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

October 22, 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.

Pittsford Central School District is located in western New York State and is a suburban district with just under 6,000 students. Pittsford, compared to NYS average is considered a slightly above average wealth district with high academic achievement and a virtually stable enrollment. This means the District receives less than 16% of its budget in State Aid and 77% of the budget is supported by the local taxpayer. This dynamic makes the NYS Property Tax Cap a larger hurdle for Pittsford than for lower wealth districts. Over the last few years, like most districts in New York state, Pittsford has had to make some economic decisions that ultimately impacted instructional practices due to the tax cap. E-rate has helped us alleviate some of the impact.

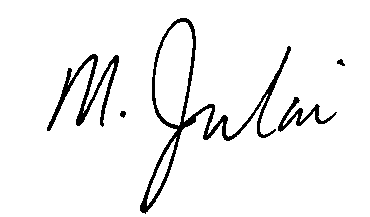
The E-Rate program is a program succeeding in its mission. As the FCC moves forward with this public notice, it is prudent to remain focused on the fact that E-Rate is a program that works. Any changes to the E-Rate program should be focused on expanding a successful program that has yet to reach its 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 is 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.

In the past year, the district has planned to use the E-rate Category 2 funding to offset the cost of replacement switches from our core switch in our network closet to the data closets in each of our 11 buildings. The switches that we currently have are nearing end of life and are slowly dying. The e-rate funding allows for us to replace the remaining switches in each closet to ensure a robust and stable network. In addition, these switches will allow for Power over Ethernet for us to install additional access points for wireless connectivity. This will ensure our district will be better prepared for computer based testing

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,

  
Melissa Julian