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**April 27, 2016**

**Dear E-rate Community,**

I have had the privilege and honor to work with you and my USAC colleagues for 18 years, 11 of those years heading the E-rate Program. Now it is time for me to move on to another phase of my life. I have decided to retire from full-time work at USAC, effective July 1, 2016. However, I will still be a part of the team and continue to work, in a reduced role, with USAC in an advisory capacity for a period of time.

Over those 11 years, the E-rate program has brought the benefits of advanced technology to millions of students and library patrons in all 50 states and territories and has provided opportunities that would never have been possible without E-rate. To be a part of that transformation has truly been a humbling experience and one I will never forget.

The E-rate program is in good hands with USAC and its very capable staff. USAC will be conducting a nationwide search starting immediately for my replacement, and I wish whomever succeeds me all the best.

Words cannot express my gratitude to all of you who have and are the ones who bring E-rate to life in every community. I have had the privilege of meeting many of you at our training sessions and talking to others of you on the phone, which has made my 11 years special.

Thanks again for all that you do to bring the benefits of the E-rate to schools and libraries across the country and territories.

Sincerely,

Mel Blackwell  
Vice President of the Schools & Libraries Program  
Universal Service Administrative Company

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