



NAVAJO COUNTY

Superintendent of Schools

"Creating an Enriched Educational Environment"

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Chairman Ajit Pai
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW,
Washington, DC 20554
October 11, 2017

Dear Chairman Pai,

I am writing today in response to the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Public Notice which, among other things, considers changes to the E-Rate program. Before delving into my response to the proposed changes, I want to thank the FCC for your continued support for the E-Rate program and for the critical programmatic and policy changes the commission adopted in 2014. The E-Rate program provides critical discounts to assist schools in Navajo County Arizona to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.

The Navajo County Superintendent of Schools office has just partnered with 18 other rural entities including libraries to form a consortium. The function is to provide increased quality service for our schools and libraries by using E-Rate. Many of our districts and libraries are just NOW getting quality broadband, this is due to E-Rate. Just NOW we can consider utilizing Category 2 E-Rate for internal functions. How can you use Wi-Fi if you are barely just no longer using dial up?

The E-Rate program is a program succeeding in its mission. As the FCC moves forward with this public notice, it is prudent to remain focused on the fact that E-Rate is a program that works. Any changes to the E-Rate program should be focused on expanding a successful program that has yet to reach its full potential and ensuring the FCC remains a good steward of the changes adopted 2014, allowing those changes to progress and play out as intended.

E-Rate played a critical role in the rapid and significant expansion of connectivity in schools, and the 2014 modernization was a much needed update to ensure more schools and libraries are connected to broadband. The E-Rate's investment in Category 2 Wi-Fi and internal connections funding is extremely valuable and could not be replaced by school, district or state funds.

- a. Now that we are getting a stronger connection and increased stability to our infrastructure we can plan stronger internal systems. The demands and possibilities for our students and communities are limitless but we first needed to get the groundwork laid before being able to use Category 2 items.

In closing, I reiterate my office continued, strong support for and reliance upon the E-Rate program for being able to access and afford the high-speed connectivity that is so central to our students' learning. Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,
Jalyn Gerlich

Navajo County Superintendent of Schools