



Feb. 26, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Information:
Amy Vogt
Communications and Media
Relations Manager
703-875-0723
avogt@aasa.org

**NEW REPORT FINDS THAT
E-RATE CONNECTS COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOLS
TO 21ST CENTURY ACADEMIC AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

ARLINGTON, Va. – The E-Rate program, which helps supply schools and libraries with telecommunications services, has transformed America’s schools and libraries into modern institutions, but its mission is not yet complete, according a report released today by two education coalitions. The report, “E-Rate: 10 Years of Connecting Kids and Community,” was released by the Education and Libraries Networks Coalition (EdLiNC) and the National Coalition for Technology in Education and Training (NCTET).

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA), a member of the coalitions that released the report, applauded the success of the E-Rate program. “Archimedes once said, ‘Give me a lever long enough and I will move the world.’ E-Rate is the lever that has allowed school districts to expand the possibilities of integrating technology into education,” said AASA Executive Director Paul D. Houston. “It has broadened the horizon for America’s school children, whether they are in Detroit, Mich., or rural Montana.”

The new report indicates that E-Rate-supported connectivity has increased the overall number of public classrooms with Internet access from 14% in 1996 to 95% in 2005. After 10 years of E-Rate support, more than 90% of classrooms in rural, high-minority and low-income school districts now have Internet connections, allowing them to leverage modern communication tools to support student achievement. However, there is work yet to be done. Though schools districts across America have been connected to the Internet, E-Rate must now focus on increasing the quality of connectivity. Only through the highest levels of telecommunications access can school districts bring high-quality distance learning, research and professional development to their classrooms.

E-Rate is a ground-breaking telecommunications program created in 1997 that provides deep discounts on telecommunications, Internet access and internal networking to America's public and private schools as well as public libraries. Since its inception, the E-Rate has provided nearly \$19 billion in discounted services. Over 30,000 applications for E-Rate discounts are filed each year nationwide. School and library discounts, which range between 20% and 90%, are based upon poverty level, with the lowest income applicants receiving the deepest discounts.

A full copy of the report is available online at: www.edlinc.org and www.nctet.org. The report was commissioned by EdLiNC and NCTET and made possible through the generous support of AT&T, Best Buy, Cox Communications, Education Networks of America (ENA) and Verizon. The report was researched, written and managed by the Bernstein Strategy Group.

About AASA

The American Association of School Administrators, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders across the United States. AASA's mission is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children. AASA's major focus is standing up for public education. For more information, visit www.aasa.org.

#####