



Talladega County Schools

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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.

Talladega County Schools is a high poverty school system with over 8000 students located in rural Alabama. E-Rate funding has been critical to our school system and has enabled Talladega County Schools to build and maintain a robust network infrastructure affording our students access to educational resources on par with the most well-funded school systems in Alabama.

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 will provide an engaging, rigorous curriculum empowering
all students to be college and career ready.*

The Talladega County School System utilized almost all of the E-Rate Category 2 allotment in its first year of availability to modernize our existing network and thus increase connectivity for our students. Coupled with a robust one-to-one initiative and continuous professional development the connectivity provided by the E-Rate Category 2 allotment has improved the educational experience for our students by providing access to resources that would have once been unimaginable in a small rural school system.

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 "Randy F. Roberts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a checkmark at the end.

Randy F. Roberts

E-Rate Coordinator Talladega County Schools