



Dr. John E. Pallone, J.D.
Superintendent

Jon W. Banko, M.Ed.
Assistant Superintendent

Mr. Jeffrey McVey
Director of Administrative Services

Mrs. Audrey Sleigh
Board Secretary

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

October 23, 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. NKASD is an urban-suburban school district in Southwestern Pennsylvania. As a Community Eligibility Program participant the District counts on E-Rate dollars for internet access, fiber-optic transport lines, and category 2 funds to replace WAP's and network edge switches. Our network is extensively used for instruction.

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.

The NKASD has used the majority of its E-Rate Category 2 allotment for the 2017-18 funding year to replace/upgrade wireless access points in all of its buildings and replace/upgrade edge switches in all buildings. With the ever-increasing demand on wireless networks and declining funding available to districts like ours, Category 2 funds are critical for providing our students access to the online presence required of providing a 21st Century Educational environment.

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,

Jon Banko, M.Ed.
Assistant Superintendent