

Agenda Item IC2 – District Technology Report January 30, 2025

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to give you a brief update on Technology Initiatives in the district. For this report I will be covering our new Support Ticket Queue, E-rate Category 2 Project, E-rate Category 1 update and Cybersecurity.

Background:

- 1.) One of my first initiatives was to streamline support throughout the school district. We went through and clearly defined the roles of our techs and tech leads. Created workflow processes and tackled our old ticketing system. Our old ticket queue needed repairs and was not meeting the needs of our department. My goal was to improve processes while also increasing customer satisfaction by providing more communications to end users. We went with Spiceworks for our support queue which allows our end users to interact with us completely through email. Since the system went live on Dec. 6 we have processed 200 tickets and closed 183. This is in addition to other project that my team is working on as well and I just want to make sure they are getting recognized for their hard work.

- 2.) **E-rate** is the commonly used name for the Schools and Libraries Program of the Universal Service Fund.
 - a.) **What it is:**

A federal program that provides discounts on telecommunications and internet services for eligible schools and libraries. That aims to make these essential services more affordable.
 - b.) **How it works:**

Eligible schools and libraries can apply for discounts on eligible services, which fall into two categories:

 - **Category One:** Data Transmission Services and Internet Access
 - **Category Two:** Internal Connections, Managed Internal Broadband Services, and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections
 - c.) **Category-2 E-rate** will pay up to 80% on a project and funding comes in 5-year cycles. We are currently in the last year of the cycle and we had \$223,888.00 dollars we were going to lose unless we submitted a project. After walking through the schools and examining the current infrastructure, we moved forward with creating a proposal to rewire and upgrade the fiber in our High School from MultiMode to Single Mode as well as replace the older switching hardware in the schools with newer equipment. We had a total of 7 low voltage contractors and 4 hardware vendors bid on the project. We are happy to say that we had clear winners in this process with Advanced Commercial Communications LLC for our low voltage project and Cache Valley Electric for Hardware. This project will cost \$270,797.52 and E-rate will pick up \$216,638.02 and the district will pick up \$54,159.50. This project will now be submitted to E-rate for final approval and funding. Once we have final approval I will be bringing this back to the board for

approval of the contract. I am working with Andy Campbell on the IT budget to include this in our budget for next year. If the project is approved by E-Rate and the Board then the work would occur this summer.

3.) E-rate Category 1 update.

- a.) Every 10 years you are required to go out for competitive bidding on your Data Transmission Services. Our current contract is with MCC for Lit Fiber.
- b.) As part of this bid the district would like to move from Lit Fiber to Dark Fiber.
 - i.) Dark Fiber gives us more control over our network, we don't share the line with other customers and we can control and increase the speed on our network by purchasing our own equipment.
- c.) Working with our E-rate Consultant we went out for bid for both Lit and Dark fiber as requested by E-rate and had 4 companies provide competitive bids.
- d.) During the review process we found an error in formula used to evaluate pricing on fiber. The formula did not allocate the proper amount of time for evaluating dark fiber proposals. Because of this error none of the dark fiber bids were competitive even from our current provider. After discussions with Clackamas ESD, Multnomah ESD and our E-rate Consultant we decided the best course of action was to cancel the current RFP, update the calculation and have everyone resubmit. We felt this was the best way to make sure we are in compliance with E-rate on how we are calculating scoring on proposals and allowing our bidders to make any necessary adjustments to their proposals.
- e.) Our goal is to notify the bidders tomorrow, along with a link to bidding the new proposal.

4.) Cybersecurity

- a.) In light of what happened with Carruth, I thought it would be prudent to discuss what the district does for Cybersecurity.
 - i.) We have security policies in place to give people the least amount of privileges needed to do their jobs.
 - ii.) We have long passwords and MFA and will be moving to enforcing more complexity and more required password changes.
 - iii.) We use Crowd Strike for End-Point Protection. This is software that looks for anything malicious on a computer or our network.
 - iv.) We have a Cisco Firewall and it is currently blocking over 3,000 malicious domains
 - v.) We have Palo Alto our web filter which is currently blocking over 630 thousand malicious websites
 - vi.) We use Rubrik to back up our servers and data and 1.9 Terabytes of backed up data.
 - vii.) CESD is using Horizon to perform Penetration Testing on our internal network and gives us reports of potential weaknesses and vulnerabilities

- viii.) Then we also work with CISA which is part of the Department of Homeland Security and they perform external Penetration Testing and report to us on any potential weaknesses or vulnerabilities they have.
- ix.) In addition to these measures and in light of what happened with Carruth, IT will be working hand in hand with procurement to help review contracts and assess the cybersecurity of our partners.
- x.) As always, education is our strongest ally so making sure our staff is trained on how to identify suspicious emails or solicitation is always our best first line of defense.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Chris Shaw, Technology Director, and Lauree Nelzen, Exec Assistant