

MCKINNEY

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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

September 11, 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.

One of the fastest growing school districts in Texas, the McKinney Independent School District currently enrolls more than 24,000 students in twenty elementary schools, five middle schools, three high schools, one alternative school and one early childhood education school. The district serves a diverse community, with approximately thirty percent of our students categorized as educationally disadvantaged based on membership in the free and reduced lunch program. The mission of McKinney ISD, the champion for progressive learning throughout the diverse McKinney community, is to inspire and equip all students to explore, develop and express their unique potential as innovators, critical thinkers and collaborators through challenging, engaging and diverse learning experiences in vital partnership with the community.

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.

Currently, McKinney ISD receives approximately \$ 190,000 in E-Rate funds. These funds help offset the services provided to our students and staff, which includes the following:

- A phone for every teacher and administrator
- Voicemail for every teacher and administrator
- Robust circuits for access to Internet content, including cloud-based, curriculum supported software

Without E-Rate funding, McKinney ISD would be hard pressed to provide broadband services at the level required to provide a robust user experience. We have noted with growing concern the increased demand for Priority One services, and the possibility of a reduction of E-Rate funds for these services. A reduction of funding for Priority One services would create an additional burden on an already stretched budget.

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 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.D. Kennedy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

J.D. Kennedy, Ed.D
Superintendent
McKinney Independent School District