



SALISBURY TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

Administration Building

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Salisbury...Inspire, Think, Learn, Grow...Together!

Superintendent

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

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.

Salisbury Township School District is a suburban district located in Allentown, PA. With an identified poverty rate of approximately 33%, federal funds make up approximately 2% of our operating budget. Federal funds include Title programs, IDEA and E-Rate. In previous years, E-Rate funding has assisted us in supplementing local funds to provide high-speed internet access, VOIP phone service and inter-district building connectivity utilized by all students and staff in a 1:1 learning environment.

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 in 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.

For the 2017-18 school year, Salisbury Township School District has used 75% of its allotment for secondary schools. This funding has provided the District with the latest in WiFi technology to support the learning in a 1:1 environment. The District plans to utilize the elementary allotment in the 2018-19 school year to provide the same benefits to elementary students and staff. Also worth noting, the District has never been eligible for Category 2 E-Rate funding. The 2014 modernization of E-Rate has provided Salisbury Township School District with the opportunity to receive Category 2 funding for the first time. The impact of this change helps the District provide the best 21st century learning opportunities for children.

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,

Randy M. Ziegenfuss, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools



THE MORNING CALL

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