

Today, I, Mark Finstrom, respectfully submit my comments to the FCC on the E-Rate NPRM, proceeding 13-184. The E-Rate program has been of great importance to Highline School District Entity 145196. The program has helped our students and teachers gain access to a wealth of online resources, to communicate and collaborate, to develop the 21st century skills necessary for college and career and for the safety and security of those we serve. However, the E-Rate funding levels have not kept pace with our district's bandwidth needs and our community's economic condition. I urge you to raise the E-rate funding level to \$5 billion per year, which is close to the average demand level for each of the past two years. I know that several Priority 2 services are denied each year due to a lack of funding, but I also know that the coffers for the USAC operation hold unspent funds that could be issued in funding requests.

As the Chief Technology Officer for Highline School District in Washington, I know that seamlessly infusing digital learning throughout the school curriculum is a pre-requisite for students to graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in today's global economy. Access to high speed broadband is the key for modern teaching and learning to occur in all schools across the country.

Highline teachers and students use digital learning every day. We have blended learning tools that are showing great promise as students have shown 10-30% gains in academic growth through their use. We have teachers who are collegially interacting with other teachers around the globe on projects that are STEAM related. Yes, I added an A, as we are seeing that Arts are showing more potential and great enthusiasm amongst our clientele.

Highline School District's network is currently meeting the demand; however, the need for upgrades to higher speeds and more reliable network gear and traffic is only going to increase in the near future. In addition, I see that some services are being proposed for disallowance; such as, web hosting. That service is critical to schools and districts as we communicate with our constituents. Please do not take away a valued component of our communication methods.

The E-rate program has been a phenomenal success in bringing Internet access to almost every classroom in America. In the last funding cycle applications from schools and libraries totaled more than \$5 billion, more than double the available funding. I respectfully urge the FCC to increase funding for the E-Rate program to at least \$5 billion to meet this demand. All students need access to high speed broadband. Our nation's future depends on their success.