

**Before the  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of:

Amendment of Parts 1, 21, 73, 74 and 101 of the Commission's Rules to Facilitate the Provision of Fixed and Mobile Broadband Access, Educational and Other Advanced Services in the 2150-2162 and 2500-2690 MHz Bands	)	WT Docket No. 03-66
	)	RM-10586
	)	
	)	
	)	WT Docket No. 03-67
Part 1 of the Commission's Rules Further Competitive Bidding Procedures	)	
	)	MM Docket No. 97-217
Amendment of Parts 21 and 74 to Enable Multipoint Distribution Service and the Instructional Television Fixed Service Amendment of Parts 21 and 74 to Engage in Fixed Two-Way Transmissions	)	
	)	
	)	WT Docket No. 02-68
Amendment of Parts 21 and 74 of the Commission's Rules With Regard to Licensing in the Multipoint Distribution Service and in the Instructional Television Fixed Service for the Gulf of Mexico	)	RM-9718
	)	

**TO:** The Commission

**COMMENTS OF  
THE SCHOOL BOARD OF  
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida ("School Board") submits the following comments in response to the Notice of Proposed Rule Making and Memoranda Opinion and Order, FCC 03-56, released April 2, 2003 (the "NPRM"). The School Board strongly urges that the Commission retain the educational reservation of the ITFS spectrum and supports the joint filing of the National ITFS Association and the Catholic Television Network in that regard. Further, the School Board strongly urges the Commission to adopt the recommendations of the joint filing by National ITFS Association ("NIA"), the Catholic Television Network ("CTN") and Wireless Cable Association International ("WCA") including

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the proposed bandplan, the plan for transition of the spectrum from the current to the proposed bandplan, and the related technical standards.

The School Board is the licensee of ITFS Station WHA-956 on the A Group Channels; ITFS Station WHG-230 on the C Group Channels; and ITFS Stations KTB-84 and KTB-85 on the F Group Channels in Miami, Florida. These stations, along with ITFS Station WHR-866, Miami, Florida, licensed to Friends of WLRN, Inc., and ITFS Station WHR-790, licensed to Southern Florida Instructional Television, Inc., form a coordinated ITFS system delivering twenty (20) high-power analog channels of video programming to receive sites throughout Miami-Dade County, Florida. Among the persons served by these stations are the 360,000 students and 52,000 full-time and part-time employees of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, located in more than 350 schools within Miami-Dade County. Since the initiation of the twenty channel consortium, the average annual hours of broadcast per channel has been in excess of forty (40) hours per week

The origination equipment, transmitting equipment and receiving equipment associated with the 20 ITFS channels serving Miami-Dade County have a replacement cost estimated to be in excess of Seven Million Dollars. The annual cost of operating these twenty (20) channels exceeds Eight Hundred Forty Thousand Dollars, exclusive of power costs. Some of the cost of building this system was paid with U.S. Government funds from the National Telecommunications and Information Agency's Public Telecommunications Facilities Program. Much of the system's cost was paid by local Miami-Dade County taxpayers.

The twenty (20) high-power analog ITFS channels serving Miami-Dade County are presently programmed as follows:

(a) **10 Channels** are dedicated to the **Teacher's Choice Video-On-Demand Service**

10 channels are for the actual programming on-demand.

Teachers and staff have access to ordering and/or viewing curriculum and teacher training videos 24-hours-a-day/seven (7) days per week. There are several media specialists and/or teachers who pre-program their VCRs at school sites to record several titles at a time overnight or on weekends; this is especially true for ESOL certification training which has several video component hours.

The Teacher's Choice Service averages around 11,000 requests per year from more than 1,200 teachers in over 290 school district locations.

(b) **3 Text/Menu Channels**

2 channels are dedicated to the Video-On-Demand service as menu channels for ordering video titles.

channel is used to disseminate information to the schools as needed.

(c) **7 Channels** are delivered to schools 24 hours/seven (7) days per week, as follows:

**Annenberg/CPB Channel** - Teacher Professional Development programs; WLRN, in conjunction with the Teacher Education Center of M-DCPS, offers teachers the opportunity to receive continuing education credits by viewing a schedule of Annenberg programs.

**Florida Channel** - News, legislative and public affairs programming from Tallahassee.

**NASA Channel** - Science programming from NASA.

**Florida Education Channel** - Programming from the Florida Department of Education.

**EDUSAT** - Educational programs in Spanish from Mexico.

**Cable-TAP Community Channel** - Informational programming produced by local non-profit community, social service groups, educational institutions, civic clubs and governmental agencies.

**Cable-TAP Learning Channel** - Local educational programming of interest to school district staff and parents including local student productions; channel content also contains personal and professional development programs from PBS You.

The School Board submits that it has a very substantial investment of taxpayer money in an established ITFS transmission system serving the most populous county in Florida, and the fourth largest school system in the United States. This ITFS system works well. It provides teachers, students and the citizens of Miami-Dade County with educational and instructional programming. Its operation fulfills the Congressional objective, expressed in Section 390 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, of delivering public telecommunications services to as many citizens as possible “by the most efficient and economical means, including the use of . . . nonbroadcast technologies. . .” Further, it serves the Congressional policy, expressed in Section 396 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, that “it is in the public interest to encourage the growth and development of nonbroadcast telecommunications technologies for the delivery of public telecommunications services . . .” and that “it is in the public interest for the Federal Government to ensure that all citizens of the United States have access to public telecommunications services through all appropriate available telecommunications distribution technologies

School systems throughout the United States, indeed, all elements of local government, are under severe financial stress due to the present protracted economic downturn. Here, in Florida, schools must plan for staffing increases and facilities construction needed to meet class

size reductions required by a recent amendment to Florida's Constitution. It is a significant challenge to find funds to construct the facilities and hire the personnel needed to meet the needs of Miami-Dade County's expanding school age population. Under current conditions, funds to implement new ITFS technologies are in short supply. This makes it especially important to adopt a band transition plan that preserves the substantial public investment in ITFS technologies.

The School Board submits that the Commission's adoption of the recommendations included in the joint filings by NIA/CTN/WCA and by NIA/CTN will provide school systems with the assurance that they can continue to provide valuable ITFS services to their schools and to the communities until such time as there is a financially and technically feasible means to convert to the newer and more efficient ITFS technology proposed in the joint filings. Most importantly, this will assure that, at such time as conversion occurs, funding will be available so the School Board can benefit from the new technology and preserve its thirty plus year investments in ITFS.

The bandplan and rules proposed by WCA/NIA/CTN offer the ITFS licensees in Miami-Dade County a new opportunity to expand and extend educational services. The explosion in the use of computer and web based instruction and the Internet in instruction is overwhelming the distribution capacity of educational institutions to respond to the demands from teachers and students. Current landline T-1 connections to each school, designed originally to carry administrative and provide an internal e-mail service, cannot respond to the current demand.

Even a prohibitively expensive expansion of the T-1 service could not respond to the future needs for capacity and more flexible access.

Further, there is an increasing need for students and teachers to access web based instruction and the Internet from locations where there is not a hard wired high speed connection. The absence of wireless internet technology prevents students from fully benefiting from the new instructional technologies. Adoption by the Commission of the proposals of NIA/CTN/WCA would facilitate the school system's ability to respond to that need.

The Miami-Dade County Public Schools are currently in the initial planning stage under which the School Board will maintain its ITFS service for high power video distribution, but would, as soon as technically and financially feasible, convert to a broadband technology that facilitates the delivery of video, text and graphics via a high speed digital wireless Wide Area Network using the capacity of the ITFS channels licensed to the School Board and its consortium partners. The plan foresees the maintenance of the current T-1 connections for administrative use and the use of the wireless broadband network via ITFS to significantly expand and speed student and teacher access to the new instructional methods based on computer based technologies. The School Board submits that adoption of the joint NIA/CTN/WCA proposal is important to bringing these new educational technologies to its students and faculty.

In view of the foregoing, the School Board requests adoption of the NIA/CTN/WCA joint proposals and retention of the educational reservation of the ITFS spectrum. This is the best way

to fulfill the goal of Sections 390 and 396 of the Communications Act, while expanding the technologies available in the ITFS band.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph A. Belisle". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Joseph A. Belisle

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