



**NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
M E M O R A N D U M**

**TO:** Qaiyaan Harcharek, President  
Members of the School Board

**THROUGH:** Pauline Harvey, Superintendent

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*Pauline Harvey*  
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**THROUGH:** Fadil Limani, Chief Financial Officer

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*Fadil Limani*  
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**FROM:** Everett Haimes, Information Technology Director

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*Everett Haimes*  
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**DATE:** 3-22-21

**SUBJECT:** Contracts over \$10,000 – GCI E-Rate

Memo No: SB21-154

**(Action Item)**

**2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY**

**4.0 FINANCIAL & OPERATIONAL STEWARDSHIP:** Effectively employ our operational and financial resources to support our strategic goals and long-term stability of the district.

**4.1 FACILITIES:** Establish safe, modern and high-performing learning facilities.

**4.2 FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP/MANAGEMENT:** Ensure financial management based on what is best for our students.

**4.5 TECHNOLOGY:** Leverage technology as a tool to facilitate learning, communication and collaboration.

**Issue Summary:**

In accordance with applicable Board policy, contracts and MOA’s \$10,000 or greater require Board approval. BP 3312

**Background:**

The Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) is an independent, not-for-profit corporation created in 1997 to collect universal service contributions from telecommunications carriers and administer universal support mechanisms (programs) designed to help communities across the country secure access to affordable telecommunications services. USAC carries out its functions as the administrator of the federal universal service programs and Universal Service Fund (USF) under the oversight of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

USAC administers universal service programs for high cost companies in rural areas, low-income consumers, rural health care providers, and schools and libraries.

The universal service Schools and Libraries Program, commonly known as "E-rate," provides discounts of up to 90 percent to help eligible schools and libraries in the United States obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access. The program is intended to ensure that schools and libraries have access to affordable telecommunications and information services.

Eligible participants include public and most non-profit K-12 schools as well as all public and many private libraries. Program participants may request funding in five categories of service: Telecommunications, Telecommunications Services, Internet Access, Internal Connections, and Basic

Maintenance of Internal Connections. Discounts for support depend on the level of poverty and the urban/rural status of the population served and range from 20 percent to 90 percent of the costs of eligible services.

**Length of Contract:**

The length of contract shall be for 3 years and commence on July 1, 2021 and term June 30, 2024.

**Funding Source and Contract Amount:**

The identified funding source is derived from the Communications/Phone/Post Account Code 100.250.355.000.433. The total not to exceed contract amount for the 3 years is \$18,322,200.00. The Yearly amount is \$6,107,400 (\$508,950.00 monthly). The District's current eligibility rate is at 70%. As such, the District's share of the cost associated with such Contract for the 3 years is \$5,496,660 (Annual District Cost \$1,832,220/Monthly District Cost \$152,685).

Considering this is a 3-year contract, future years are subject annual appropriations by the Board of Education through the adoption of the annual budget.

**Budget Line Transfer:**

N/A

**Grant Funds:**

Yes. This Program is funded through USAC.

**Compliance with BP 3311:**

The Schools and Libraries (E-rate) program funding year 2021 filing window is January 15th, 2021 through March 25th, 2021. In compliance with USAC/FCC federal filing requirements, the North Slope Borough School District publicly posted an E-Rate Category 1 Internet Circuit Request for Proposals (RFP) from February 11th, 2021 to March 11th, 2021, detailed as follows.

March 10th, 2021 (Bid receipt):

The day prior to the E-Rate posting window closure of 4:00pm on March 11th, 2021, four bid packets were received, and as interpreted by the mailing labels and couriers, were determined to have originated from Alaska Communications (ACS), General Communications, Inc. (GCI), Microcom, and Leonardo DRS. Upon receipt of each packet, photographs of the sealed packets were delivered via email to the vendors as confirmation of timely receipt. No additional or late bid packets were received.

March 15th, 2021 (Evaluation committee formation and bid opening):

An evaluation committee was composed consisting of Assistant Superintendent Dr. David Jones, Chief Financial Officer Fadil Limani, and Information Technology Director Everett Haimes. In addition to the evaluation committee, School Board Secretary Chelsie Overby was designated witness and minutes taker, and, having an active support contract with the District, SERRC E-Rate coordinator Kela Halfmann was designated advisor. Once the evaluation committee was established, bids were unsealed by committee member Everett Haimes, contents were inventoried, photographed, and securely stored. In compliance with RFP requirements, all respondents included electronic copies of bid materials on flash drives which were distributed to evaluation committee members Dr. David Jones, Fadil Limani, Everett Haimes, advisor Kela Halfmann, and Superintendent Pauline Harvey.

March 17th, 2021 (Respondent presentations and evaluations):

Evaluation committee members convened in preparation of upcoming presentations which began promptly at 9:00am. Each respondent was given thirty (30) minutes to deliver their presentations, including introductions and quick briefing. In order to maximize presentation time for the respondents, each respondent was instructed that unless they preferred to utilize their time with questions and answers, the evaluation committee intended to provide follow-up questions via email at 12:00pm, having email responses due by 2:00pm the same day. Upon conclusion of the presentations, follow-up questions were finalized and delivered to the respondents shortly after 12:00pm. All respondents promptly responded and for the remainder of the day, with the assistance of the board secretary and advisor, the evaluation committee began evaluating the materials. Recordings and audio transcripts were thoroughly reviewed and documented, fair, pragmatic, and objective cost evaluation was applied to comparable three-year contract proposals, and discrepancies were carefully evaluated and noted. It was at this time the evaluation committee determined that Microcom, while being a well-established Alaska-based company with a compelling service offering, failed to meet District requirements and had to be disqualified for the following reasons:

Microcom disqualification factors:

- 1) The Low-Earth-Orbit technology vendor OneWeb, of which Microcom specified as their proposed rebranded carrier, is as of this time unavailable for service. Furthermore, despite specifying a delivery date of July 1st, 2021, during the presentation it was disclosed that delivery of their proposed LEO solution by the deadline of July 1st, 2021 would not be possible, directly violating RFP scope of service requirement on page 4, paragraph 3, sentence 1, "Service must begin on July 1st, 2021, which represents the expiration of the current leased IA service."
- 2) As defined in the proposal, an implementation schedule of June 15th, 2021 to July 1st, 2021, further put into question during the presentation, provided only two-weeks time to deliver service District-wide, including shipping and installation, but provides no testing and migration period, directly violating RFP scope of service requirement on page 4, paragraph 3, sentence 2, "It is the expectation that there will be a guaranteed overlap/transition period of two (2) weeks prior to service activation for testing and migration, and logistics."

March 22, 2021 (Scoring):

Presided by committee member Fadil Limani, and witnessed by board secretary Chelsie Overby, scoring began at approximately 5:36 pm and concluded at approximately 5:44pm.

Final scores are as follows:

General Communications Inc: 14.9

Leonardo DRS: 6.9

Alaska Communications: 6.6

The Evaluation Committee's recommendation is to award the Contract to General Communications Inc. (GCI) for E-Rate Broadband services.

**Proposed Motion:**

"I move that the NSBSD Board of Education Award the Contract to GCI for the E-Rate Broadband Services in an amount not to exceed \$18,322,200. In addition, the Board of Education further authorizes the Superintendent or designee to enter into negotiations with GCI for the said services."

Moved by \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_

Vote \_\_\_\_\_