WOODRIDGE
SCHOOL DISTRICT 68

memo

To:	The Board of Education and Dr. Patrick Broncato, Superintendent
From:	Curt Saindon, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services/CSBO Josh Halverson, Director of Technology Services
Date:	October 23, 2026
Subject:	Chromebook and Laptop Order/Technology Refresh Update

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As we have mentioned in prior years, we have two main purchasing cycles for refreshing our technology software and hardware, our non e-rate related purchases (typically student and staff devices, TV's and other items not covered by the e-rate program) and e-rate related purchases (the switches, routers, hubs, battery backups, wireless access points, servers and other districtwide equipment and software that supports our network). We used to bring these two purchases to the Board at the same time in late winter, order the equipment in early spring and get it in over the summer. However, with the shifting production timeframes and extended delivery cycles, we are wanting to bring the non e-rate items to the Board for approval in the late fall to get them ordered and in the production queue before Winter Break in hopes of getting the equipment in the spring or early summer for installation before the next school year starts.

The e-rate related purchases still have to go through a required Federal procurement process where we work with an e-rate consultant to post the hardware and software we would like to purchase on the Federal e-rate website for 28 days, get proposals from any interested companies, review, score and then select the best proposals, get Board approval to move forward with the purchases and then post the approved contracts on the Federal e-rate website. We have moved that process up some and hope to have those items to the Board for approval in January or February, instead of March or April, as had been done in prior years. This will be for items like network software, firewall software, switches, routers, hubs, access points, ups battery backups, servers and some other miscellaneous network equipment and related software.

We would like to bring the non e-rate related purchases to the Board for approval in November, so we can get the order in before Winter Break and hopefully get most of the stuff delivered before school is out in May, so we can get them ready over the summer and hand them out when our students return to school in August. Per cost estimates provided by our current technology device provider (Trafera), we are looking to order 616 Chromebook devices (300 for 1st Grade, 300 for 5th Grade, and 16 spares) at a cost of about $639 each (these cost $589 each

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last year), 88 Chromebook Plus devices (for ED and MD staff) at a cost of about $1,379 each (these were $1,199 last year) and 38 Lenovo ThinkPad Laptop devices (for DAC and Student Services staff) at a cost of about $1,789 each (these were $1,399 last year). These prices includes a case, a charger, a four-year warranty and a basic software bundle for each device, and the total cost for the device purchases this year would be about $583,047 (last year we spent $533,650, or about $50K less, for 84 more of these devices). As you can see, prices have increased dramatically due to the shortage of high speed memory and processing chips created by the exploding demand for these products for use in AI Data Centers. This "memory shortage" is a nationwide issue that is causing all kinds of problems and cost increases for technology devices in multiple areas where processing and memory functions are impacted by the shortage of these high speed chips. Whereas we used to see prices for these devices trending down over time as the technology became "better and cheaper", we are now seeing it increase exponentially because of the shortage of chips and the cost of rare earth metals used to produce them.

We do not need any servers or other large network equipment this year, but we do plan to order some replacement docking stations (2), monitors (2) and TV's (5) and Vivi Casting Licenses (280) for staff and classroom use, at a total estimated cost of about $39,020. Pricing for these items is largely unchanged from last year and the total cost difference this year compared to last year (we spent about $58K last year for these items) is related solely to purchasing less of these items this year. Therefore, the total estimated cost for all non e-rate related purchases is expected to be about $621,978 this year, as compared to $592,540 last year (about a 5% overall cost increase), but we are ordering significantly less Chromebook devices this year (616 this year compared to 700 last year) due to changing student needs. The final cost will depend on exact quantities and final pricing as established when the order is placed and a purchase order is issued in November after Board approval.

E-rate purchases will be priced out and estimated to the Board in December for discussion purposes with Board approval of the requested e-rate purchases based on final bid results and pricing in January. We are expecting to purchase a few battery backups for Edgewood and Meadowview and some new districtwide Firewall Software to replace our old Palo Alto Firewall, but not any routers, hubs, switches, wireless access points, or other related network hardware or software. The total expected cost of the E-Rate equipment will be minimal when compared to the non E-Rate purchases mentioned above, and the cost will be split 40% to the school district and 60% to the E-Rate program. We will not actually purchase any e-rate related items until we receive notification from the SLC that the items have been approved for the 60% e-rate discount, as outlined in the program guidelines (hopefully in February or March).

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This memo is for information and discussion purposes and if you have any questions please let us know. Our plan would be to bring the actual purchase request for the non e-rate related software and equipment, along with a detailed listing of the items, quantities and estimated amounts, as an action item to the Board in November, and with Board approval we would then issue a purchase order and place the order immediately thereafter. All funds for both sets of purchases that are not covered by the e-rate grant program are budgeted for and paid for out of the school district's instructional technology department purchased services and equipment budget, as appropriate. Again, please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information. Thank you.