

REPORT: Firewall Replacement E-Rate

REPORT OF: Business Office/Technology

FOR: Information and Approval

STRATEGIC GOAL ALIGNMENT: *Board Strategic Plan Goal V*

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ALIGNMENT:

Through collective responsibility, establish a physical and operational environment of safety, cleanliness, innovative spaces and high expectations, partnering with parents, families, community and industry to ensure the highest level of performance by all stakeholders.

FISCAL FUND IMPACT: 2020 Building and Site Fund

IMPACT AMOUNT: \$67,593.00 with approximately \$23,000 reimbursement from E-Rate. This covers the next 5 years for firewall hardware.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/BACKGROUND:

The district firewall has reached the end of its life and is scheduled for replacement. A firewall acts as a digital security guard, monitoring and filtering incoming and outgoing network traffic based on predefined security rules. It protects systems by blocking malicious traffic, preventing unauthorized access, and managing network resources. This is an essential piece of the district's network security.

Oakland Schools issued a Request for Proposals for Firewall hardware, software, and installation services through the Federal government E-Rate program on behalf of the 15 supported districts and Oakland Schools. The Oakland Schools Security Team reviewed the existing solutions and researched the current market. The new specification took into account the district's current needs and growth capacity to accommodate the next five to seven years. As part of the IGA with Oakland Schools, the OS security team manages each district's firewall through a centralized management system.

Utilizing the Federal E-Rate program, the district is eligible for partial reimbursement on the new hardware. The anticipated reimbursement is approximately \$23,000 based on eligible items.

Under E-Rate program rules, some of the software is not eligible for reimbursement. Oakland Schools will purchase this software and invoice the district a one-time cost of \$11,436.07. This will cover the software and maintenance for 5 years.

Attached is the Oakland Schools board meeting minutes and solicitation summary that was approved at the March 24, 2026, Board of Education meeting.

COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS:

Utilizing the Federal E-Rate program provides roughly a \$23,000 reimbursement.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the recommendation of the Administration that the Board of Education award the firewall replacement project to Delta Network Services, the lowest-qualified bidder, in the amount of Sixty-Seven Thousand Five Hundred Ninety-Three Dollars (\$67,593.00). Delta Network Services has served districts across the county in a similar capacity over the last 10 years.

IMPACT IF NOT APPROVED:

Our current firewall is end of life 6/30/26. Without a firewall, a school district's network is open to anyone on the internet, making it easy for hackers to access systems and steal sensitive student and staff data. Malware and ransomware can spread quickly, potentially shutting down school operations. It also removes the ability to filter unsafe content and monitor network activity, increasing both safety and legal risks.

NEXT STEPS IF APPROVED:

Oakland Schools and Delta Network Services will install a new firewall with no disruption to Oakland Schools technology Field Services districts beginning May 2026.