



ISD 75 St. Clair Public School

121 Main Street West / PO Box 99 • St. Clair MN 56080-0099

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

District Mission Statement:

The St. Clair Learning Community will maximize learning for all, in order to thrive in an ever changing world.

District CORE VALUES

Growth:
Continuous transformation with a purpose.

Student-focused:
The needs of the students come first.

Respect:
Honor the diversity of self, all people, all things and all beliefs.

Community:
About all of us all of the time.

Stewardship:
Shared ownership of where and how we work, learn and play.

September 12, 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.

St. Clair Public School is a small, rural school district in southern Minnesota with a K-12 student enrollment of 652 students. We rely heavily on information technology to provide educational services to our students. The E-Rate funding has allowed us to make investments in technology that go directly into the hands of our students. Each of our seventh through twelfth grade students is assigned a Netbook computer with wireless connectivity to use for the school year. Much of our course content is provided on-line and we utilize flipped instruction in many instances. Our elementary grades are piloting the use of tablet PC's for on-line textbooks and for learning centers. Needless to say, the E-Rate program is a critical component in making this work for our students.

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.

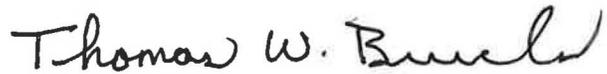
There are additional programmatic changes and restructuring that can provide additional efficiencies and savings. To rely solely on programmatic efficiencies, however, without providing additional new funding is a shortsighted solution, a policy that fails to address the program's most significant problem: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

Providing additional funding for the E-Rate program and streamlining the application process would be tremendously helpful in providing the type of telecommunications and connectivity access that is critical to the future success of our students.

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 that reads "Thomas W. Bruels". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'T'.

Thomas W. Bruels
Superintendent