Hands-off E-Rate Category 2 funds!.

Our nation’s Schools and library budgets have absorbed more than $ 500,000,000 in support that was previously provided by the E-Rate program.  Schools and libraries still use telephone service, probably for the same reason the Congress and the FCC still have telephone services in their offices.  The loss of telephone support has put even more pressure on our budgets.  Many times in the past these reimbursements were a critical component of required network infrastructure support.  The FCC has to realize that eligible and in-eligible local shares of these must also be planned and budgeted.  Carrying the full burden of telephone costs has reduced the Category 2 buying power of applicants.

When the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) modernized this program in 2014, it focused funding on broadband internet service (Category 1) and Wi-Fi and internal connections (Category 2). For Category 2, E-Rate provides schools with a formula distribution of $150 per pupil that is supposed to last schools five years and that schools have five years to use.

The current lack of Category 2 funding makes it difficult to even use these small “C-2” school balances in an effective programmatic manner.  Technology Planning was eliminated for the ERate program requirements, but the process is more important than ever.

Funding reductions have adversely impacted the mission for these organizations, since equipment, materials and supporting services are always reduced first in the budget process, then personnel are reduced.

We are re-opening two more building on a very constrained budget and want to make certain that these additional classrooms may serve our teachers and students instructional requirements.  Since these building are in process of opening they will only be considered as “NIFs” Non-instructional Facilities and not eligible for Category 2 funding.

We have always sought to live within our limited budgets.   We have always exhibited care and planning in the use of all the available local, state, federal and private funding sources.

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.

The Providence Public School District already used some of its E-Rate Category 2 allotment in conjunction with Local, PBA and RIDE WCI, PBA and Local for the upgrading ten (10) of our school building networks.

The connectivity provided by these Category 2 funds has improved our school district's educational experience in the following ways through communication and cooperation among students, teachers, parents and staff.  All can contribute to the educational process.

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