Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	**)**	
Modernizing the E-rate	**)**	**WC Docket No. 13-184**
Program for Schools and Libraries	**)**	

COMMENTS BY SCHOOLS AS REPRESENTED BY INTELAGENT RESOURCES, LLC RELATED TO THE E-RATE 2.0 PUBLIC NOTICE

ORGANIZATION NAME: INTELAGENT RESOURCES, LLC **DATE:** 03/27/2014

Re: FCC PUBLIC NOTICE: WC Docket No. 13-184: Response

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ORGANIZATION NAME: INTELAGENT RESOURCES, LLC **DATE:** 03/27/2014

Re: FCC PUBLIC NOTICE: WC Docket No. 13-184: Response

Demographics:

Intelagent Resources, LLC (IR) represents 78 schools for their E-rate strategies and applications/processes (consisting of individual entities, consortiums, charter schools, LEAs, and Alternative Education) distributed throughout four (4) states (Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey) and Washington D.C. These schools service over 29,594 students with a vast majority of the schools qualifying at the 90% E-rate funding level and most of the remaining schools qualifying at 80%. These schools are all challenged with funding and/or staff resource issues and as such leverage IR to assist in identifying specific service and equipment needs and potential opportunities for E-rate funding. As their E-rate partner IR and the schools feel it is our responsibility to represent their interests and concerns regarding the considerations being proposed for E-rate 2.0. Letters of Agency (LOAs) are in place for each of these schools and numerous in-depth conversations have taken place with the schools to ensure a full comprehension of their specific needs and to identify areas of input regarding specific E-rate 2.0 proposals being presented as they will impact the schools.

Response Summary:

The fear of our schools is that their voices will not be heard or considered at the individual level; however, collectively they know they represent a significant snapshot of a diverse student population distributed over a wide geographic area. The challenges presented to these schools in regards to individually responding to this FCC Notice include but are not limited to: 1.) The aggressive response timelines in conjunction with satisfying current E-rate application/processes needs (for Funding Year 2014/15), 2.) Limited or no resource availability to coordinate and address response needs, and 3.) A challenge due to lack of in-depth understanding of underlying issues and potential/probable immediate and long-term impact on the E-rate Program and corresponding eligibility and funding opportunities as they relate to particular hardships and challenges faced by the schools. With that known, please review and consider the following responses and comments regarding specific items either noted in the FCC Notice DA 14-308 or as offered up by the schools for consideration. The following is a concentrated effort to provide input on many of the proposed ideas and surveys presented. Areas of non-response denote that these specific schools have no input to offer in regards to those particular items as presented.

ORGANIZATION NAME: INTELAGENT RESOURCES, LLC **DATE:** 03/27/2014

Re: FCC PUBLIC NOTICE: WC Docket No. 13-184: Response

Responses/Comments:

Re: Page 4 under ***"FOCUSED FUNDING FOR HIGH-CAPACITY BROADBAND*:**

Page 4, Paragraph #8.": One-to-One educational models are not the most prevalent education models existing in K-12 education today and will not be for some time yet due to many challenges ranging from initial financial investment regarding devices, on-going support challenges and costs, cost-effective policy/filtering issues and numerous other deterrents. That being stated, this majority of schools should not have any funding limitations/eliminations based on the fact that they cannot afford to implement a One-to-One model. The Program's primary goal is to assist schools and libraries in acquiring and accessing Internet Service…the Program should not be limiting the educational/technology models for the stakeholders as a qualifier in order to have access to funding or award a higher value to funding applications based on One-to-One initiatives.

Re: Page 5 under ***"1. Scope of Service to Be Funded"*:**

Page 5, Paragraphs #11 & #12: In addition to traditional network equipment and supporting components such as routers, switches, wireless access points, LAN/Campus cabling infrastructure and corresponding supporting "software" there should also be consideration for network management and security devices such as wireless controllers and firewalls. Also, we agree that content filtering and caching content servers would/should have a substantial improvement on internet efficiency. Without E-rate funding assistance solutions for these functionalities either will remain outdated, ineffective or totally absent. Potential benefit for the schools and the Program should be a given.

Re: Page 6 under ***"a. Five-Year Upgrade Cycle"*:**

Page 6, Paragraph #14.: Based on our experiences and noting the quality level of today's equipment it is agreed upon that a 5-year equipment replacement cycle is warranted and acceptable.

Page 6, Paragraph #15: The funding level for Priority 2 should be applied at the levels of the individual school and library buildings as it would be more aligned to the actual student poverty level of those particular sites. There are numerous districts which are traditionally confirmed at lower aggregate funding levels which have schools in high poverty areas (90%) that drastically need funding assistance. To calculate funding opportunity for these high-poverty schools under the District's/LEA's aggregate level would deny/delay infusion of much needed technology and internet access opportunities for these sites. ***Note:*** *This funding matrix should be leveraged across all situations where prioritization of funding award/consideration comes into question so there is a standard which is consistent within the Program so as not to foster confusion or mislead schools which could have other ramifications negatively impacting the schools.*

Page 6, Paragraph #16: If insufficient funding for a particular Priority 2 discount level is not available for a given year then prioritizing funding based on a preference given to applicants with the highest percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunches is not necessarily the best approach. What needs to be considered here is that schools/libraries are requesting funding assistance because of need…not necessarily because of their ability to just acquire it. Extensive planning encompassing educational models and corresponding needs, bid processes, contract awards and numerous other items has taken place. To simply dismiss those schools' efforts as an afterthought and eliminate their funding opportunities because they qualify at 90% but their actual poverty percentage is 2% higher than some other schools places extreme hardship on that school. Example: A school qualifies at 90%. As such it makes the decision to move forward with a one-to-one initiative (perhaps leveraging a grant to acquire student hand-held devices). Correspondingly, the school applies for the necessary network cabling and equipment infrastructure to support the initiative via E-rate. Under the solution proposed above the school potentially can lose funding opportunity and would have no financial means to embed the necessary infrastructure to support or operate the new student devices. The education model would suffer substantially thus negatively impacting the students. A more fair model would be for the overall funding dollar need for that specific funding percentage to be calculated out and actual funding to be reduced to a level that ensures that all that qualify will be funded at some determined level (Example: instead of 700 schools out of 1000 schools that qualified for

Page 6, Paragraph #16 (continued):
90% funding being funded at 90% while the remaining 300 schools received nothing all 1000 schools would be funded at a lesser rate…such as 85%). All schools then at least have an option to evaluate their immediate verses long-tern education/financial issues and make cost-effective decisions accordingly. If they so choose to wait until another opportunity to level full 90% funding then they can pass. All schools would need to have their confirmation of the funding solution path they choose in 30 days and would not be permitted to change that decision after submitting it.

Re: Page 6 under ***"b. Rotating Eligibility"***:

Pages 6 & 7, Paragraphs #17, #18 & #19: The requirement of an updated Technology Plan which should pro-actively document the schools' needs and intentions could provide some safe-guard against schools inflating their 1st-year of eligibility funding requests.

No funds from a previous year should be leveraged to front-load funding for years 2015 and 2016. To do so would invalidate substantial efforts, incurred costs, and planning executed by schools following the existing processes in good faith during the 2014/2015 E-rate application processes. Additionally, if such schools get funded at the 90% Priority 2 level for 2014/2015 then said schools should at least have an imposed 2 or 3-year wait before they can reapply/qualify for additional Priority 2 funding no matter what their funding level is. This would also help ensure that a recently funded school (via 2014/15) for Priority 2 could not re-submit a new Priority 2 application moving forward just because they can (based on a specific poverty level i.e.: 90% being funded for the upcoming year). A 5-year wait would not be fair to any such 2014/15 Priority 2 funded schools as they were not aware that their exercised funding opportunity would need to last 5 years and as such would/could have planned accordingly.

One additional dynamic also needs to be considered. What if 90% sites are funded in the 1st year (Year 2015/16) then 80% sites in the second year (Year 2016/17)? What are the safe-guards/opportunities for new schools opening in the 2nd, 3rd or subsequent years that qualify at 90%? Are they embedded at the front of the funding list based on percentage…noting that they did not have the opportunity to refuse funding? They should be.

Pages 6 & 7, Paragraphs #17, #18 & #19 (continued):
Based on some of the dynamics affecting the requests and corresponding impact on available yearly funding for Priority 2 it may be advantageous to revisit the current funding matrix calculations. Instead of jumping directly from 90% to 80% levels perhaps imposing an 85% level would help. Typically, the number of funding requests that are between the 90% to 80% levels is significant. Embedding an 85% level would permit spreading such <90% requests over a two year period.

Re: Page 7 under **"*c. Annual Allocation for Internal Connections*"**:

Pages 7 & 8, Paragraphs #20, #21, & #22: We are not in support of any solution that projects/calculates Priority 2 funding based on student populations. Although such scales look logical on paper there are way too many challenges and dynamics that cannot be incorporated into any such matrices or calculations. The entities pushing for this scenario are typically large entities (or, representing large entities) that have direct interests regarding this solution. No smaller schools/libraries would advocate this solution as it would be extremely restrictive and provide road blocks in attempting to execute any school-wide initiative. Example: It is more cost effective on a long-term basis and functionally feasible to upgrade and light/activate cabling in the entire school as opposed to spreading the upgrade over a 4 year period. Keep in mind that this solution would add further challenges to the current funding dilemma where a majority of the available funding is absorbed by a small group of highly populated, low poverty entities. It would also severely impact efforts to upgrade rural-based entities, causing even more equity issues.

Re: Page 11 under **"1. C "Encouraging Cost-Effective Purchasing"**:

Page 11, Paragraph #35: "*Consortium purchasing and bulk buying*": Revision of the Queen of Peace decision to permit for bulk purchasing programs such as PEPPM would instantly provide for bulk pricing and purchasing opportunities. The elimination of such state-driven contracts (i.e.: PEPPM) has/will embed a substantial amount of additional administrative burden on both the E-rate Program (from a PIA review aspect) and the schools.

Page 11, Paragraph #35 (continued):
Construction of additional consortiums for the purpose of extended quantity discount benefits provides challenges due to every potential member within said consortium having different scoring criteria and award processes. Then there is the fear of the schools that such a consortium may be questioned or challenged which in turn would freeze their particular funding requests. Perhaps a better way to infuse collaborative quantity bid processes is to permit the schools to join consortium efforts for bidding items but allow for them to submit on their own applications (leveraging the consortium's collaborative 470/bidding processes). Additionally, perhaps consideration could be given for representatives of a group/groups of schools and/or libraries (i.e.: E-rate consultant, IU, etc.) to be permitted to orchestrate, create and coordinate the consortium. Evaluation criteria for such endeavor could be dictated by a representative group for the schools and then scored collaboratively. This solution path could infuse collaborative bid efforts for many smaller to mid-sized schools. The Program can assist this endeavor by appointing a special contact resource to assist in questions regarding the structure of such consortiums to alleviate fears and provide/confirm direction.

Page 12, Paragraph #36 - "*Technology Planning*": The need for having an adopted, updated Technology Plan should be reinstated as it pertains to supporting the funding requests for any potential E-rate funding whether it is Priority One or Priority Two. The schools and the Program must be held accountable for validating that proper planning steps and authorization are executed and documented. This would have an immediate impact on ensuring that funding being requested is in line with documented needs/initiatives. A Technology Plan should be viewed as evolving documentation which confirms direction and corresponding service/equipment needs.

Perhaps the SLD could create an online technology planning tool so that all eligible entities leveraging the program can submit their relevant data. This tool would ensure that all plans would meet specific standardized criteria as identified by the Program. Not all states have equal requirements for content which meets the SLD Program's minimal plan requirements. This tool could assist the Program in appropriately mapping applicants planning processes directly to funding requests by leveraging real time integration with review processes. Additionally, if structured correctly this new process can address a significant portion of the data mining needs of the program. This collected data can then be viewed and leveraged to address issues and corresponding updates/modifications to help manage the usefulness of the program. This tool would not take place of any state-required/mandated planning processes…it would just be to address the minimal program needs.

Re: Page 12 under **"*D. Streamlining the Administrative Process*":**

General Comment #1: Although the E-rate Program has been extremely beneficial to schools and libraries it does at times present restrictions, qualifications or changes which make it extremely challenging or impractical to operate from a process/implementation aspect. These challenges can have dire consequences in regard to project readiness and/or finances. One such item is when decisions regarding eligibility changes are made post-471 filing deadline and are leveraged against that particular funding year. Schools make strategic plans and leverage their budgets proactively to develop plans and position themselves to implement said projects. By the Program making eligibility changes post-471 filing there is probability that such changes will negatively impact or totally derail related projects. This places the school/library in significant operational and financial jeopardy as now additional resources, costs and time must be expended to address needs. The Program should adopt policy that no such changes are embedded within an open E-rate funding period. Instead, any such changes should be extensively identified before the upcoming E-rate application year.

Another process which causes hardship on schools/libraries is the cabling installation mandated service start date of July 1st or later. The challenge here is that there are limited numbers of eligible (having SPIN Numbers) cabling vendors operating in geographic location servicing the needs of multiple E-rate applicants. Based on current restrictions these vendors cannot start cabling build-out until July 1st. The problem is this restriction is impeded upon all applicants…all of which need complete, operational networks around the same time period (typically the second week of August for staff/school start up. A solution is to treat LAN cabling projects the same as WAN service cabling projects and allow for the build-out to take place before the July 1st date. This will ensure that there would be adequate time for schools to ensure that the required infrastructure is in place in time for the start of the school year. A restriction for this expanded service opportunity would be that no invoicing can take place until July 1st or later so as to align with the actual funding year. This minor change would reap big benefits and significantly reduce administrative, resource and operational stress for the schools, libraries, and E-rate vendors.

Finally, there should be an effort to address the numerous bugs and functional issues within the program's online applications/processes (or "non"-online appications/processes…which is an issue in itself) applications/processes. The program should leverage the registered E-rate consultant community with a quick online survey

General Comment #1 (continued):
where they can provide insight to a significant portion of the challenges/issues. Then the results can be reviewed, prioritized and addressed in a controlled manner. These are the stakeholders that have the most experience/knowledge regarding these items.

Re: Page 13 under ***"II. REDUCED SUPPORT FOR VOICE SERVICES"*:**

General Comment #2 (Regarding "legacy voice"): "Legacy voice" services are still quite prominent throughout a majority of schools nationally. Many times this is a direct result of broadband access availability or dependability issues. If the Program elects to attempt to start phasing out legacy voice solutions then we feel that it should be at a set reduced funding rate (x% of the schools'/libraries' aggregate Priority one funding percentage) for each year with a hard cutoff date. This would immediately start to reduce program expenditures for legacy voice solutions yet provide enough funding for the entities so as not to impose immediate hardship. Schools/libraries can then move towards broadband based web voice solutions that receive E-rate funding. The exceptions to this would be for eligible entities which reside in geographic areas with service restrictions/challenges and for emergency 911 POTS lines servicing the sites. These POTS service lines need to be included to safe-guard emergency access needs for sites in the event of an Internet or Internet Access service outage.

Additionally, during the multi-year hard cutoff date period there should be no Priority 2 funding for any voice plant cabling installation services. Such services can be very costly and would only be undertaken in attempts to pre-position the sites for ongoing legacy system functionality after termination of funding for legacy voice. Exceptions of course would be for those sites with challenges as defined above.

General Comment #3 (Regarding Hosted VoIP Service): VoIP technology/services should be retained as an eligible service and promoted by the Program with continual funding in conjunction with reduced/eliminated funding for legacy voice. This voice technology will continue to get more cost-effective as more service providers and manufacturers develop. Hosted VoIP solutions must also continue to be eligible. Many schools have migrated to these hosted voice services electing to transition away from legacy voice solutions. To eliminate funding for this type of service would be contradictory to the Program's attempt to incite next-generation voice services via broadband by eliminating legacy voice solutions.

Re: Page 18 under ***"III. DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS"*:**

General Comment #4 (Regarding Pilot Projects): Although our schools are not necessarily against "pilot projects" they are leery about leveraging the E-rate Program for the sole purpose of creating funding for data gathering purposes of some particular/selected entity(ies). Unless such pilots would have strong consideration and corresponding funding for across the board implementation to all stakeholders moving forward then valuable, limited Program funding should not be used here. This is especially so at this time as the Program is being totally re-engineered and available funding for any such projects would not be known upfront. The goal should be to concentrate and dedicate funding for known services/items and leave such pilot projects to special interest groups and other funding mechanisms outside of E-rate.

Page 19, Paragraph #58. Re: "*Technical Assistance…*": This item could actually have benefits that not only serve the schools and libraries but also the Program itself. A large majority of the eligible entities are experiencing staffing resource challenges which typically extend into the technology areas. These entities are then tasked to attempt to identify technology services and/or equipment functionality to support their schools'/libraries' needs. Unfortunately, broad-based experience and knowledge that transcends across the multitude of technology disciplines is often lacking which contributes to incomplete or extensive solutions which fall short of being functionally adequate and/or cost-effective. For E-rate to set a flat amount available for each site to leverage for such consulting/planning or validation services could go a long way in validating strategies/projects and reducing administrative pressure for the schools. The purpose of making the amount a set amount is that it would eliminate 3rd parties from inflating service fees and it would allow for easy cost projections for the Program regarding this initiative.

Additionally, any such consulting providers should be required to register a "consultant number" just as E-rate consultants do. As part of that registration process that consultant would have to certify that they are vendor/service provider agnostic with no business ties with any such parties. Consultants that are registered within the E-rate Program could provide for both services thus providing for a more cohesive, seamless overall E-rate funding strategy for the eligible entities. Some schools already realize their challenges and leverage E-rate/Technology consultants as opposed to E-rate filers to ensure that the technical, strategic planning and cost-effective aspects of their E-rate

Page 19, Paragraph #58 (continued):

applications are met. To augment funding for these schools for this service initiative would be a welcome confirmation to those entities that their extended efforts are/were warranted.