

Discontinuing funding for web hosting through E-Rate will put a major strain on school district budgets, especially in these difficult economic times when ARRA funds have dried up and districts are having to cut personnel and programs.

A school district's website has become a hub of communication between parents, teachers, students and all stakeholders within that district's community. Teachers communicate with students through online homework assignments, blogs and other online collaboration tools effectively extending the education of students well beyond the traditional school day. Just as the web has flattened the global economy, so has it flattened the playing field in education.

A district's website is also slowly becoming a medium for delivery of online courses for those students who would typically opt for online learning through a cyber charter school. The website provides a means for the district to retain those students and provide them with the same learning experiences from home that a cyber charter school might offer.

The website has also become a core source for emergency communication within a district's borders. Parents look to the district's website for emergency school closings or even information regarding lock-downs.

Cutting funding for web hosting has the potential to damage what has become a district's core communications medium, its online learning delivery mechanism, and its emergency notification system.

I highly recommend the continuation of funding of web hosting through the E-Rate program for the aforementioned reasons.