

Virginia M. Barry, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education
603-271-3144



Paul Leather
Deputy Commissioner of Education
603-271-3801

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
101 Pleasant Street
Concord, N.H. 03301
FAX 603-271-1953
Citizens Services Line 1-800-339-9900**

16 September 2013

Federal Communications Commission

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of the New Hampshire Department of Education to provide Comments to the FCC on the E-Rate NPRM, proceeding 13-184. The E-Rate has been of great importance to districts and schools in New Hampshire because it has helped our students and teachers gain access to a wealth of online resources, to communicate and collaborate, and to develop the 21st century skills necessary for college and career. However, E-Rate funding levels have not kept pace with New Hampshire's current, and future, bandwidth needs. I urge you to consider raising the E-rate funding level to at least \$5 billion per year, which is close to the average demand level for each of the past two years.

As the state educational technology director in New Hampshire, I know that seamlessly infusing digital learning throughout the curriculum in our schools is a pre-requisite for students to graduate from high school with the college and career ready skills, knowledge, and competencies 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.

Many schools and districts in New Hampshire use digital learning to personalize learning, provide online classes, meet common core and other state standards, administer online assessments, make data driven decisions, collaborate, and communicate. While there are many examples of digital learning that currently take place in New Hampshire, there are many more examples of schools and districts where digital learning does not take place. The main reason for this is cost and accessibility. Many of our small and rural districts do not have access to broadband, or funding to support the digital technology necessary for learning and teaching in our digital age.

Many of our district networks are currently failing to keep up with the demand for increased digital learning and the supporting bandwidth. The need for a high speed reliable network is only going to increase in the near future as our schools anticipate and prepare for participation in the Smarter Balanced online assessment of the Common Core State Standards.

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 and digital tools in order to learn and be productive in the 21st Century. New Hampshire is dedicated to innovative and

personalized learning, using digital tools that support achievement of our college and career ready standards. The future of our state, and our nation, depends on their success.

I would ask that you consider these principles when updating the E-Rate Program rules:

- A modernized E-Rate should be guided by few, clear performance goals and metrics.
- A modernized E-Rate must better align to education needs and governance responsibilities.
- A modernized E-Rate must prioritize equity of access to robust broadband by 100% of schools.
- A modernized E-Rate must be fiscally responsible.
- A modernized E-Rate should incent participant innovation.
- A modernized E-Rate should reduce participant burden.
- A modernized E-Rate must provide specific, predictable, and sufficient funding to address K-12 broadband infrastructure needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stanley J. Freeda". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Stanley J. Freeda
Office of Educational Technology
New Hampshire Department of Education
101 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301