



The Gaggler

Bringing You a Gaggle of News Monthly

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Let Erate Pay for Your Gaggle Accounts

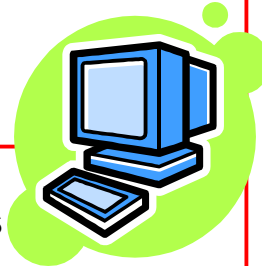
Did you know there is a government funded program that will help your school pay for its Gaggle accounts? The Schools and Libraries Program and the Universal Service Fund, more commonly known as "Erate," provides discounts and monetary assistance to schools and districts for telecommunication services, internet access, and internal connections. The purpose of the Erate program is to enable all schools to have access to these services for their students.

Funding for Erate can be requested under four categories of service: Telecommunications Services, Internet Access, Internal Connections, and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections. The Gaggle service must be requested under the "Internet Access" portion of your school's application in order for it to be eligible.

Discounts and monetary assistance from Erate is dependant on your

student population's socio-economic status and the urban/rural status of the population of your community. Discounts can range from 20% to 90% of the cost of eligible services. This means your school could pay as little as 10% for their Gaggle accounts. Schools can apply for Erate individually or as part of a larger district.

The Erate program is a wonderful solution for many school districts and allows them to afford the tools necessary to provide their students a 21st century education. If you are looking for a way to fund your school or district's Gaggle accounts, we encourage you to apply for Erate funding. You can visit the Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) website for more information on applying (<http://www.universalservice.org/sl/>). What have you got to lose!



Factors to Consider When Choosing Vendors

Price will always be a determining factor when choosing a vendor. But there are several other factors that you should consider as well.

1. Prior experience including past performance
2. Environmental objectives such as features, security, and ease of use.
3. Personnel qualifications including technical excellence
4. Management capability including schedule compliance

Erate Application Process

File Form 470 – Applicants file this form to indicate which services they would like to receive funding for. Again, Gaggle is eligible for funding under "Internet Access." The SLD is currently accepting Form 470 applications for the 07/08 school year. To begin, visit the SLD website for more information.

File Form 471 – This form identifies which vendors were selected to fulfill each request from the Form 470. The last day to file a Form 471 is typically in mid to late February. Schools must wait a minimum of 28 days after filing a Form 470 before they can file a Form 471, to allow vendors to provide each applicant with competitive bids for services.

Receive Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) – Once a Form 471 is filed, the SLD will review the requests and send a letter stating whether funding was approved or denied.

File Form 486 – Once funding is approved, file a Form 486 to indicate to the SLD that services have started with the chosen vendors.