



Council of the Great City Schools  
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June 28, 2010

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
445 12th Street, SW  
Room TW-B204  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Ex Parte Discussion (CC Docket 02-6; GN 09-51)

Dear Ms. Dortch:

This letter is to inform you of an *ex parte* discussion on June 2, 2010, between attendees at the Council of the Great City Schools annual technology conference and Ms. Gina Spade of the Wireline Competition Bureau at the Commission. The subject of Ms. Spade’s presentation at the conference was the National Broadband Plan, and the subsequent work of the Commission to implement goals in the Education portion of the plan through rule changes in the Universal Service program for schools and libraries, also known as the E-Rate. The conference was located in Denver, CO, and Manish Naik from the Council of the Great City Schools facilitated the question and answer session that followed Ms. Spade’s presentation. The conference attendees included approximately 75 local technology officials from the nation’s largest urban school districts, such as Los Angeles Unified School District, Chicago Public Schools, School District of Philadelphia, Houston Independent School District; Miami-Dade Public Schools, Jefferson County Public Schools (Louisville, KY), and Boston Public Schools.

At the conference, Ms. Spade began with a PowerPoint presentation, which outlined the Commission’s charge to undertake a National Broadband Plan, as directed by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Her presentation covered the areas in which the Commission’s work focused, and the results that were included in the Education portion of the final plan. She also discussed the next step for the Commission, which would be a series of public rulemaking proceedings that would help the Commission discuss and implement changes to the E-Rate program that could help to deliver the goals and outcomes desired in the National Broadband Plan. She completed her presentation with an outline of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) released on May 20, 2010 (CC Docket 02-6; GN 09-51), and the specific areas in which the Commission were seeking public comments.

A number of the initial questions regarding the NPRM regarded the topic of Basic Maintenance. Attendees from multiple city school districts indicated that annual

maintenance reimbursements were vital to protect the investment that E-Rate and their own school district had made in their technology infrastructure. Ms. Spade responded that all of the items in the NPRM, including the question about the potential elimination of maintenance funding, were intended to spur dialogue and debate about what is necessary for school districts to operate and sustain modern technology services, and that applicants supporting maintenance funding should file comments to that effect as part of the rulemaking proceedings.

The discussion with Ms. Spade also covered a number of other topics included in the NPRM. Multiple districts indicated that the ability of their poorest schools to access E-Rate funding would be jeopardized if the Commission required districts to file applications with a single, district-wide poverty figure, since many large applicants cover a wide geographic area with varying socioeconomic levels. Other attendees raised questions regarding the specific poverty level of schools in their district and their attempts to obtain Priority Two funding through the E-Rate. A significant portion of the discussion also involved accessing broadband networks from off-campus locations, and specifically the challenges, benefits, and changes such a rule would allow.

Additional responses on the proposed changes to the E-Rate program will be provided by the Council of the Great City Schools in official comments to the NPRM. Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact me, or Manish Naik on my staff, for any additional information.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Casserly  
Executive Director

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