



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

October 16, 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 (like mine) to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.

We are a small Rural School District in Southeastern Alabama that is dependent on E-Rate funding to sustain Internet connectivity to and inside our schools and classrooms. Our poverty level is high and we use these E-Rate dollars to sustain daily classes being instructed and received over the internet. We also have Wireless in classrooms provided by E-Rate that allows Students the opportunity to participate in online testing as well as daily activities. Most of our Students have or will have taken Dual Enrollment College classes that help support the need for furthering their Education as well as giving them the opportunity to receive college credits before entering a 2 or 4 year University.

E-Rate funds also help us to sustain online Professional Development through the Internet and on-site Instruction. Our Teachers receive credits needed for their Teaching Certificates through these trainings.

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.

We have used most of our E-Rate Category 2 allotment for upgrading our Internal Connections, mostly core Switches that would not have been possible without E-Rate help. We have also upgraded our Wi-Fi at each of our 5 schools to allow for the daily use of Internet for Teachers and Students. This allows all parties involved in the Educational process to access the Internet and provide quality instruction in the Classrooms and Libraries. Doing so, we are able to give Students and Teachers the capability to reach well beyond the Classrooms and experience other avenues of Instruction to further each Student's Education here in Henry County.

In closing, I reiterate my district's 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geoff Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Geoff" and last name "Jones" clearly distinguishable.

Geoff Jones  
System Technology Coordinator  
Central Office Supervisor  
E-Rate System Coordinator  
Data Collections Coordinator  
System Network Administrator

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Henry County Board of Education

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