

# Washington County Board of Education

Received & Inspected

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FCC Mailroom

Ronald A. Dykes  
Director of Schools



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June 14, 2016

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

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RE: Request for Review and/or Waiver by Sweetwater City Schools et al. of Funding Decisions by the Universal Service Administrative Company, Docket No. 02-6

Dear Ms. Dortch:

As Director of the Washington County Department of Education, I write to address the consequences to my students of the process by which E-rate funding has been denied to my district. My district is a member of the Sweetwater Consortium, which was denied funding by USAC. We request immediate action by the Commission to provide the funding to which our district is entitled under the rules of the E-rate program. We know that you appreciate that budgets are always tight, and we hope that you know how much we appreciate the E-rate program and how much it has improved the teaching and learning experience.

Since 2013, our district has been purchasing services from ENA, which has consistently proven the validity of the scoring process by providing our schools continuous, reliable, cost-effective services. If funding is denied by the Commission, we want you to appreciate the significant harm that decision will cause. While our broadband connectivity is now a critical element of the teaching and learning experiences, it competes for funding with salaries for our teachers, capital improvements for our aging infrastructure and other programs. Every day that passes without a final resolution creates increasing pressure on our budget.

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Already in our district, we have made significant cuts to our budgets. For example, new high school mathematics textbooks, additional positions in both technology and maintenance departments, and SMART technology in lower grades. We cannot bear additional loss of funds. Because our budgeting counted on E-rate reimbursement, we have accrued over the past three years a debt to ENA in the amount of nearly \$1 million. If we are required to pay from school funds the amount owed to ENA, we will have to:

- Coordinated school health program that provides building level school clinics.
- Decrease individualized blended learning implementation.
- Reduce teaching staff by six positions.
- Reduce future technology expenditures by 30%.

As you can readily see, the unexpected loss of funding as a result of a decision made three years after the procurement will be devastating to our children. As the damage suffered by a student in one year reverberates in future years, our students will suffer lasting harm. This procurement has fully achieved the Commission's goals for this program; we ask that you act quickly to avoid the dramatic damage that will result if the program is not funded. Even if the Commission acts to correct USAC's mistake six months or a year from now, we cannot replace the educational services that will be eliminated in the meantime – that time for that child is lost forever.

Accordingly, we ask that the Commission act immediately to grant our appeal and direct USAC to provide funding to our district. Please let me know if I can provide additional information.

Very Truly Yours,



Ronald A. Dykes  
Director of Schools