



Superintendent of Schools
Alberto M. Carvalho

Miami-Dade County School Board
Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair
Dr. Martin Karp, Vice Chair
Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall
Susie V. Castillo
Carlos L. Curbelo
Dr. Lawrence S. Feldman
Dr. Wilbert "Tee" Holloway
Dr. Marta Pérez
Raquel A. Regalado

March 4, 2013

Ex Parte Notice

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

Schools and Libraries Universal Service Support Mechanism, CC Docket No. 02-6

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On February 11, 2013, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) hosted a visit from Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel and Ms. Priscilla Argeris at our iPrep Academy in Miami, Florida. In attendance to welcome them were Ms. Debbie Karcher, Chief Information Officer; Dr. Sylvia J. Diaz, Administrative Director, Instructional Technology; Mr. Javier Pérez, Executive Director, ITS Infrastructure and Systems Support; Dr. Anthony D. Machado, Director, E-Rate Management; Ms. Linda S. Trupia, District Supervisor, Instructional Support; and Ms. Layda M. Nasr, Senior Assistant Principal at iPrep Academy.

Our District's iPrep Academy, as well as the opportunities these types of innovative, technology-rich environments provide students, was showcased. Staff also emphasized the importance of the E-Rate Program in supporting the internet connectivity required for pioneering programs such as these. In addition, the funding crisis, including the impending loss of internal connections funding for such novel projects and for all schools and school districts nationwide, was discussed.

As a result of the discussion of the funding crisis, Commissioner Rosenworcel was provided with a copy of the attached presentation, previously prepared by Funds For Learning (FFL), LLC, a consultant company providing E-Rate support. M-DCPS, however, does not avail itself of their services. The FFL plan, as presented, retains the E-Rate Program's fundamentally important aspects, including the discount matrix. Additionally, it addresses the two problematic issues: funding predictability and equitable distribution of funds – "the blank check". These are issues that M-DCPS has wrestled with over the years.

A key feature of this plan would provide applicants an anticipated annual funding budget based on a per-student budget basis at the District level. This is a simple and logical solution to a very serious problem and one we fully support, as discussed with Commissioner Rosenworcel. Operating within a budget is something every organization understands. It allows for school districts to plan and use the E-Rate funds more effectively.

Additionally, districts would be permitted to use these federal funds to purchase eligible services/equipment as needed at the local level, thus restoring to all applicants the flexibility to allocate their program discounts in a manner that best suits their local needs and eliminating the need to retain the 2/5 Rule in the books.

In summary, the FFL plan would enable the Commission to allow applicants to set their own E-Rate budget priorities, thus providing the flexibility and predictability they need to make intelligent planning and purchasing decisions, as outlined in their Technology Plans. M-DCPS strongly believes that implementation of these simple adjustments to the E-Rate program would ensure that local needs be the only driving force behind E-Rate procurements. This practice led to the E-Rate Program's early success and is even more integral to its sustainability today.

Sincerely,



Alberto M. Carvalho
Superintendent of Schools

AMC:ig
L829

Attachment

cc: Ms. Milagros R. Fornell
Ms. Debbie Karcher
Dr. Sylvia J. Diaz
Mr. Javier Pérez
Dr. Anthony D. Machado
Ms. Linda S. Trupia
Ms. Layda M. Nasr