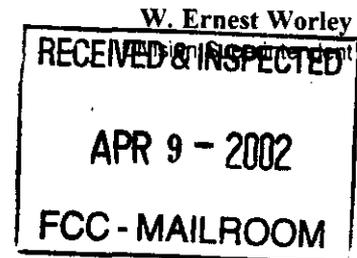




## Nelson County Public Schools

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March 28, 2002

Federal Communication Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
445 - 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

CC Docket Nos. 96-45 and 97-21/  
Request for Waiver  
Form 472 - Year 3

Dear Sir:

I am sending this letter to request a waiver of the filing deadline for the Form 472 for telecommunications and internet access costs for Year 3 of the Universal Schools and Libraries Universal Service Fund for Nelson Co School District, Entity Number 126480 due to extenuating circumstances. For background in understanding this request, Nelson County is a small rural school division with a diverse population and great socioeconomic need. Due to the size of our school division, we have very few administrators and they "wear many hats." There are not large staffs to accomplish administrative tasks and responsibilities are assigned to individuals based on their individual expertise. The task of handling all of the reporting requirements involving E-rate funding was assigned to a technology coordinator of the division. The application for funding, Form 470, Form 471 and Form 486 were completed and were approved for funding to offset the tremendous costs for telecommunications for our division. Due to medical reasons, our technology coordinator, under the advice of her physician, was forced to take a leave of absence from her position during the months of January and February, 2002. Due to the absence of the only person to whom direct responsibility for E-rate funding was given and had knowledge of the required timelines, the filing deadline was inadvertently missed.

The original intent of the telecommunications act of 1996 was to "insure that all eligible schools and libraries have affordable access to telecommunications and information services." In a county such as Nelson, that "access" is only affordable with the supplemental funding provided through E-rate. Nelson County Public Schools is unique in that the challenges that it faces in educating our students. Our geographical features pose challenges that equate to our transportation budget exceeding the state average by 62 %. An amount such as this directly limits the funding available for instructional programming. The rural make-up of our community is the primary reason that telecommunications are so important. The mountains serve as a barrier between isolated parts of the community and it is only through the internet that we can open up the world to our students to expose them to different cultures and experiences. Our most recent Poverty Index equated to 20.23, which graphically demonstrates the economic need of our community. According to the Literacy Volunteers of America, approximately 24% of the adult population of Nelson County is at Level I illiteracy. In order to insure better opportunities for

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tomorrow's leaders, it is crucial that the supplemental funds available through E-rate are awarded to Nelson County Public Schools. To a division such as ours, it would be financially and educationally devastating if a specific medical circumstance led to the withholding of funds.

In an effort to prevent missed deadlines and filing problems in the future, I have put the following measures in place. Checks and Balances have been established between the Technology Coordinator, the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction and the Finance Officer so that our various personnel will be aware of the filing requirements. Diversifying the responsibilities of developing the technology plan, filing for benefits, and applying for reimbursements should allow us the safeguards that are required to insure that we are meeting the mandates of the SLD as it pertains to the Universal Service Fund.

Should you need any supporting documentation to verify this Request for Waiver, please do not hesitate to contact me at your earliest convenience. Again, I cannot stress to you the importance of the E-rate funding to the members of our community at large, but more importantly the students that are under our care.

Sincerely yours,



W. Ernest Worley  
Division Superintendent