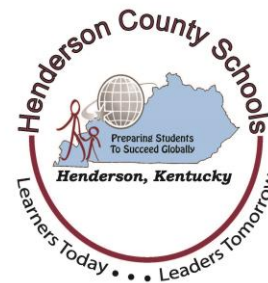


Henderson County Schools

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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.

We have utilized the E-rate program to provide our students with an extremely reliable, high speed network. Without the support of the E-rate program, it would be extremely difficult for us to maintain basic services, let alone plan for major infrastructure refresh, which we are currently in the process of. Our school district is currently just over 62% free or reduced lunch. Access to these resources are imperative for our students and teachers. Without this access, teachers would be restricted and student learning would not be all that it is today.

Henderson County Schools has taken full advantage of the support that the E-rate program is designed and intended to provide. It takes careful planning and budgetary requests on behalf of local school district leadership teams to ensure our local part of the financial costs can be met for particular projects. For instance, the majority of our Category 2 budget was untouched for 2 years. The planning process, budgetary requests, and "saving up" our 20% portion of the current refresh project costs has taken these past 2 years to accomplish.

How has Henderson Co. Schools benefited from the E-rate program in the past 3 years?

FY15 - \$242,792.02 (Included a \$62,000 refresh of our oldest wireless access points in 7 schools)

FY16 - \$161,284.70

FY17 – To date approved funding requests = \$920,730.05 (Includes a district wide Category 2 refresh of internal connections)

We are currently in the process of completely refreshing our entire network, which is something that we must plan to do every 5-7 years in order to stay current with the rapid pace of advancement in

technology. Without the Category 2 support that we have received for FY17, this project would not be possible.

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 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,

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