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ALBERTO M. CARVALHO
Superintendent

September 14, 2022

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel, Chairwoman
The Honorable Brendan Carr, Commissioner
The Honorable Geoffrey Starks, Commissioner
The Honorable Nathan Simington, Commissioner

Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, D.C. 20554

**RE: Addressing the Urgent Need to Combat Cyber Security Threats at Schools by
Leveraging E-Rate and Other Federal Funds**

Dear Chairwoman Rosenworcel and Commissioners:

As Los Angeles Unified School District (Los Angeles Unified) continues to work toward full operational capacity following the September 2022 ransomware attack, I write with urgency to request the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) immediately authorize the ongoing, permanent use of existing E-Rate Program funds to bolster and maintain IT security infrastructure.

Los Angeles Unified has previously joined the Council of Great City Schools and other national organizations in urging the FCC to update the E-Rate program by including cybersecurity costs under the E-Rate Eligible Services List (ESL) to help school districts prepare for the increase in cyberattacks and enable school districts to strengthen their security needs. Currently, Los Angeles Unified and school districts nationwide are fighting increasingly sophisticated cyberattacks and their aftermath with funding meant to be used for meeting the instructional and socio-emotional needs of our students. We feel that supporting cybersecurity tools through the E-Rate program is not only appropriate under the FCC's existing goals for Universal Service, but also has reached a critical point as illustrated by the scope of the attack on Los Angeles Unified.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the severity of the digital divide for students throughout the nation. Due to the requirement to attend school remotely, students experienced a greater dependency on technology. The sudden and large-scale transition to a virtual environment brought a clear view of the vast disparities in access to information and communication technologies within underserved communities. Los Angeles Unified has made great strides in increasing access and connectivity for students and their families. Nonetheless, the ransomware attack demonstrates vulnerabilities that leave school districts nationwide susceptible to future attacks and exposes the

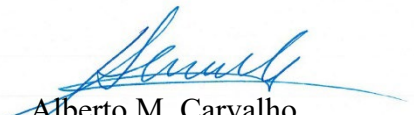
significant risk of disruption to instruction, home to school transportation, or access to nutritious meals that would be catastrophic for students and their learning.

While Los Angeles Unified seeks the immediate availability of state and federal resources to reimburse our district for the financial consequences in the aftermath of the recent ransomware attack on our district assets, it is imperative for FCC to take immediate action to enable school districts nationwide to strengthen their ability to prevent these IT infrastructure breaches in the future.

For these reasons, it is essential that the FCC immediately examine the E-Rate program for opportunities to allow for the use of E-Rate funds to bolster and maintain IT security infrastructure. The collaboration of state, federal, and local programs will help safeguard against future attacks and protect against further disruptions to classroom education. Los Angeles Unified stands ready to be part of this collaboration and solution and welcomes the opportunity to meet with you and your staff to discuss further.

If you have any questions, please contact Martha Alvarez, Director of Legislative Affairs and Governmental Relations, at martha.alvarez1@lausd.net.

Sincerely,



Alberto M. Carvalho
Superintendent of Schools

cc: The Honorable U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein
The Honorable U.S. Senator Alex Padilla
Los Angeles Congressional Delegation
The Honorable Ambassador Susan E. Rice, Domestic Policy Advisor to the President
Julie Chavez Rodriguez, Senior Advisor to the President and Director of the White House
Office of Intergovernmental Affairs
U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona
U.S. Deputy Secretary of Education Cindy Marten
Los Angeles Unified Board of Education