



May 5, 2014

Marlene H. Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: *California Emerging Technology Fund Ex Parte Filing for WC 13-184, Modernization of the E-rate Program for Schools and Libraries*

Dear Ms. Dortch:

This is a timely-filed ex parte filing relating to the above-referenced docket, the Modernization of the E-rate program for Schools and Libraries, a permit-but-disclose proceeding.

On May 1, 2014, Commissioner Mignon Clyburn and Adonis Hoffman, her Chief of Staff and Senior Legal Advisor, Media, toured the School2Home program at John Muir Middle School located at 5929 South Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles, California, at the invitation of the California Emerging Technology Fund (CETF), a non-profit organization dedicated to bridging the Digital Divide in California.

Attendees:

Kurt Lowry, Principal, John Muir Middle School
Ronald Chandler, Chief Information Officer, LAUSD
Richard Quinones, Consultant to the Office of the CIO, LAUSD
Liliana Vasquez, Director of Operations, LA's Promise
Hector Hernandez, Blended Learning Technology Coordinator, LA's Promise
Norma Fernandez, L.A. Technology Adoption Manager, EveryoneOn
Susan Walters, Senior Vice President, CETF
Agustin Urgiles, Director of Education, CETF
Darrell Stewart, Board of Director, CETF
Rachelle Chong, Chair, Board of Experts, and Attorney to CETF
Wendy Alviso, Community Representative, LA's Promise
David Arenas, Problem Solving Coordinator, John Muir Middle School
David Hernandez, Teacher, John Muir Middle School
Eileen Hiss, Director of Teaching and Learning, LA's Promise
Sergio Alvarez, Teacher, John Muir Middle School
Lourdes Martinez, Teacher, John Muir Middle School
Laura Schafenacker, Teacher, John Muir Middle School
Susana Olmos, Teacher, John Muir Middle School

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Phungthao Dinh, Teacher, John Muir Middle School

Bryan Ramos, Teacher, John Muir Middle School

Commissioner Clyburn and Mr. Hoffman observed three classrooms where John Muir teachers were interacting with their middle school students using electronic learning devices (iPads) powered by internal wireless Internet connections. They participated in small group discussions with John Muir faculty, school administrators, and community-based organizations. The Commissioner and her Chief of Staff also visited with the after school "Mouse Squad" class of students, who are learning to perform first level troubleshooting on IT issues.

The written materials distributed to the Commissioner are attached hereto and include an agenda, a program fact sheet entitled "School2Home: Empowering Students, Transforming Lives," a "Highlights of CETF Recommendations on E-Rate Reform and Modernization" summary document relating to CETF's April 7, 2014 Comment filing in the above-referenced docket, and a CETF Annual Report for 2013-2014.

School2Home representatives emphasized that the purpose of the program is to train teachers how to integrate technology into learning and to teach the students to use the electronic learning device as a tool for gaining knowledge. Employers need students with Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) skills and this program greatly enhances student preparation for the California workforce. The attendees discussed some of the challenges and benefits associated with the School2Home program and issues relating to E-rate reform:

- The LAUSD expressed the need for adequate Internet connectivity and bandwidth to power all the electronic learning devices – described as "must haves" with "no turning back on the use of digital media in the classroom" -- in the hands of LAUSD faculty, students and administrators;
- The LAUSD and school staff advocated the E-rate fund allow the purchase of electronic learning devices with less emphasis on hardware, like servers and routers;
- The teachers described the need for professional development and teaming/coaching for teachers to learn to effectively teach using digital media to engage the students' imagination and keep them in school;

- The school staff and LA's Promise spoke about the critical need for an affordable broadband rate for low income students at home, in order for these students to do their homework, collaborate with other students and ask questions of their teachers after school hours;
- The CETF staff described how current discounted broadband service offers are inadequate in low income communities in Los Angeles, and how no access at home greatly disadvantages a low income student seeking to improve his or her academic performance;
- The LAUSD and CETF staff described the importance of schools and libraries becoming community WiFi "hotspots" to serve low income families, foster children, and 12,000 homeless children in LAUSD who cannot afford home broadband services after hours;
- The LA's Promise staff discussed the critical S2H program component of six hours of parental training on the learning device before it is allowed to go home with the student, in order to coach the parents on how to use the device, how to send email to the school/teacher, and check student grades and attendance;
- The LA's Promise, CETF, and school staff stated how important the role of each partner in School2Home is, particularly the community partners who hold the trust and relationships with the low income community, and the corporate partners that provide technical expertise, discounted or free electronic devices, software, hardware, apps, and discounted home broadband services;
- The CETF staff talked about the need for the FCC, where applicable, to hold corporate programs strictly accountable for commitments made especially for affordable broadband offers to low income communities;
- The School2Home staff shared that it has data showing greatly enhanced and quantifiable student achievement, including grades, standardized test performance, attendance, and reducing disciplinary issues;
- The John Muir faculty reported that the School2Home program improved student research skills, learning self-sufficiency, in addition to improving student collaboration and student-teacher communication;
- The John Muir staff and faculty reported the challenges include sustainability of the School2Home program and desired expansion by LAUSD of the program to all schools;

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- The LAUSD described its need to leverage the FCC E-rate program in order to have adequate bandwidth and capacity to serve the increasing broadband demand from all schools in the District, and requested the FCC simplify the difficult and complex E-rate application process and discount methodology;
- The LAUSD and CETF staff discussed raising the FCC-set E-rate cap based on an up-to-date baseline of spending, based on hard data of recent years of USAC requests for Priority 2 funding for high capacity broadband connections, internal wireless networks, and related hardware, software, and other necessary services;
- The CETF staff raised the issue of the contribution base for the E-rate and the need to expand it, due to the change in technologies since 1996 when the E-rate was implemented;
- The CETF staff expressed the need for transparency in how E-rate funding is spent, including support for the idea of a public online dashboard showing the public how a school district is spending its E-rate funds; and
- A CETF request for the FCC Commissioners to show federal leadership in requesting technology be integrated into federal programs, including, for example, Department of Education programs explicitly, affordable housing units being Internet-ready, sustainable public computer centers, workforce development, and rural economic development programs.

The participants from CETF and LAUSD referenced generally the arguments contained in their respective Comments filed April 7, 2014 in the E-rate Modernization docket, WC 13-184.

Sincerely yours,



Rachelle B. Chong
Attorney for CETF

cc: The Honorable Mignon Clyburn
Mr. Adonis Hoffman