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Dear FIRN User,

The core mission of FIRN2 is to provide direct connectivity to school districts in support of data reporting and Internet access. When FIRN was first established, dial-up and direct connections to the Department of Education network were provided to schools in order to support educational needs and data file transmissions to the education data centers. Over the past several years, the utilization of dial-up services has shifted from classroom use to home use by teachers and administrators.

FIRN currently spends approximately \$1,116,000 per year to maintain the dial-up services being offered. We must continue to support schools that need connectivity through dial-up services, but we can no longer support local or 800 dial-up services for public school staff outside of the school day. Current estimates indicate that at least 90% of the current costs will be saved by disconnecting the service in areas where direct connection into the district network is available to schools. The Department is providing all users of FIRN with a schedule outlining which geographic areas will be terminating dial-up services. This document can be located at <http://www.firn2.net/dialups>.

Each school district is being given the opportunity to acquire "at no charge" the existing equipment and circuits used to provide dial-up services in their locale. School districts will be responsible for maintaining the local circuit(s) and absorbing associated recurring costs. In some rural areas where a commercial Internet Service Provider (ISP) is not available for school personnel, limited dial-up support will be provided by FIRN2.

While we regret the loss of dial-up services for our teachers, FIRN2's operational priorities must be addressed with the limited funding available. Standard FIRN services, such as E-mail, web pages and educational content will still be provided by FIRN2 through the Internet.

I hope this response has answered your questions and concerns. If you have further questions or wish to discuss this modification in FIRN2's service, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Other documents available at the <http://www.firn2.net> site include a list of Alternative Internet Service Providers for areas of the state.

Sincerely,
Ruben Lopez

RUBEN LOPEZ
Chief Technology Officer