assessments are all at grave risk.