



## Vision

*MPL is an anchor institution that helps build healthy families and vibrant neighborhoods – the foundation of a strong Milwaukee.*

## Mission

*Inspiration starts here – we help people read, learn, and connect.*

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# BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

**Thursday, June 5, 2025**

**1:30 p.m.**

**Virtual via Microsoft Teams**

## WELCOME & ROLL CALL

## NEW BUSINESS

1. **Letter of Support – Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition (SHLB).** Library Director Joan Johnson will present a request to authorize MPL to sign on to a letter from SHLB to elected officials in Congress. The letter is related to the use of federal E-rate funding to provide hotspot service.

Attachment A, page 2

## CLOSING REMARKS

2. **Closing Remarks and Adjournment.**

## Trustees

Mark Sain, *President*, Michele Bria, *Vice-President*, Teresa Mercado, *Financial Secretary*, Ald. Milele Coggs, Matthew Kowalski, Michael Morgan, Felicia Saffold, Ald. Scott Spiker, Ald. Larresa Taylor, Sup. Kathleen Vincent, Venice Williams, Joan Johnson, *Secretary*, Rebecca Schweisberger, *Secretary's Assistant* (414) 286-3021

***The Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees is an informed, dedicated group of citizens who represent a cross-section of the city of Milwaukee and are committed to supporting, developing, and advancing the library for the benefit of all residents of Milwaukee and others throughout Milwaukee County, the State of Wisconsin, and beyond. In their role as advocates and advisors, they serve the library's many patrons, its staff, the common good of the community, and this critical and enduring institution.***

*Persons engaged in lobbying as defined in s. 305-43-4 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances are required to register with the City Clerk's Office License Division. More information is available at [www.milwaukee.gov/lobby](http://www.milwaukee.gov/lobby) or by calling (414) 286-2238.*

*Please be advised that members of the Milwaukee Common Council who are also members of this body will be in attendance at this meeting. In addition, Common Council members who are not members of this body may attend this meeting to participate or to gather information. A quorum of the Common Council or any of its standing committees may be present, but no formal Common Council action will be taken at this meeting.*

*PLEASE NOTE: Upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities. Make requests to the Library Director's Office at (414)286-3021, 286-2794 (FAX) or Central Library, 814 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53233 Attn: Accommodation Request.*

MPL BOARD AGENDA

06/05/2025

P. 1

May 29, 2025

Dear U.S. Members of the House of Representatives,

The organizations below urge you to oppose S.J.Res.7 and H.J.Res. 33, Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolutions that would overturn the Federal Communications Commission's [E-Rate hotspot decision](#). The FCC's Order allows schools and libraries to obtain E-Rate funding to provide wireless internet hotspot devices and service to students, school staff, and library patrons. Despite the Senate recently passing S.J.Res 7, the House of Representatives now has its opportunity to weigh in and acknowledge the harm this resolution will cause to rural and underserved communities around the country. If this resolution becomes law, not only would the FCC have to reject currently pending requests for hotspots from schools and libraries across the nation, the FCC would be barred from ever reinstituting this program. **In short, this resolution would prevent millions of students and library patrons across the country from obtaining internet access now and in the future.**

**Hotspots are a solution to closing the Homework Gap.** The demand is already proven. Approximately 20,000 schools and libraries across the country indicated their broad interest in applying for several hundred thousand hotspot devices during the first funding year of the program. And despite growing threats to the program's long-term permanence because of these proposed congressional resolutions, [more than 8,000 schools and libraries still ultimately applied](#) for program support, requesting funding for over 200,000 hotspot connections during the funding window that recently closed.<sup>1</sup>

Research studies point to the importance of anywhere, anytime learning. A 2021 Common Sense Media [report](#) estimates between 9 million and 15 million U.S. students fall into the persistent digital divide and lack adequate internet access at home. **Hotspots address this problem head-on by allowing children and adult learners to do their schoolwork online outside the classroom**, giving them access to digital textbooks, research tools, virtual tutoring, college prep courses, and other online educational programs that enhance student success. Furthermore, teachers' abilities to assign homework is severely limited by lack of off-campus access. For example, 40% of [Title I school teachers](#) say that they "do not assign work that requires internet access because they fear that doing so would exacerbate inequalities." Additionally, non-traditional students such as adult learners, individuals building skills for college and career, and English-learners also benefit from hotspots.

The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) [found](#) "there was more internet traffic outside of school hours than . . . during school hours." Connectivity after school hours is essential for learning and hotspots are a key strategy to fill that need.

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<sup>1</sup> During the E-Rate filing window, an applicant files the [FCC Form 470](#), which outlines the potential scope and description of the services it anticipates needing and initiates the competitive bidding process. Subsequently, an applicant files the [FCC Form 471](#), which lists the final contracts and services it is ultimately requesting for funding support, based on the results of competitive bidding.

In addition to the educational benefits above, hotspots provide a number of other benefits to the community. For instance, hotspots:

- allow elderly people and those in rural communities to engage in remote telehealth,
- allow veterans to obtain financial services and medical support,
- allow jobseekers and aspiring entrepreneurs to practice digital skills, obtain jobs, and start their own businesses, and
- allow access to emergency life-saving services, especially during natural disasters.

**Hotspots promote safe, filtered access for minors in accordance with federal law.** Under the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), schools and libraries must adopt an internet safety policy to ensure that hotspots block access to material deemed "harmful to minors". In fact, filtering technologies are built into the hotspot solution, and most schools go further than what CIPA requires to block access to all non-educational websites.

- For example, Jill Hobson, chief technology officer at Gainesville City Schools (GA), said on a [recent webinar](#): "These devices that go home are not being used by family members to stream a television show or a movie. They're not being used for online gaming. That's not possible. Those kinds of things are blocked from use."

If the FCC's program is overturned, school children will seek other ways to access the internet that do not have these filtering protections.

**Lending out hotspots is a proven technology.** Nearly half (46.9%) of [public libraries now offer Wi-Fi hotspots for checkout](#), a 14.6% increase since 2020, highlighting continued demand. Since at least 2015, libraries and schools have developed lending practices that reduce theft and loss, and promote fair circulation policies. For instance:

- The Nelson Public Library in rural Princeton, Texas, provided a hotspot to a college student who tore her ACL and meniscus. Due to her injury she had to stay home, but there was no internet at her home. She was able to do schoolwork because of the hotspot that the library provided. Hotspots fill a distinct and demonstrated educational need for many communities.
- Schools in Oakland, California [connected 98%](#) of their student population through the distribution of 11,500 Wi-Fi hotspots and connected devices.

**The hotspot program is not a partisan program.** In fact, schools and libraries in 46 of the 50 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico, have submitted hotspot applications in the current E-rate application window.

**The FCC's hotspot program is well-designed and fiscally responsible.** The FCC set a three-year cap on the amount of funding available to each school and library. Based on current

applications, the program will cost about \$200 million per year, which can be accommodated within the current E-Rate funding cap. Schools and libraries must monitor usage to make sure that the hotspots are actually used and not warehoused. The program requires schools and libraries to pay a portion of the cost based on the FCC's traditional E-Rate matrix. Applicants are also subject to audits and enforcement measures to ensure they comply with the FCC's rules.

**The FCC's decision is authorized by the statutory language in the Communications Act.** The statute does not limit support to classrooms. In fact, E-Rate has supported internet access in administrative offices, parking lots, and library bookmobiles for several years, even though they are not "classrooms." Several provisions in [Section 254](#) of the Communications Act authorize the FCC to provide E-Rate funding for learning off-campus, including sections 254(b)(6), 254(c)(1), 254(c)(3), 254(h)(1)(B) and 254(h)(2)(A).

**The digital divide continues to be a significant problem that hotspots can address.** According to [Pew](#), 21% of households still do not subscribe to broadband internet service at home, largely because it is too expensive. Now that the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) have both expired, the E-Rate hotspot lending program is an important and fiscally prudent tool to address the Homework Gap and bring affordable wireless internet to millions of students and families who need help.

**We suggest that the FCC, under the leadership of Chairman Carr, can address the future of the E-Rate hotspot lending program at a later date.** Deferring to the FCC will allow time for more public discussion and not harm the approximately 8,000 schools and libraries nationwide that have already submitted hotspot applications in the current E-Rate funding year, along with the countless other schools and libraries that may one day seek this crucial funding.

**Please vote NO on S.J. Res.7 and H.J.Res.33.**

## **National Organizations**

AASA, The School Superintendents Association  
AI for Education  
All4Ed  
American Federation of School Administrators (AFSA)  
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)  
American Library Association  
American Psychological Association  
Association for Career and Technical Education  
Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESAs)  
Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS)  
Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)  
Benton Institute for Broadband & Society  
BrainStorm Events, Inc.  
Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA)  
Common Sense Media

Consortium of State School Boards Associations (COSSBA)  
CoSN - The Consortium for School Networking  
Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE)  
Council of Chief State School Officers  
Council of the Great City Schools  
EdTrust  
Family Centered Treatment Foundation  
Gigabit Libraries Network  
National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT)  
National Association of Counties (NACo)  
National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)  
National Association of Federally Impacted Schools (NAFIS)  
National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)  
National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)  
National Catholic Educational Association  
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)  
National Digital Inclusion Alliance  
National Education Association (NEA)  
National PTA  
National Rural Education Association (NREA)  
National School Boards Association (NSBA)  
National Science Teaching Association (NSTA)  
Open Technology Institute at New America  
Project Evident  
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)  
Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition (SHLB)  
Software & Information Industry Association  
State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA)

## **State Organizations**

Arizona School Administrators, Inc.  
Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators  
California IT in Education (CITE)  
Coalition of Oregon School Administrators  
Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB)  
Connecticut Association of Boards of Education  
Connecticut Educational Technology Leaders (CTETL)  
Cooperative Council of Oklahoma School Administration  
Delaware Association of School Administrators (DASA)  
EdTech Leaders Alliance (Ohio CoSN)  
Georgia Leaders of Educational Technology (GLET)  
Georgia School Superintendents Association  
Indiana CTO Council (CoSN State Chapter)  
Kentucky Association of School Administrators  
Link Oregon  
Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents

Massachusetts Educational Technology Administrators Association (METAA)  
Michigan Association of Superintendents & Administrators  
Minnesota Association of School Administrators  
Missouri Association of School Administrators (MASA)  
Missouri Educational Technology Leaders (METL)  
Montana Educational Technologists Association (META)  
Nebraska Council of School Administrators  
Nevada Association of School Superintendents  
New Mexico School Boards Association (NMSBA)  
New York State Association for Computers and Technologies in Education (NYSCATE)  
New York State Council of School Superintendents  
New York State School Boards Association  
North Carolina Association of School Administrators  
North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders  
Oregon School Boards Association  
Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators  
School Administrators of Iowa  
Tennessee Educational Technology Association  
The Seattle Public Library  
Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA)  
Wisconsin Association of School District Administrators  
Wisconsin Educational Technology Leaders (WETL)  
Vermont Information Technology Association for the Advancement of Learning (VITA-Learn)  
Virginia Society for Technology in Education