

## Tallapoosa County Schools

Technology in today's school environment requires a major financial commitment. It is not a one-time funding problem but rather an on-going expense burden that cannot be met with regular school budgets. In Tallapoosa County, a 3400 student system located in East Central Alabama, we have a very high poverty rate and a low tax base. If we are to have modern technology for our students and administrators we must have a supplement like that contained in e-rate. Our communication technologies, subsidized by e-rate, allow us to have the following critical services:

- Phone service at our schools allows for communications between parents and teachers and gives us a security connection to emergency personnel;
- Mobile phone services further add to our security on buses and with our administrators so we can be in constant communication, especially during emergencies;
- high-speed fiber network services provides us with modern communications between our schools and to the Internet;
- Our fiber network also provides us with fully interactive Distance Learning labs in our 4 high schools that have allowed us to offer courses to our smaller high schools that otherwise could not be offered;
- Our Distance learning labs have also allowed us to have interactive field trips for our students to places like the Bronx Zoo in New York - a trip that our students could not have taken any other way;
- Through our technical maintenance agreements we are able to keep this sophisticated network properly maintained and operating;
- Our web hosting services will allow us to have easy to maintain web sites that bring us closer to our community and gives us a portal to the outside world. Our students, parents and teachers can now have additional channels of communication; and,
- One-time Internal connection rebuilds will allow us to improve our networks which are aging rapidly. The world of communication technology has changed dramatically over the last 5 years and we could not upgrade our physical plant without the help of e-rate for Internal Connections.

E-rate is no longer a nice thing to have it is the communication lifeblood of our school system. If we did not have this kind of financial help we would have to severely reduce our services to the students and community. These funds directly allow for other expenditures such as more teachers, better teachers and professional development. Most of the communication expenses are REQUIRED and therefore other services in the District would greatly suffer if we did not have E-rate funding.

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