

May 9, 2014

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

Re: Notice of Ex Parte – WC Docket No. 13-184
New Hope Technology Foundation

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On May 7, 2014, John Hughes III, President, New Hope Technology Foundation (“New Hope”) and Ray Spain, Superintendent, Warren County Schools, North Carolina (the “Superintendent”), along with Paul Besozzi and Koyulyn Miller of Patton Boggs LLP, counsel to New Hope, met with Lisa Hone, Deputy Bureau Chief, and Patrick Halley, Associate Bureau Chief, both of the Wireline Competition Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), to discuss certain matters raised in the Commission’s E-Rate reform proceeding.¹

During the meeting, the New Hope representative and Superintendent discussed the importance of E-Rate reform, expressing in particular concerns regarding: (1) the potential negative impact of eliminating support for legacy voice services, including cellular and Voice over Internet Protocol (“VoIP”); (2) the importance of predictable, focused funding for broadband deployment inside the schools; and (3) the need for permanent expansion of the fund to meet these important growing needs.

First, New Hope and the Superintendent explained that if support for cellular and VoIP, which are ongoing necessary services, were reduced or eliminated, the ability of the school districts to match funds for other services would be affected, or other cost reductions (e.g., staff) would have to be made. Therefore, retention of—at a minimum—cellular and VoIP was essential. Particularly, the Superintendent spoke about how his schools, which rely on VoIP almost completely for telephone service, are receiving VoIP services, the pricing involved, and the availability of those services to others. They also discussed the cost of transitioning the schools to VoIP, and the cost of maintenance and upkeep of the network. Finally, they discussed use of cellular service.

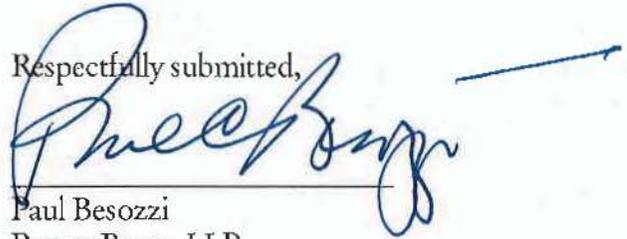
¹ *Modernizing the E-rate Program for Schools and Libraries*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, WC Docket No. 13-184, 28 FCC Rcd 11304 (2013); *Wireline Competition Bureau Seeks Focused Comment on E-rate Modernization*, Public Notice, DA 14-1308 (Wireline Comp. Bur. Mar. 6, 2014).

Second, New Hope and the Superintendent described the difficulties in planning and approving annual budgets without knowing with certainty the timing or level of funding support. Specific reference was made to the impact of the lack of support for internal connections for a number of recent years. In particular, the lack of any Priority 2 funding for Funding Year ("FY") 2013 and likely FY 2014 was cited. As New Hope explained, getting internet "beyond the front door" has been challenging to say the least.

Third, New Hope and the Superintendent stressed the fact that to effectively meet the growing demands for broadband deployment in the schools, the size of fund must be permanently increased. By way of example, they noted the prospect of shifting funds from other USF programs (e.g., Lifeline).

Both New Hope and the Superintendent urged that this input from, and on behalf of, school district managers living with the E-Rate Program on a daily basis be given strong consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



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cc: Lisa Hone
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