



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.

Madison County Schools is one of the largest rural districts in Kentucky, with around 11,500 students spread across 18 different schools. The E-rate program is a vital part of our strategy in keeping those schools connected with each other and the internet using fast, reliable fiber connections, as well as ensuring that there is reliable wireless access in each classroom. Having quick, dependable internet access available to every square inch of Madison County Schools has empowered teachers to reach students and keep them more engaged in ways not possible otherwise, and it shows in both test scores and increasing rates for college and career readiness.

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.

Madison County Schools has utilized the availability of Category 2 funds the past several years to update both our core network infrastructure as well as worked to expand our wireless network coverage to every classroom, both very expensive endeavors that would not have been possible without those Category 2 funds. These projects were much needed, as the use of wireless devices in the classroom is exploding in ways that were quickly overwhelming our existing infrastructure. Now it's no problem to have a class of students all working together in their classroom, collaborating digitally on individual tablets or laptops, both with their peers in that classroom, or even with students in other schools throughout the district.

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,

Jacob Cecil
CIO
Madison County Schools