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E-rate has provided funds for the Clarke County School System that has allowed us to network nine schools and the Central Office and provide Internet access to all schools and Central Office. E-rate funding has provided us with the ability to up-date our equipment as necessary to keep up with the ever-changing technology needs in our school system. Every school has two network servers that contains administrative, media center and classroom software that is offered to the appropriate people through use of the network.

We are part of a consortium that receives our Internet access through Alabama Supercomputer Authority and this is funded by E-rate funds. Without E-rate funding we would not be able to afford Internet access. We are a rural school system and Internet access provides our students with distance-learning capabilities that would not be readily available without this funding. Our Media Centers provide Internet access for students and parents after school hours on a schedule basis.

I don't like to think about what our system would do without E-rate funding. We rely on our telecommunication funds (provided by BEAR forms) to purchase technology supplies such as switches, patch cables, hard drives, network cards, sound cards, and various other necessities that we have not had time to apply for e-rate funding to receive or were ineligible for e-rate funds. We rely on Internal Connections funding to wire our school buildings and provide network and Internet in the classrooms. We rely on basic maintenance provided by E-rate to maintain our servers so that all our schools can use the network and Internet with as little down time as possible.

When continued E-rate funding is being considered and how it has benefited the school systems in the State of Alabama, I have to suggest that you talk to students and hear how they how used our network and the Internet and see what it has done for them. They are the reason we need E-rate funding and need to think of their future and how they will be trained to meet the technological needs in the world they live in.

Thank you for your consideration.