



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 mine) to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.

The Kearney R-1 School district is located in Kearney, Missouri, twenty miles north of Kansas City. We service approximately 3500 students, K-12, and also offer an early childhood special education program. Despite having tremendous community and parent support, and passing a significant technology levy three years ago, we are still greatly behind other surrounding districts and struggle to offer decent connectivity to our students. We rely on E-rate funding to help increase our available broadband so that we can provide valuable online resources to our teachers and students. Everything we do is Internet/cloud based from our textbooks, to subscription resource sites and assessment programs. Things have radically changed in the last ten years and our infrastructure has had a difficult time keeping up.

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.

I realize that funding is an issue in many districts. The state continues to cut funding while asking us to do more with so little. As we transition to the common core, assessments will be 100% online for grades 3-

12th. That thought is overwhelming to our technology staff, administrators and teachers. We constantly fight with bogged down servers and slow responding computers. Struggling with our day to day usage is tough enough, but now having this looming task on the horizon, we are at the breaking point. We need E-rate assistance to survive. The cost of connectivity is high but the cost of not having it is even higher. E-rate must increase its funding. Our students and teachers depend on it. We want our kids to have the best chance for success later in life and having solid technology skills is imperative to that success. Not being able to provide students with these necessary resources robs them of future opportunities.

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,

Ashley Weaver
Instructional Technology Coach
Kearney R-1 School District