



MEMO

DATE: February 12, 2014

TO: Superintendents, Charter Directors, and Co-op Directors

FROM: Arkansas Department of Education

SUBJECT: \$10 Million

Over the past several months the State has been engaged in an effort to improve broadband access, capacity and affordability because doing so will help strengthen education and foster digital learning throughout Arkansas. The Governor has provided for a \$10 million supplemental appropriation for fiscal E-Rate year 2014-15. If approved this funding could be leveraged at the district level for up to an additional \$40 million in new E-Rate funding for local loop/WAN connectivity (the last mile). Specifically, this funding can be used to build or improve connectivity in local districts between school buildings (local loop/WAN) such as connections between bus barns, classrooms, and administration buildings. If the Legislature appropriates and funds the Governor's request, a process to access these funds will be put in place based on demonstrated need. Districts will use this funding to pay for contracts with private providers. This funding will not impact local contracts, nor will it be used to fund AREON or the middle mile.

To qualify for this potential new funding each district must file a Form 470 that includes a request for the local loop/WAN connections by February 26, 2014. This is a final reminder encouraging you to include building connectivity (local loop/WAN) language as noted below in your E-Rate application and to follow E-Rate procurement procedures for 2014-15. As recommended in the State Education Technologies Directors Association report, The Broadband Imperative (<http://www.setda.org/web/guest/broadbandimperative>): Districts are strongly encouraged to request connectivity that meets or exceeds the SETDA recommendations for 2014-15 of 100Kbps/per student and staff. Districts are encouraged to submit this request and even re-apply for E-Rate online if they have not included this request in their existing Form 470(s).

For questions contact Becky Rains E-Rate State Coordinator at 501.682.4003 or becky.rains@arkansas.gov.