



## Press Release

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### **MMTC SUPPORTS FCC'S NEXT STEPS IN MODERNIZING AMERICAN SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (December 12, 2014):** The Minority Media and Telecommunications Council (MMTC) applauds yesterday's decision by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to take another step forward in the modernization of its E-Rate program. The approved Order will close the connectivity gap that exists in schools and libraries by increasing funding to purchase broadband connections that can deliver gigabit service over the next five years.

The FCC's Order reinforces the extension of Wi-Fi service to the nation's classrooms and requires broadband providers that receive high-cost funding to offer high-speed broadband to local schools and libraries at rates reasonably comparable to similar services in urban areas. MMTC further commends the Commission for recognizing the special broadband needs of urban library systems that serve as the primary providers of free broadband access for children and adults in their communities.

"As these reforms are rolled out, we urge the Commission to prioritize the digital needs of rural and urban schools and begin reform on the Lifeline program to accelerate affordable access at home – these reforms are fundamental to achieving net equality for all Americans," stated MMTC President and CEO Kim Keenan.

Educational institutions and schools serving communities of color, especially those in remote rural and densely populated urban areas, are in dire need of high-speed broadband. Recent research commissioned by the Alliance for Excellent Education and the LEAD Council found that schools with low-income students are primarily affected by disparate access: 12.3 percent of these schools lack access to the highest speed tier or are overrepresented in the lowest speed tier when compared to wealthier schools.

With broadband powering the 21st century textbook and creating more robust learning environments that boost the workforce competitiveness of American students, closing the connectivity gap is as important as narrowing the educational disparities that exist along demographic lines. For communities of color, the ability to learn in modernized schools, classrooms, and libraries has the potential to negate the trajectory of poverty that ultimately leads to unemployment, under-employment, global disconnectedness, and digital inequity.

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#### **About MMTC:**

The Minority Media and Telecommunications Council (MMTC) is a non-partisan, national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and preserving equal opportunity and civil rights in the mass media, telecommunications and broadband industries, and closing the digital divide. MMTC is generally recognized as the nation's leading advocate for minority advancement in communications.