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Summary: Initial comments of the VSCCS

Contributed by: Kenneth Pohl <pohl@pop.erols.com>

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 80 18:22:38 -0800

This article relates to affordability of phone lines. It stressed "the goal should be to encourage competition to meet or exceed existing service standards." It is believed that competition will lower price and increase standards. We believe that lower prices and better service will encourage schools to get more lines in order to have greater access to the public both in and out.

A major part of consideration to determine if rates are affordable can be similar to the VSCC's residential penetration rates. The commission's October 18, 1994 order directed the alternative regulatory plan companies to expand their offering to food stamp recipients. Based on rulings similar to this the FCC should rely on existing identifiers instead of pursuing or inventing new methods to define and identify them.

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Article Review Based on Comments of the Black Community Crusade for Children (BCCC)

Contributed by: Ken Pohl <pohl@pop.erols.com> (Pohl and Vanliere)

Date: Sun, 08 Sep 96 22:53:15 -0700

Being a teacher in a low income school, Lake Taylor HS in Norfolk, VA, and a product of a high income school, F W Cox HS in Virginia Beach, VA, I have had the opportunity to see both sides of the coin. The article "Comments of the Black Community Crusade for Children (BCCC)" stresses the fact that all students, black or white, should have the same chance to gain access to the information superhighway.

This means that there may be some uneven spending across the board, but this is only to bring the deprived schools into the nineties and out of the seventies. All schools need phone line access and possibly modems, however some schools already have the computers to support the hardware others need the computers as well as the hardware.

There needs to be some determination as to which schools need what. Possibly a survey sent to all schools for their inventory. Space for computers must also be a consideration in the expenditure. Possibly even staff positions to hold night labs for the students, and possibly parents, use.

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Summary:

Articles/Comments of the AFT

Contributed by: Kenneth Pohl (Pohl and Vanliere) <pohl@pop.erols.com>

Date: Fri Sep 13 19:30:28 1996

The American Federation of Teachers commented on the need to have a specific formula for determining what school districts would fall under the category of having a majority of their children living in poverty. They recommended the use of a formula very similar or identical to that of determining Title I funds. We concur with that proposal as this formula is known state and nationwide.

They also stated that revitalizing urban communities will depend on increased business development. "Decisions about where business will locate will often depend on the availability of quality education in the communities being considered." Therefore, it is extremely important that poor districts be given an equal opportunity to develop their future work force.

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Summary:

Comments Related to the Council of Great City Schools

Contributed by: Kenneth Pohl (Pohl and Vanliere) <pohl@pop.erols.com>

Date: Sun, 27 Apr 80 18:22:17 -0700

Since we teach in an urban school we were very interested in the comments that were made by the Council. We are in total agreement with their findings.

1. "High poverty urban/central city area" is as important as concerning ourselves with high cost areas.
2. We were also concerned with the aspect as to where the services would be placed, believing also that classroom access is imperative.
3. Rates should be proportional to the amount that a school system is able to pay.

In conclusion, we felt that the Council of the Great City Schools made many valuable points and that they should be taken into consideration.

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Regarding: Comments by Virginia State Corporation Commission Staff

Contributed by: Pohl and Vanliere <vanliere@erols.com>

Date: Sun, 04 May 1980 15:17:18 -0700

We were very interested in the comments by the VSCC. The comment that the VSCC require new entrants to comply with the service quality criteria that has been stated many years ago and to base the quality measurements on existing state standards is acceptable as far as it goes. Who is to determine if the state standards are where they should be for consumer needs?

There was another comment made concerning competition between service providers. Maintaining minimum standards is not acceptable. We believe that all service should be at the least above average. There isn't any school, library, or organization in the country today that should have to accept service that is just above minimal. We also believe that service terms should be listed in a generic form so that the layperson will understand the differences in service provided even if it is not in the language that they are used to.

We do agree with the comment made that the FCC should use existing identifiers for discount rate services. There is no need to re-invent the wheel. There does seem to be a need however to update the method in which eligible people are notified that they are entitled to such rates.

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Response to the AFT's Article

Contributed by: Ken Pohl (and Melanie Van Liere) <pohl@pop.erols.com>

Date: Sun, 22 Sep 96 21:14:16 -0700

We are in total agreement with this article. They say funding should first go to low income schools. The district should at least have a 15 percent poverty level and the schools should qualify for title I funds as well. This is to bring these schools and districts into the present before they try to step into the future.

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Summary: WavePhore, Inc.

Contributed by: Christine Rademan <cradema@libby.litchpkeld.k12.az.us>

Date: Wed, 11 Sep 1996 17:44:16 +0000

[Comments].

WavePhore is a communications R & D company founded in 1990. Its technologies span the range of point-to-multipoint data broadcasting: FM, television (VBI) data systems. Its primary innovation is the TVTI/4 datacasting system for TV broadcasters.

The three part TVTI/4 system consists of a hardware-based data encoder installed at the TV broadcast station. The encoder transmits digital data "imbedded" between the normal aural and visual broadcast signals reliably at 300 kbps.

Secondly, the data is recovered by a low cost decoder unit designed to physically connect with all existing computer systems, regardless of age or manufacturer.

The third part is the WavePhore Network using current industry/gov't standard access methods & protocols. WavePhore has been operating its TVTI/4 system for over two years in AZ, and has also operated in GA, OK, and FL. A WavePhore system is currently used for the AZ State University ITFS based distance learning program. It allows students at separate satellite campuses real-time participation in lectures and activities, and also transmits printed class lecture notes and student handouts. WavePhore also suggests possible uses for its technologies in health care, education, libraries, fire departments, and in meeting the needs of the blind.

WavePhore suggests that the definitions of universal service and support need to be very broad, and should clear barriers to the use of new technology. WavePhore believes that the law should support both wireline and wireless technologies; the model implemented should be competitively and technologically neutral.

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Summary: EDLINC Comments

Contributed by: Christine Rademan <cradema@libby.litchpkeld.k12.az.us>

Date: Sun, 22 Sep 1996 16:39:46 +0000

The "Joint Comments of Education and Library Network Coalition" was written by a coalition of the National School Boards Association (NSBA) representing 95,000 school board members serving 40 million public school students, the American Library Association (ALA) representing 57,000 library professionals, the National Education Association representing 2.2 million educators, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) serving all 50 states, five extra-jurisdictions, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Schools and 22 other concerned organizations.

The Coalition proposes an implementation plan for universal service which is based on setting "just, reasonable and affordable" rates. The Coalition argues for discounted education/library rates for all technologies available anywhere in the nation.

The Coalition strongly opposes any form of block grant, voucher, or billing credit. It also opposes technology plans as obstacles to implementation of universal service.

The Coalition bases its arguments on a call for "functionalities" rather than defined technologies. "We wish to emphasize that schools and libraries do not need particular technologies or technical solutions. What they need is the ability to perform certain functions; the best approach will depend on what is practical and cost-effective in a given situation. For this reason, the Commission [FCC] should include a full range of service options up to and including the highest level..." (pg.9)

It proposes bidding by providers, and purchase of low-bid services as methods to gradually increase the affordability of universal service.

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Summary: EDLINC Reply Comments

Contributed by: Christine Rademan <cradema@libby.litchpkeld.k12.az.us>

Date: Sun, 22 Sep 1996 17:20:35 +0000

In this reply to comments, the Coalition rebuts comments of parties calling for further study. It asks the Joint Board to make initial recommendations so that introduction of services can begin as soon as possible.

The Coalition also cautions against proposals which would operate with the premise that universal service is a specific network model which would be apportioned to schools through a system similar to block grants or vouchers.

The Coalition argues that "bona fide" means good faith; it opposes plans which use a new bureaucracy to qualify applications.

It reiterates features of its proposed plan: Open bidding for the right to serve a particular school or library district; permitting aggregation on the broadest basis; making all services available at discounted rates; ease of administration since existing purchasing methods already safeguard school and library purchases; ease of administration since applying discounted rates to all existing technologies eliminates the need to qualify recipients of the funds.

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Summary: EDLINC Further Comments

Contributed by: Christine Rademan <cradema@libby.litchpkeld.k12.az.us>

Date: Sun, 22 Sep 1996 18:09:05 +0000

The Coalition answers questions and elaborates on its plan for the implementation of universal service.

It believes that the fairest way to ensure affordable rates for schools and libraries is to establish a national competitive benchmark rate as the basis for discounted price; assuring all users of a competitive rate, even where no competition exists.

The Coalition argues that all services or functionalities should be eligible for discounts. It argues that Section 254(h) in conjunction with Section 254(c)(3) make internal connections to classrooms eligible for universal service support.

It supports competitive bids from service providers, discounted rates that continue to support longterm use of telecommunications services, community consortia, and narrow construction of the resale prohibition to encourage growth of new networks and aggregation of purchasing power.

It argues that existing legislation regulating procurement procedures provide enough protection against misuse of funds, so no further administrative bureaucracy needs to be developed.

It proposes a method of calculating discounts varying from 30%-70%.

It opposes industry efforts to develop a final model as likely to cause unnecessary delay. "We believe that the industry has an incentive to delay the process, both to reduce any perceived long-term harm to the industry arising out of the new universal service requirements, and to give it time to develop a regulatory structure that favors the industry's interests." (Further Comments 8-2-96 p.18)

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Summary:
**Comments Of The National Black Caucus
Of State Legislators:
Telecommunications & Energy Committee
Honorable Albert Vann, Chairman**

Contributed by: Carl Redwood <redwood@hillhouse.ckp.edu>

Date: Thu, 01 Sep 1996 22:53:20 -0700

My summary

Comments from NBCSL stressed the need to support access to technology for parts of urban areas that are underserved by market driven service provision. They point out that all urban areas are not equal and that within urban areas neighborhoods do not currently have equal access. They also call for a needs based formula to measure telecommunications penetration as a benchmark for determining which communities will receive support. My last observation is their reference to the New York State Education Departments inclusion of cultural and community based organizations in addition to schools and libraries as places for public access.

Some excerpts...

"It is well known that Manhattan has very little broadband infrastructure above 59th st., however, under the Act's definition, above 59th st. would not be considered a high cost area. In my own district, Brooklyn's Bedford Stuyvasant, until last year the central office switches had not been upgraded since 1963. It would be an unfortunate irony if wealthy distant communities were subsidized and low income residents in urban communities were neglected."

"The issue of access for the urban disadvantaged and minorities has been a longstanding and inadequately addressed aspect of the social policy discussions around telecommunications. The fact that the issue of access for low income persons had to be added in conference is a cause for concern to NBCSL."

"In a study conducted by the Office of Telecommunications and Energy in New York City, my own district in Bedford Stuyvasant had 28% of the residences without telephone service."

" Market-driven competition will not bring new telecommunications services to everyone in the state at the same time. This can adversely affect the citizens and communities left behind. . . New York's policies to foster competition must reflect a continuing commitment to basic universal service, including an expanding definition of such service as new services become essential to participation in the social and economic mainstream. Connecting to the Future--The Report of the New York State Telecommunications Exchange--December, 1993 pg. 22"

"In New York State, the State Education Department has proposed the Omnibus Technology in Education Act of 1996.[16] The bill provides for a comprehensive plan to upgrade the infrastructure and networking capability for K-12 schools, Higher Education and Libraries. It also goes a step further by including cultural and community service organizations as part of eligible recipients. Most importantly, it calls for a redirection of human resource funds toward training teachers to maximize instruction and learning in an interactive content environment. It is an example of a state utilizing its traditional spending capability, whether bonding authority or redirecting traditional spending in human resource allocation or aggregating current information technology spending for more modern use and cost savings.

A needs based Federal universal service plan can compliment a comprehensive state initiative by insuring that support is given to public institutions who are the last resort for access opportunities in advanced telecommunications services, and/or serve as the initial point of presence for technologically neutral broadband infrastructure. This complimentary profile can also stimulate regulatory solutions on the state level with regards to universal service. The needs based formula assures that there is indeed a private market concept for business, residential and public sector use of advanced telecommunications use and that both Federal and State universal service formulas will truly be targeted to insure societal interconnectivity."

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Summary: Oakland Unified School District

Contributed by: Dr. Eugene Stovall <estovall@ousd.k12.ca.us>

Date: Thu, 12 Sep 96

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT: SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

Dr. Eugene Stovall
MIS Department
Oakland Unified School District

The Oakland Unified School District submitted three sets of comments on the FCC's NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING AND ORDER ESTABLISHING THE JOINT BOARD on the matter of Universal Service. In our March 8, 1996 comments, we established the basis for school discounts and the "principle of total school service". In our reply comments of April 29, 1996 we addressed the specific issue of Subscriber Line Charges (SLCs), Common Carrier Line Charges (CCLs) and the proposed cost reallocations for maintaining the network from the vendors to the end users. Our further comments submitted July 31, 1996, recommended a competitive methodology for providing discounts to the schools which would use the universal fund to incent and facilitate rather than fund educational discounts.

The one ideal which directed all three comments was that Congress intended that the Telecommunication Act of 1996 rapidly transform the telecommunications industry from a regulated monopoly controlled by a few large vendors to a competitive marketplace open to all. In signing the Telecommunications Act of 1996, President Clinton said:

"Today our world is being remade yet again by an information revolution, changing the way we work, the way we live, the way we relate to each other. Already the revolution is so profound that it is changing the dominant economic model of this age....

"But this revolution has been held back by outdated laws, designed for a time when there was one phone company, three TV networks, [and] no such thing as a computer. Today, with the stroke of a pen, our laws will catch up with our future.

We will help to create an open marketplace where competition and innovation can move as quick as light.

COMMENTS OF MARCH 8, 1996:

The District believes that the 1996 Telecommunications Act should provide discounts on all universal service utilized by schools defined in terms of *access to the public switched network, switching within the public switched network and features utilized on the public switched network*. The District also believes that the federal universal service support mechanisms should apply to the broad array of high speed digital services. Finally, the District believes that Internet access should also be included under this classification of advanced services and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) be included under the category

of telecommunications carriers.

In these first comments, we believed the basis of school discounts would be the following:

- Flat rate service for all network access lines

Schools should have flat rate access to the network at the same cost as residential customers. Just as with residential service, all usage charges should be eliminated for local calls.

- Elimination of all inter-office facility charges; and

One of the anomalies of the current telephone delivery structure is the concept of the telephone central office. All local rates and local services are based upon the arbitrarily defined central office locations of the local exchange carrier. These boundaries are nothing more than historic relics of the way communities developed and grew. They are neither standardized nor are they rational. They overlap and cut over school district boundaries. Local exchange carrier (LEC) central office boundaries create excess charges for schools. For large school districts such as Oakland, the excess telephone service charges are bloated by the fact that these large school districts overlap several LEC central offices. To obtain telephone service between these different central offices, many school districts must incur telephone company-imposed inter-office facility charges such as mileage and termination charges. These charges are all the more excessive because most LECs have implemented the as Signaling System 7 technology which have virtually eliminated any additional cost to the LEC for providing service across the LEC's central office boundaries. Eliminating all interoffice facility charges including mileage, terminations, and local loop charges for providing services to schools across central office boundaries is a reasonable discount mechanism.

- Bulk rate or quantity discounts applied to all services

In general, discounts are given customers by the telecommunications vendors. One taken into consideration is quantity. The District proposes that quantity discounts be initiated for all services.

One of the most important aspects of the Oakland Unified School District's comments is its assertion of the "Principle of Total School Service". It is important to the schools that the principle be established that requests for universal and advanced services for any activity undertaken by school administrators, directors, managers and all other school and school district personnel be considered a "bona fide request for educational purposes". The principle of total school service is fundamental to the establishment of those support mechanisms required by the 1996 Telecommunications Act for schools. No arbitrary division can be made between the uses of universal and advanced services and neither can there be an arbitrary division between educational and administrative use. When a Hispanic parent requiring bilingual services calls the district office and speaks to a person in Spanish about the education of that parent's child, that universal service is being used for an educational purpose. It is of the utmost concern that the

implementation of rules affecting a "bona fide request for educational purposes" be guided by this principle of total school service.

REPLY COMMENTS OF APRIL 29, 1996

In its April 29, 1996 comments, the Oakland Unified School District replied to the comments of Ameritech, Southwestern Bell, et. al. on the issue of increased rates to the end user. Specifically, the incumbent local exchange carriers (LECs) want to eliminate the common carrier line (CCL) charges which are paid into the universal fund to maintain the public switched network. The shortfall would be made up by an increase in the subscriber line charges (SLCs) which are end user fees mandated by regulation.

This would have to results. First, long distance rate discounts given to large corporate users would be funded by small residential and non-long distance users. Second, long exchange carriers will have their entry fees into the long distance market paid by the end user.

This issue is of particular importance to schools which are low users of long distance service. Many of Oakland Unified School District's telephone lines are connected to automated intrusion and fire alarms and electrical and heat monitoring circuits. These lines only call out to other district locations which monitors alarm conditions and dispatches the appropriate emergency team. The district does not need long distance access on these lines. If Congress truly intended the Act to create market conditions for telephone services, the government would not mandate that schools must pay for services the schools do not require. These government mandated access charges, SLCs, merely put an unfair economic burden on schools and other organizations which do not require that all telephone lines have long distance access. Eliminating CCLs and raising the government -mandated SLCs will result in an unfair penalty for low end users such as schools and a boon for high end users such as corporations. Most corporations are multinational with far-flung locations throughout the United States and all over the world. They benefit a robust and ubiquitous interexchange, interstate long distance network. Low end users should not be forced through government mandates to pay a disproportionate amount of the costs for supporting this network.

In its reply comments, dated May 8, 1996, NARUC stated:

"The record lacks crucial evidence concerning the probable impact of SLC increases and suggests, through oppositions from almost all major commenting groups, the impropriety of increasing the SLC from both a policy and legal perspective."

A market approach to this problem, therefore, would charge those necessary costs for maintaining the network to those who order and derive economic benefit from the long distance network. To that end, the District made the following recommendations:

1. Eliminate of all government-mandated subscriber line charges (SLCs)

Consistent with a market driven telecommunications approach, end users should be given a choice as to whether or not they want access to a long-distance carrier. Carriers

should be permitted to charge their customers a market based price for long distance access. The charges could be based upon usage or some fully allocated costing formula for maintaining the network.

2. Standard Carrier Common Line (CCL) Rates

All interexchange carriers should bear the cost of maintaining the public switched network from which they derive significant value in the form of revenue. In a market-driven economy, the cost of opportunity is charged to the provider rather than the consumer.

3. Prohibition of Interexchange Line of Business Subsidies for LECs

While the Act permits LECs to enter the interexchange, long-distance business, it does not permit entry to be subsidized by local rates. Mechanisms should be put in place to guarantee that the LECs do not enjoy a competitive advantage over other telecommunications carriers. LECs should pay the same standard CCL charges incurred by current long distance carriers.

FURTHER COMMENTS OF JULY 31, 1996

The Oakland Unified School District has provided further comments to the specific questions asked by the Common Carrier Bureau. These further comments attempt to focus attention on using competitive as a method for providing discounts to schools. We advocated a competitive bidding process because we wished rate payers, tax payers and consumers to be protected from being forced to pay the entire cost of the educational discounts envisioned by the Telecommunications Act. Our plan is that subsidies from the universal fund should be used to stimulate and incent innovation and efficiencies among incumbent telecommunications providers as well as new entrants into the industry. We hoped to remove the most inefficient aspect of regulatory monopolies: subsidizing inefficient and unimaginative telcos. It is our view that restricting discounts to those which the consumer must pay the monopoly to provide will result in less benefit to the schools and contrary to congressional intent.

The following is a summary of the District's responses to the specific common carrier bureau questions

Question #

6. Should the services or functionalities eligible for discounts be specifically limited and identified or should the discount apply to all available services?

School discounts should apply to all universal services providing access, switching and features on the public switched network.

7. Does Section 254(h) contemplate that inside wiring or other internal connections to classrooms may be eligible for universal service support of telecommunications services provided schools and libraries? If so, what is the estimated cost of the inside wiring and other internal connections?

Inside wiring and other internal connections are ineligible for discounts.

8. To what extent should the provisions of Section 706 and 708 be considered by the Joint Board and be relied upon to provide advanced services to schools, libraries and health providers?

Sections 706 and 708 in no way should be considered by the joint Board as a means of providing schools, libraries and health providers advanced telecommunications services.

9. How can universal service support for schools, libraries, and health care providers be structured to promote competition?

The Oakland Unified School District proposes a method of permitting telecommunication services providers to compete for the right to provide schools, libraries and health care providers with discount services and minimize the demand upon the universal fund.

10. Should the resale prohibitions in Section 254(h)(3) be construed to prohibit only the resale of services to the public for profit, and should it be construed so as to permit end user cost based fees for services? Would construction in this manner facilitate community networks and/or aggregation of purchasing power?

The prohibition on resale by schools should allow schools to enter into consortiums with other community groups and facilitate community networks by allowing the pro rata share of telecommunications costs to be distributed among all participants. The prohibition against profit making should be maintained.

11. If the answer to the first question in number 10 is "yes", should the discounts be available only for the traffic or network usage attributable to the educational entities that qualify for the Section 254 discounts?

When discounts are applied to services for educational or community-based consortiums, the costs for telecommunication services are bundled together in a way that it is not feasible to separate out the actual school or educational usage.

12. Should discounts be directed to the states in the form of block grants?

Discounts should not be directed to states in block grants. [NB: In further discussions with the Working Group established by the Research, Evaluation and Technology Division's K-12 Network Planning Unit which is drafting a universal service comment for the California Department of Education, the District has subsequently modified this position.]

13. Should discounts for schools, libraries, and health care providers take the form of direct billing credits for telecommunications services provided eligible institutions?

Discounts should not take the form of direct billing credits. Neither of these methods accomplish the type of "value" infusion into telecommunications required to convert it from a monopoly dominated by a few into an industry open to many and able to provide jobs to our students.

15. What is the least administratively burdensome requirement that could be used to ensure that requests for supported telecommunications services are bona fide requests

within the intent of section 254(h)?

The least burdensome requirement for bona fide requests is that schools be certified by the States and that telecommunications services be provided on the "total school" principle.

16. What should be the base service prices to which discounts for schools and libraries are applied: (a) total service long-run incremental cost; (b) short-run incremental costs; (c) best commercially-available rate; (d) tariffed rate; (e) rate established through a competitively-bid contract in which schools and libraries participate; (f) lowest of some group of the above; or (g) some other benchmark? How could the best commercially-available rate be ascertained, in light of the fact that many such rates may be established pursuant to confidential contract arrangements?

The base service prices to which discounts for schools and libraries are applied should be a rate established through a competitively-bid contract in which schools and libraries participate.

17. How should discounts be applied, if at all, for schools and libraries and rural health care providers that are currently receiving special rates?

With the implementation of the Oakland proposal, institutions receiving special rates would have a choice between their special rates and the new discount rates. This freedom of choice is consistent with moving the industry into a competitive environment.

18. What states have established discount programs for telecommunications services provided to schools, libraries, and health care providers? Describe the programs including measurable outcomes and associated costs.

In California, Pacific Bell has an educational tariff for the ISDN product; however, ISDN is a product that has not received the acceptance in the marketplace and is generally considered inferior. In a monopoly environment, discount services often mean inferior services.

22. Should separate funding mechanisms be established for schools and libraries and for rural health care providers?

The Oakland proposal anticipates providing discounts to all three types of users; however, there is a real need for rural health care providers to receive special attention.

23. Are the cost estimates contained in the McKinsey Report and NII Kickstart initiative an accurate funding estimate for the discount provisions for schools and libraries, assuming that tariffed rates are used as the base prices?

Any cost estimate which is not based upon a competitive bidding process is one which supports the current monopolistic thinking. The only true estimate is one based upon the reality of competitive bidding.

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Aggregation and Competition

Contributed by: Melanie Van Liere (and Kenneth Pohl) <vanlier@erols.com>

Date: Sat, 10 May 1980 18:37:02 -0700

1.

In Norfolk, VA one public school has joined with the area cable carrier for internet access. This has been a great benefit for this one school. Also in this highly populated Navy area most schools have a sponsor, such as the crew of a ship, to help with electronics and wiring as well as tutoring. It is our belief that any major corporation is willing to help a school also.

Specifically at Lake Taylor High School we have made USAA a partner for education. They have donated 50 IBM 386 computers, miscellaneous equipment and offer technical support. This has been an invaluable collaboration.

2.

We seem to have a split opinion on this topic. On one hand there is the fact that schools will not be as needy so they may not seek all the assistance from the local companies. On the other hand if the schools had the financial backing more companies would be willing to offer technical support or advice since it is less money than a major donation of computers and assistance.

3.

An enhanced competitive environment will benefit education from new services starting. We believe that there is potential for new servers to enter the market as well as better packages to lower costs for education.

4.

In our area there is no apparent structures in place. Each school looks for community partners and some have the ability to help with computer needs and some do not. There is no across the board set structures with our system.

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Comments Regarding California Department of Education

Contributed by: Melanie Van Liere (and Kenneth Pohl) <vanlier@erols.com>

Date: Sun, 11 May 1980 15:58:37 -0700

I am very pleased to see that the California Department of Education has taken a stand concerning the Telecommunications Act with the Federal Communications Commission. They stated quite specifically that they believed that all schools, libraries, and health centers be given the opportunity to have affordable high-speed communications technology. Technology is one way of reform and will be able to help bring our schools into the next century. This effort will not only benefit the students but the community. Schools all over the country need to be preparing young people for their future and included in that future is a great deal of technology.

The CDE also stated that they felt that with access to local switching points being provided that schools would have more money to help themselves with the cost of purchasing equipment and training their teachers. I also concur with that premise but there are many school districts that will need additional help with the equipment and the training.

I believe that the comments made by the CDE were worthwhile and that they show a commitment by California to bring the education in their state to a standard that they can be proud of. I sincerely hope that other states jump on the technology bandwagon.

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Comments on Comments of 360 Communications

Contributed by: Melanie Van Liere (and Kenneth Pohl) <vanlier@erols.com>

Date:

Being a layperson, some of the comments made by 360 Communications were somewhat beyond my understanding just as I'm sure that some educational issues and policies may be beyond their level of expertise. I felt however, that many of the comments made sense, logically. First, I agree that in many circumstances a wireless carrier would be more practical than having to lay cable line to many remote areas. With this in mind, I believe that if CMRS providers can make the same commitments that other carriers can make they should be considered by the Commission. Secondly, and more relevant to the educational field, I really liked what 360 Communications had to say about their ideas to add to the educational environment. They have started programs such as ClassLink, SafeTalk, Homework Hotline all related to schools. I am particularly interested in ClassLink and Homework Hotline. ClassLink is being tried in a neighboring city and Norfolk already has a homework hotline program. In our program we are chained to a desk and the phone system in the central administration building.

360 Communications also appeared to be interested in providing service to all persons. They agreed that a voucher system would be the best way to be fair to low-income consumers. We need to make certain that as many companies that can provide service on a competitive basis are able to do so it reach all consumers as well as the schools, libraries, and health care centers.

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California Legislation

Contributed by: Jim Warner <warner@cats.ucsc.edu> <warner@cats.ucsc.edu>

Date: Tue, 3 Sep 1996 09:21:22 -0700

Hello.

I found a few interesting references. It seems that the California State Legislature and its Public Utilities Commission have been busy. The legislation is AB 3643, passed in July 1995.

The real action, however, is in the regulations issued about three weeks ago.

The new rules are in the appendix.

The "good stuff" is in the second appendix "ADOPTED UNIVERSAL SERVICE RULES."

The CPU has set a subsidy rate of 25 percent for 1-MB, ISDN, switched-56 and T-1 lines. Higher speed services up to DS3 get a 20 percent subsidy.

While that colors as a good thing, better deals for clear channel T-1s, T-1 rate Frame Relay ports, and 56 Kb Frame Relay ports are available to tax supported schools under the State GSA contract with PacBell. The new discount will be welcome for frame customers at intermediate port speeds of 128 and 384 Kb. [Pac Bell does tariff other port speeds.]

Actually, it's not clear that public schools already eligible for the State GSA rate shouldn't get a 25 percent discount ON TOP of the already good GSA price.

PacBell already has a special ISDN program (Knowledge Network) for education that amounts to a call plan layered on top of tariff ISDN service. Presumably, the new tariff subsidy will be available for the lines that stand underneath the Knowledge Network.

In the main part of the CPUC decision, the Commission recites arguments and makes rulings. Our stuff is in section VII about half way through.

The Commission believes that \$20 Million/year will cover the subsidies for the tariff discount program. \$15 M is for schools and libraries; \$5 M is for CBOs (Community Based Organizations) which are eligible for subsidies if they're non-profit and have an educational character. CBOs only can get the "low speed" (below T-1 rate) subsidy and in quantities more limited than public education.

-jim warner, UCSC network engineer

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Summary: Comments of America's Public Television Stations (APTS)

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Summary of Comments of America's Public Television Stations (APTS):

The APTS submitted comments on two main issues:

The Commission should adopt rules making it clear that--

1. Educational video services provided to elementary and secondary schools, libraries and rural health care providers, including interactive capabilities afforded by high-speed data links, qualify for discounted rates under Sec.254.
2. Consortiums of educational television stations that provide distance learning services to those facilities are eligible for discounted rates under the statute.

Reasoning: The noncommercial educational television stations provide a wealth of educational services, including video and on-line services as well as interactive capabilities, to their communities and fulfill a multitude of needs. Public TV stations reach millions of classrooms, workplaces, homes, agencies, child care providers, and share multiple resources with higher educational institutions, caretaking institutions, and government educational departments.

Knowledge beyond the scope of the meeting facility, whether a classroom or workplace, expands understanding and provides motivation and participant interaction through electronic field trips and two-way video conferencing. The limitations on technical facilities should not be written into the rules by the Commission because no one knows what the future holds for needs and opportunities in advanced telecommunications possibilities for educational services.

Summary of Further Comments by APTS and joined by PBS (Public Broadcasting Service):

The comments respond directly to questions 6 & 18.

Question 6 response: APTS and PBS believe that rules adopted to implement the universal service provisions of Sec. 254 should 1) not unnecessarily limit the services to be included for discounted rates, but instead allow eligible institutions to determine what services and facilities they need to accomplish their educational goals and provide a written certification to the telecommunications carrier that the requested facilities will be used for educational purposes; and 2) must include, as services eligible for discounted rates, the educational services offered by PBS and public television stations, including