



June 30, 2014

AESA represents 550 Educational Service Agencies (ESAs) across the country. In many cases ESAs provide technical assistance to our member school districts (about 80% of all districts in the country) and are users of E-rate ourselves. We have some serious concerns about the proposed funding changes being considered.

- The proposed change in funding to per pupil rather than those who are neediest and in poverty completely changes the original intent of the statute.
- In those districts where the cost of access is high and rural in nature – they would receive less money than they are now and those districts who have a high number of students and because of their population probably have cheaper access would receive more money. It doesn't make sense.
- The lack of long range funding and changes in what is covered with further cause problems – particularly for smaller, rural and poverty stricken areas.
- This approach doesn't solve the problems – it makes them worse.

We believe there are solutions, including:

- Continuing the approach we are now using and infusing money into the system so that it can help reduce the gap between the have's and have-nots.
- If a five year timeline is used – then fund all five years and not enact changes that could make cost containment impossible for districts.
- Concentrate funding in Priority 1 areas until all students have adequate connectivity prior to shifting funding to Priority 2.

AESA continues to support the E-Rate program and applauds the goal of helping all children being able to equitably access the internet. We are pleased to be able to share some of our thoughts with you and hope that there will be some reconsideration given to the proposed changes.

Sincerely,

Lee Warne  
Executive Director  
AESAs