

E-Rate

13-184

Seminole Independent School District

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Received & Inspected

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FCC Mail Room

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

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.

Seminole ISD is a rural district in West Texas. The majority of our 2700 students qualify as economically disadvantaged. In addition, we have a large English Language Learner population. Many of the research-based programs used effectively with our students are dependent upon technology.

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.

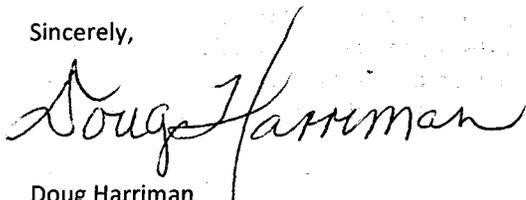
There are additional programmatic changes and restructuring that can provide additional efficiencies and savings. To rely solely on programmatic efficiencies, however, without providing additional new funding is a shortsighted solution, a policy that fails to address the program's most significant problem: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

E-Rate has benefitted our students educationally by providing sufficient bandwidth to deliver online curriculum. Advantages of having access to online curriculum include increased student interest, engagement and the abundance of relevant resources available. Our district depends on E-Rate funding to sustain our current instruction. It is our opinion that E-Rate is oversubscribed and underfunded. Streamlining the application would be beneficial, however additional funding should be the priority.

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,



Doug Harriman  
Superintendent