



Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators

2608 Market Place ~ Harrisburg, PA 17110-9358
(717) 540-4448 (717) 540-4405 fax www.pasa-net.org

August 30, 2013

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket No. 13-184

Dear Sir/Madame:

I write in response to the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking which proposes several changes to the E-Rate program. On behalf of Pennsylvania's school superintendents who lead its 500 school districts that are responsible for educating nearly 1.8 million students, I want to thank the FCC for its continued support for the E-Rate program. The E-Rate program provides critical discounts to assist schools across Pennsylvania and the nation to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access. Since 1998 Pennsylvania students and citizens have benefited from nearly \$1.2 billion in E-Rate funding.

Many of Pennsylvania's rural schools continue to face ongoing challenges in providing students and teachers with high speed internet access. And many schools that have high speed access do not have access to sufficient bandwidth to take full advantage of the educational potential provided through the internet. With nearly 450,000 of Pennsylvania's 1.8 million students enrolled in 238 rural districts, this challenge is significant.

The E-Rate program is a program succeeding in its mission to expand affordable access to Pennsylvania's schools and libraries. As the FCC moves forward with this proposed rulemaking, it is important that it remain focused on the fact that E-Rate is a program that is successful and that changes to the program should focus on expanding opportunities so that all schools and libraries can fully benefit from affordable telecommunications and broad band internet access. The current program, while in need of some revisions to its structure, is most challenged by increasing demand for E-Rate-supported services and insufficient funding. The single most effective step the FCC can take is to increase E-Rate funding to \$5 billion, the amount needed to meet current demand.

While there are additional programmatic changes and restructuring that can produce efficiencies and savings that will free up some additional resources, sole reliance on this without providing additional new funding, fails to address the program's most significant problem which is inadequate funding.

Page 2
August 30, 2013

On behalf of Pennsylvania's school system leaders, we urge the FCC to take on the challenge to expand opportunities available through an already 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.

Thank you for considering my comments as the FCC develops its final rulemaking for the E-Rate program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Buckheit". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J".

Jim Buckheit
Executive Director