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JAMES E. FOSTER, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT

September 22, 1998

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The Honorable William Kennard
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Kennard:

I wrote you in January of this year concerning BellSouth's entry into the long-distance market. I was disappointed their first application was not approved and I believe you now have another opportunity to effect the goals of the 1996 Telecommunications Act by approving their current application.

One of my major concerns is still Internet access for students of the 21st Century -- is it accessible and affordable. The Internet is a powerful way to connect students to new and different sources of knowledge and to improve learning. Internet access in schools also levels the playing field for many economically disadvantaged students. That's especially important for Caddo Parish since many of our 48,200 students come from low income families. I am concerned that, until the long distance issues are worked out for the Bell companies, we won't utilize the Internet to its full potential.

I agree with our state elected officials, the men and women of the Louisiana Public Service Commission. They have twice endorsed BellSouth's request, certifying that the company has opened its network to competitors and that BellSouth's entry into long-distance is in the best interest of Louisiana consumers.

The benefits are just as clear to me today as they were in January. Increased competition reduces prices, increases choices and encourages high quality service. I hope you will agree that education in Louisiana will benefit greatly from true competition, and approving BellSouth's second application is the right thing to do.

Sincerely,

James E. Foster, Ed.D.
Superintendent

JEF/dcl

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