

CLAY COUNTY SCHOOLS

Office

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Ben H. Griffin, Jr.
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Board of Education

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September 15, 2005

Clay County Board of Education was able to build its entire infrastructure with the aid of E-rate funding. This included the wiring of all buildings in each school, the leasing of a wireless internet telecommunications system for internet, internet services and internet maintenance. Without the aid of these funds our system would still be operating with a dial-up modem to a limited number of computers with in our school system. We are a rural economically deprived area, with a limited amount of local funds available for technology.

Currently, we are seeking funding from the SLD for the replacement of servers in our schools. Our servers are operating with Windows NT, they are approximately 8 – 9 years old. The matching funds for the servers will be EETA Formula Grant. If we receive funding commitments from E-rate for the servers will be able to use the reimbursement to upgrade our wiring closet equipment that has also become outdated.

Our system has also applied for e-rate funding for distance learning equipment. Our students are not receiving the same educational opportunities as those in other parts of Alabama. We are able to offer them the basic requirements for the Alabama High School Diploma and Advanced Diploma with only a few electives. With the distance learning equipment and the internet services we would be able to provide our students the same educational opportunities as those across the country.

Clay County School System has been under severe financial cutbacks the past few years, having closed two of six schools and cutting back on teachers units. Our board has not approved of hiring a computer technician or data support personnel for the system. As the technology coordinator, I am assigned those jobs, plus others within the central office, so funding for the internet maintenance contract on a part time basis has been our only

means of providing any technical support for the schools and our internet system.

We use local funds as a match for our internet, internet wide area network and internet maintenance contract. The State Department has placed many mandatory requirements for the administrative offices at each school for the use of technology, without funding these projects. Our schools have had to provide the computer workstations, the software and software maintenance contract for the mandatory day to day operations from local funding.

Discontinuing the E-rate program would be discontinuing the Internet Services our students now have and technology opportunities for the future would end. Why in America do we have "NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND", without the E-rate program, children of Clay County will be left behind.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Mitchell".

Betsy Mitchell
Technology Coordinator