



NORTH THURSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Bower Learning Center

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Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Modernizing the E-Rate Program for Schools and Libraries, WC Docket 13-184

Dear Ms. Dortch,

North Thurston Public Schools is a suburban school district that serves 14,500 students. We maintain 23 buildings to include 13 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 4 high schools. We are a highly diverse school system with a moderately high poverty rate of approximately 46%.

Our vision is to ensure all of our students acquire the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and vision necessary to become lifelong learners and contributing citizens in a diverse and changing society. We take a core competency approach to embedding technology learning goals within the curricula. We specifically seek to:

- Use technology to support learning in all areas of instruction.
- Use technology to support assessment and evaluation.
- Increase the availability of web-based resources for all.

It is imperative that we have enough bandwidth to support users' needs. All of our sites have at least 50 Mb/s MOE connections, but due to increasing demand, we will need to increase connections between schools and the Internet. Last summer we upgraded to 100 Mb/s to the Internet and we will need to increase again this fall.

This letter offers comments related to the FCC's effort to modernize the E-rate program.

We believe:

- Universal access to broadband is necessary to meet school reform and improvement goals. These goals include the development of K-12 programming able to prepare all students for college and 21st century careers.
- The demand for access to broadband is growing rapidly beyond the ability of schools to provide it, despite the cost advantage possible through the E-rate discount.
- A modernized E-rate program must be less burdensome for schools, and aligned more effectively to current and future K-12 education priorities. There is also a growing need to help schools plan and budget for technology.
- Today's demand for the cost benefit of the E-rate program exceeds available funding. Clearly, the amount of money available for schools must increase to meet state and local needs.

We agree that it is time to modernize the E-rate program and support positive change that benefits K-12 schools. We encourage you to move quickly as you complete your deliberations.

If you have any further questions about our district, please do not hesitate to contact me at 360-412-4476.

Sincerely,

Vicky Lamoreaux, Executive Director

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