

July 17, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

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

Re: **Ex Parte Submission**

***Modernizing the E-rate Program for Schools and Libraries -- WC Docket No. 13-184
Schools and Libraries Universal Service Support Mechanism -- CC Docket No. 02-6***

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On July 17, 2020, representatives of Funds For Learning, LLC, met via video conference with FCC staff to discuss the results of a national survey of E-rate applicants that was conducted in June 2020.

We met with the following individuals from the Wireline Competition Bureau (WCB): Sue McNeil, WCB Special Counsel; Gabriella Gross, Telecommunications Access Policy Division (TAPD) Deputy Division Chief; James Bachtell, TAPD Assistant Division Chief; Stephanie Minnock, TAPD Assistant Division Chief; Katherine Dumouchel, TAPD Special Counsel; and WCB Attorney Advisors Mark Nadel, Molly O'Coner, Carol Pomponio, and Greg Vadas.

The Funds For Learning (FFL) representatives in attendance were Cathy Cruzan, President, and John Harrington, CEO. We shared the attached presentation "2020 E-rate Trends Analysis Based on National Survey of E-rate Applicants (2016 to 2020)."

We explained that the survey results are an accurate representation of the overall experience, thoughts and opinions of E-rate applicants nationwide. There were 2,138 survey respondents, which equates to a sample size of 9.9% of all FY2020 E-rate applicants. Responses were received from every type of applicant, and from every state and territory, representing both rural and urban zones, in similar proportion to the overall population of E-rate applicants.

We shared the following observations based on the survey responses, referencing the percentage of applicants who agreed with each statement.

Measuring Success

- E-rate funding is vital to Internet access in schools and libraries (95%)
- Because of the E-rate program:
 - Schools and libraries have faster Internet connections (90%)
 - More students and library patrons are connected to the Internet (89%)
- Schools and libraries trust and depend on the E-rate program more than ever (89%)
- E-rate funding ensures sufficient access to broadband for schools and libraries (91%)
- The application process promotes cost-effective purchases (84%)
- The bidding requirements result in lower prices (72%)
- The application process is getting easier and faster (55%)

Remote Off-campus Internet

- Regarding off-campus Internet access and remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - Insufficient home Internet access is a significant issue in 90% of communities
 - 93% of schools and libraries would share their Internet access off-campus at no additional cost to the E-rate program if the FCC permitted it
 - 84% have received little or no emergency financial support for Remote Learning
 - 82% agree the E-rate program is the best solution to support Remote Learning
 - 74% agree that off-campus network security is a serious concern

Eligible Services

- Most schools and libraries will increase their Internet bandwidth by at least 50% over the next three years, with an average annual increase of 17% reported by respondents
- 66% of applicants need dual Internet connections for reliable connectivity and would request it if the FCC allowed
- 28% of applicants report lower prices because of the option to purchase off-campus “self-provisioned” networks
- 98% of applicants describe Wi-Fi as extremely or very important
- 79% of applicants will upgrade their Wi-Fi within three years
- 51% of applicants strongly agree that they will apply for Category Two discounts in 2021
- The eligible services list should be updated to include: cybersecurity (98%); Dual Internet (88%); VoIP infrastructure (88%); Telephone service (75%); and school bus Wi-Fi (73%).

USAC and the EPC Portal

- 83% of applicants are very or somewhat satisfied with USAC
- 30% of applicants believes USAC cares a great deal or a lot about them
- The EPC portal meets applicant needs extremely well or very well (56%)
- Overall, the EPC portal is easy to use (47%)

Funds For Learning, LLC
Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
July 17, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ John D. Harrington

John D. Harrington

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Attachment: 2020 E-rate Trends Analysis

cc: Sue McNeil
Ryan Palmer
Gabriella Gross