
Approval to Award E-RATE Contract

Background:

The E-Rate Program is a federal initiative managed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). It provides discounted rates for telecommunication services, internet access, and internal network equipment to qualifying schools and libraries across the United States. The program is divided into two distinct funding categories: **Category 1** and **Category 2**.

Category 1

- Category 1 funding covers the essential services necessary to connect schools and libraries. These services include telecommunication services and both fixed broadband and wireless internet connections.
- The District currently uses its **Category 1** E-Rate Funding to supplement the cost of our monthly internet billing. The program reimburses our internet connection expenditures at a **40%** rate.
- Last year, the District received \$24,000 from Category 1 E-Rate Reimbursement

Category 2

- **Category 2** funding focuses on the internal infrastructure that supports the connectivity services provided by **Category 1**.
- This infrastructure typically includes the equipment and hardware needed to distribute internet access within a school or library.
- Category 2 funding is subject to a predefined funding cap. Currently, Benjamin SD25, has a cap of \$167 per student (\$101,369), which applies over a five-year funding cycle.

Current Status:

The District is currently in the fourth year of the five-year cycle and has not spent any Category 2 funding to date. As a result, Mr. Greg Martin has worked to identify an opportunistic use of our Category 2 allotment. He has proposed using this funding to supplement the costs of the technology needed within the Evergreen Addition and to renew the district-wide subscription licenses for our wireless access points—specifically, “8 Wireless Access Points” for the Evergreen Addition and “94 5-Year Wireless Access Point Licenses.”

The project was bid out in February through the E-RATE Portal, and we received five bids. After review, Data Center Warehouse offered the lowest responsible price for materials and maintenance, totaling \$35,866.

Recommendation:

The Administration recommends that the Board approve the \$35,866 bid from Data Center Warehouse to furnish (8) wireless access points within the Evergreen Addition and provide (94) district-wide five-year wireless access point licenses. Once E-Rate gives final approval, the District would be reimbursed \$14,346 of this cost, resulting in a net cost to the district of \$21,519.

Respectfully submitted,

