E-Rate – the Past, Present and Future

Schools and Libraries Universal Service Support

When did E-Rate start?

When the Telecommunications Act of 1996 was signed into law, for the first time schools and libraries became eligible for Universal Service support. An explicit goal of the Act is to ensure that schools and libraries have affordable access to advanced telecommunications. On May 7, 1997, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued a unanimous ruling for implementing Universal Service.

This fund is maintained through contributions made by telecommunications providers through fees included in communications services bills.*

*currently16.1%

What Is E-Rate?

❖E-Rate is administered by Universal Service Administration Company (USAC) under the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) direction

❖Schools work with the Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) of the USAC

❖The SLD provides discounts to assist schools & libraries in obtaining telecommunications & Internet access

Dark Fiber

Dark fiber refers to unused fiber-optic cable. More strands of fiber are installed than initially needed. Allows scalability and predictable costs.

E-Rate recently (2014) added dark fiber to the list of allowed services. Dark fiber must be justified as cost effective when compared to lit services.

Initial bandwidth increases of 1,000 to 4,000 percent.

Projected ten year savings of $575,000 while increasing bandwidth by up to 400,000 percent.

Challenges with E-Rate processes - building the car as it is going down the road.

Wireless Access

2016 Funding Year:
     43 switches
     292 Wireless Access Points

2017 Funding Year:
     63 switches
     111 Wireless Access Points

Internet2

Internet2 is a not-for-profit United States computer networking consortium led by members from the research and education communities, industry, and government.   Developed to overcome the Internet's bandwidth limitations.

Provides an opportunity to increase Internet bandwidth to the district while lowering the cost of services.

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Questions

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