

GUSTINE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
503 W MAIN, GUSTINE, TEXAS 76455
"TOGETHER, WE ACHIEVE"
Ken Baugh, Superintendent

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

September 16, 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 ours to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.

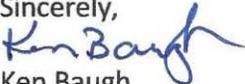
Our district is an isolated rural district with 230 students. Our student population is at a poverty rate of 84%. E-rate funds are extremely critical to our student's success. The funds help our district level the playing field with areas not as poor as we are. The funds provide technology that would not be available otherwise. We have more students and staff able to reach high school classes, college classes, professional development than ever before. We have the largest percentage of students attending and finishing post-secondary education than at any time in school history. The E-rate program is working. Please put more into it and we will continue to get even more from it.

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.

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,

Ken Baugh