

September 19, 2005

Ms. Kim Carroll
Alabama Supercomputer Authority
401 Adams Avenue, Suite 758
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-9553

Dear Ms. Carroll,

I am pleased that you will have an opportunity to talk with our Alabama Senators and Representatives during your visit to Washington, D.C. Please share with them the importance of keeping the E-rate program, and how vital E-rate is in providing Internet access, telecommunication services, and internal connections to this rural school system.

Through high-speed Internet access our students participate in core courses from the Alabama Online High School and electives through the Virtual High School, located in Boston, Massachusetts. In the absence of *Highly Qualified* Spanish teachers, our students are able to receive online instruction from foreign language teachers located throughout Alabama. Students needing electives and enrichment courses are able to choose from among 200 electives offered through the Virtual High School. While taking these electives, our students communicate with students from across our country and the world. Classmates may be from any participating state or country, including Washington, Maine, Georgia, Singapore, Brazil, or China. Students in other parts of our country and world are also recipients of courses from Alabama. Currently, I teach two elective courses, *To Kill A Mockingbird – Microcosm to the World*, based upon the novel by Nelle Harper Lee, and *Around the World in 80 Days* by Jules Verne. The ability to access the Internet and receive these courses is made possible through E-rate.

Our school system also provides video-conferencing courses, including Spanish, history, and science to our students. E-rate makes it possible to access these telecommunication services, maximize personnel, and deliver coursework to schools that lack specific course offerings and personnel. Photos are enclosed from several of our schools that participate in video-conferencing and online courses.

Again, thank you for taking time to discuss our story with our Alabama Senators and Representatives. It is very important that the E-rate program continues to provide Internet and telecommunication services to our students and teachers.

Sincerely,

Brooks Steele, Director
Library Media/Technology/Federal Programs