PRESENTATION BY
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BEFORE THE
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OPEN COMMISSION MEETING
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Good morning. I am John Word, principal of Kenmore Middle School which is just across the bridge in Arlington, VA. Kenmore is Arlington's Arts and Communications Technology Focus School. I am delighted to be here to contribute to the discussion on how and why the FCC should continue to support all schools and libraries in their quest to increase connectivity and technology integration.

I began my career in education as a social studies teacher at Thomas Stone High School in Waldorf, Maryland. I worked as a teacher, Instructional supervisor, assistant principal and principal with the District of Columbia Public Schools prior to serving in my current capacity. I want to acknowledge the work of this commission and its ongoing advocacy for technology integration in schools and specifically its role in getting schools connected. If my memory serves me well there was not much if any noticeable technology in classrooms and schools when I began teaching in 1979. My first appointment as principal was in 1993 at Garnet-Patterson Middle School here in Washington, DC. When I was appointed principal we embraced a theme, “Communications Technology the Link to the 21st Century". During those times there was a great deal of excitement about the change of the millennium. There was a fair amount of anxiety about technology and our readiness to harness its power and stay competitive globally. While at Garnet-Patterson I had the experience of being a part of some exciting projects. In those days there were teams of "techies” that would come to schools on call and assist with installation of Internet cable. In 1993, we converted a typing classroom to a computer lab, installed computer labs on each of three floors and added a distance learning classroom. We were one of the first schools to have Internet access.

In 1998, I was appointed principal of Kenmore. One of my responsibilities was to continue the relatively new mission of integrating technology. Most educators agree that integrating technology is a powerful enhancement to teaching and learning. Sometimes schools don't have the training, hardware, software and accessibility necessary to realize the desired outcomes. During my tenure at Kenmore we moved from a 50 year old building to one that was designed with technology integration at its core. We are a wireless school community with a 3 to 1 student to computer ratio. All of our classrooms are equipped with smart boards, scanners and 1/3 with audio enhancement systems. The goal of the district is to be at 1 to 1 by 2017. We have six computer labs, at least two computers in every classroom, four classrooms designed to facilitate the Read 180 program, 5 laptop carts, 4 iPad carts, TV Production studio, technology education lab, business education lab, family and consumer sciences lab, and a distance learning lab. Last year we provided every instructional staff member with an iPad. For the past two years, we participated in a state funded "iPads in algebra project". Our algebra pass rate improved from 79% passing in 2012 to 94% pass rate in 2013.

In Arlington, eRate money has been used to support school infrastructure which includes cabling for computers, wireless, mobile devices, and telecommunications. For example, for the past two years we have provided any family in need with a laptop. The eRate money helped to provide the infrastructure that allows these families to have after school hours Internet access wirelessly at any APS school facilities including our libraries and recreation centers. We are hopeful that eRate funds will help us make our schools ready to support our expected 1 to 1 student ratio in the coming years and the growing numbers of faculty and students bringing the own devices on campus.

Many of our students utilize Internet based enrichment programs like Read 180 and Think Through Math. Most students who invest the prescribed number of hours on the Scholastic Read 180 program have shown remarkable gains in their reading scores as measured by lexile growth on the Scholastic Reading Inventory or SRI. Read 180 is a program that is designed for students who are reading two or more years below grade level. There are five components to the daily instruction, one of which is driven by instructional software. The class is taught in a daily 90 minute block with about 12 students. We use the program for identified students with disabilities. Most students who are enrolled in the program in 6th grade are able to return to

fully integrated class by 8th grade. This kind of success builds a student's academic confidence. Likewise, we have a cohort of students who come to school early and spend time working on the Think Through Math enrichment program. These students are able to work on the program away from school if they have internet connectivity. We are able to offer Chinese, Arabic, and Latin in a distance learning format using our distance learning lab. It is very unlikely that we would be able to offer these classes if we were not able to use the distance learning process. Our enrollment in foreign languages, which are high school credit bearing classes, has increased and I see a pattern of students studying native languages which heretofore were not available.

The use and integration of technology has had a tremendous positive impact on our students and staff. One of our students came to our school from Bangladesh in 6th grade. By the time he completed this school year he was designing web pages as a hobby and had been invited to serve on the Superintendent's Council for the Advancement of Technology. Last year Kenmore pioneered a program called KidWind; an initiative to encourage "green" energy solutions through the design and construction of a functional scale windmill. Students printed over 50 different components using the four 3D printers in the lab and assembled the entire windmill with snap-fit precision. Five students traveled down to James Madison University to compete against many other teams in the middle and high school divisions. Students finished second overall in the state and look forward to multiple entries next year. This project was featured on the channel 9 news. Some of these students had shown that they were academically strong but had not found the connection at school to bring out the best of their talent.

Two years ago we launched a Laptop Loaner program that targeted a group of boys who had to earn their laptop by conducting community service or earning good grades. Over 50 students earned their computers in almost no time. Additionally, any student who had a demonstrated need was able to earn a laptop.

8th Grade Geography used arts and technology integration to create "Geo-Jingles" that were student-created songs about regions of the world. I heard a student comment that by doing this project she felt included and important in the learning process.

We have two teachers who have been named SMART Exemplary educators. This entitles them to an array of support materials such as Smart boards, student response systems and the opportunities to showcase their skills with

colleagues locally and nationally. These experiences have transformed their teaching. One is on track to become a math coach; the other is slated to lead a revolutionary “collaborative classroom” this year. Our technology education teacher inspires and leaves most who watch his work with students in awe.

This year our district is in the process of making a change in the student information management system. One of the highlights of the new system is its accessibility for parents and students to connect digitally. Parents and students will be able to see upcoming lessons and grades in live time.

Unlike the classroom that I inherited at the start of my career we have just installed a "Collaborative Classroom” that has four smart boards and a 50 inch touch screen TV. As a result of the connectivity that we enjoy today our school is a place where our teachers and students are interacting with limitless constituents, with endless possibilities and always display the joy of learning.

I want to thank you for all of the work that you’ve done on behalf of schools and libraries across the country and for organizing this program so that all schools and libraries can benefit from your insight and work to increase broadband access and technology integration. This is powerful and transformative work and I commend you for your commitment thus far.