

## Merced River School District

4402 West Oakdale Road \* Winton, CA 95388 \* (209) 358-5679 \* FAX (209) 358-2855

Hopeton Elementary (K-3) Helio Brasil, Superintendent/Principal Washington Elementary (4-8)

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

{Insert Month/Date}, 2013

Dear Sir/Madame,

I am writing today in response to the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking which, among other things, proposes changes to the E-Rate program. Before delving into my response to the proposed changes, I want to first thank the FCC for your continued support for the E-Rate program. The E-Rate program provides critical discounts to assist schools (like mine) to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.

As a small and rural school district, E-Rate funding is essential to providing the services more readily available to larger urban school districts. This is easily seen in the simple internet connectivity, ability to provide online assessments and assuring all students have access to deemed essential technology of the current times. Without E-Rate funding as a small rural district my students will be at a disadvantage and will suffer academically.

The E-Rate program is a program succeeding in its mission. As the FCC moves forward with this NPRM, it is prudent to remain focused on the fact that E-Rate is a program that works and that any changes to the E-Rate program should be focused on expanding a successful program that has yet to reach its full potential. The current program, while needing some marginal updates to its structure, is most strained by increasing demand for E-Rate-supported services and persistently low funding. The single most effective step the FCC can take to bolster E-Rates current and future success is to provide \$5 billion in funding, an amount commensurate with current demand.

There are additional programmatic changes and restructuring that can provide additional efficiencies and savings. To rely solely on programmatic efficiencies, however, without providing additional new funding is a shortsighted solution, a policy that fails to address the program's most significant problem: inadequate funding.

I think this NPRM is an opportunity to tackle the important work of expanding a successful program. E-Rate is not a broken program that needs to be fixed; it is a successful program that schools and libraries continue to rely on, a program that must continue to provide funding critical for telecommunications and connectivity.

E-Rate is without doubt oversubscribed and underfunded and when coupled with current cuts to education funding providing services for all students at a quality level is in jeopardy. The need to streamline the application is crucial. It is especially in need of streamlining for small and rural districts who lack the personnel to address the process and application requirements. It is, however, very clear that simply streamlining the process will not solve the issue alone. It is streamlining of process with additional funding that will provide our students with greater access to technology and the competitive world we live in.

Thank you for considering my response as you move forward with your decision on the E-Rate program. I applaud the FCC for its continued efforts to protect the already oversubscribed E-Rate program by ensuring

**Board of Education: George Soares, Lloyd Pareira, Scot Sherman, George Soares Jr., Robert Gamble**

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the future of this successful program. I urge you to support significant increased funding for the E-Rate program, and to ensure that the program and its limited resources are protected and preserved.

Sincerely,

Helio Brasil  
Superintendent/Principal