

FRANCIS HOWELL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

September 13, 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. Let me start by thanking the FCC for your continued support for the E-Rate program. Schools districts around the country have benefited greatly by the discounts provided for telecommunications and internet access.

E-Rate has been very important to Francis Howell Schools because it has helped our students and teachers gain access to a wealth of online resources, communicate and collaborate, and develop the 21st century skills necessary for college and career. Francis Howell is a suburban district of 17,500+ students and depends on the E-Rate funding to help with internet costs, web-hosting and other telecommunications that support instruction and community access to information.

The E-Rate program is a program succeeding in its mission. The single most effective step the FCC can take to improve E-Rates current and future success is to provide more funding to meet the current demands. Access to high-speed broadband is the key to allowing modern teaching and learning to occur in all schools across the country. Francis Howell is an innovative school district working to make all learning engaging and relevant for its students. This work requires technologies that are fast and reliable in all school buildings and classrooms. E-Rate helps ensure that our teachers and students have this most desired resource.

Our communications and public relations staff rely on the use of our district website to inform and engage our community in the business of the District. The proposed changes to eligible services that would eliminate funding for web-hosting would be detrimental to the district in terms of budget dollars for communication. The funding E-Rate provides for this service helps off-site the cost of the web-hosting and those dollars saved are used for mass messaging systems that districts like Francis Howell use to get information quickly to parents regarding emergencies and snow days.

Thank you for considering my comments and I have high hopes that the FCC will do the right thing and increase the funding and eligible services as opposed to the reverse. I applaud the FCC for the successes thus far with the program and the opportunity to share my thoughts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Eernisse', is located below the 'Sincerely,' text.

Ray Eernisse
Chief Information Officer