

April 1, 2014

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

Re: Proceeding Number 13-184

Dear Sir/Madame,

I am writing today in response to the FCC's Public Notice (PN): Wireline Competition Bureau Seeks Focused Comment on E-Rate Modernization which, among other things, examines how to distribute \$2 billion in found funding for the E-Rate program. The E-Rate program currently represents the only source of federal funding aimed at educational technology and it critical in providing discounts to assist schools (like mine) to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.

Eastmont School District serves 5,600 high poverty students (57% free or reduced) in a rural farming community that produces fruits such as apples, cherries, peaches, and pears. We also grow grapes and are made into quality wines that may likely be served on your very own table. E-Rate is critical to our district. Not only has it enabled basic connectivity for all our schools, it is now supporting improvements necessary to meet ever increasing digital technology.

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. The final proposal must include both programmatic restructuring and a permanent increase in the program's funding cap. Quite simply, an infusion of funding without programmatic restructuring is a poor investment, and programmatic restructuring without permanent, adequate funding sets the program on a path towards instability and failure.

The \$2 billion (over two years) in found funding for E-Rate is a strong step in the right direction, as is focusing the funds on Priority Two (internal connections). Connectivity is an annual expense, though, and I am concerned that the proper focus on modernization and build out will come with sustained increased program demand that far exceeds the current program funding level and the inevitable funding cliff that will come when the \$2 billion is spent down. In fact, the most recent application cycle for E-Rate (closing March 26, 2014) totaled more than \$2.225 billion for one year, already exceeding the \$2 billion the FCC proposes for two years.

It is my hope that the final changes to the E-Rate program position to program to continue to fulfill its original promise of connectivity in the broader context of equity, local decision making, and technological neutrality. More specifically to the FCC's proposal:

- Support technological neutrality
- Oppose any effort to set aside a specific portion of E-Rate dollars for Priority Two
- Oppose any proposal that would distribute E-Rate funding on the basis of a per-capita (ie, per-student) basis
- Support Streamlining Administrative Process
- Support Voice Services
- Oppose demonstration projects within E-Rate funding

Any change to E-Rate would leave our district in great difficulty. Our students would be left without the experiences common for the more affluent communities in our nation.

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,

Garn Christensen

Dr. Garn Christensen
Superintendent