



To: Members, Board of Education

**Agenda Item IV.B.6.  
March 11, 2021**

From: Rachel Gorton, Director of Technology

Date: March 11, 2021

Re: Award Contract for Networking Switches

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Board of Education approve the contract for the Network Switch purchase through High Point Networks (HPN).

This network switch project will replace 172 building access switches located in our district. Building switches are a critical component of our network and manage the flow of data between equipment including devices such as computers, servers, wireless access points, HVAC systems, security cameras, fire and emergency systems, and card readers. It will also replace 2 lab switches. Lab switches are one option used to maximize the network connectivity in our lab environments. Nicollet is the only school that currently utilizes this set up therefore 2 lab switches will be replaced as part of this project.

This replacement project was earmarked for FY22 as part of our long term network infrastructure plan. The anticipated life span of a network switch is 5-7 years and our current building switches were installed in 2014.

The network switch project qualifies for category 2 of the FCC erate program which provides discounts to public schools and libraries for equipment and services for telecommunications, internet access, and internal connections. Per erate requirements, a competitive bidding process was followed with 5 vendors providing bids. The erate bid evaluation requires that the price of eligible products and services is a factor and that factor must be weighed more heavily than any other single factor.

Based on our bid evaluation, we choose High Point Networks.

The erate discount rate is based on a calculation of the total number of students eligible for the National School Lunch Program divided by total number of students in the district. Erate funding has been impacted by COVID-19. In 2019-2020, ISD191 qualified at an 80% reimbursement rate. For 2020-2021 our reimbursement rate is 60%. This decrease is directly tied to the lower number of families who filled out the Application for Educational Benefits. Due to the unique nature of 2020-2021, we anticipate a ruling that may allow districts to use their previous year's rate. I have included both possible costs. The

recommendation is for approval at 60% reimbursement rate with our sincerest hope that we will see the 80% rate carried into this year.

After our erate discount, funding for this purchase will utilize FY22 Technology Levy funds. This equipment also qualifies as a capital expense.

The purchase price includes acceptable of Alt#1 from the bid documents. We will not accept Alt#2, Alt#3, or Alt#4.

Total Cost before erate reimbursement = \$546,855.21

District cost after 60% erate reimbursement = **\$218,742.08**

If the 2019-2020 rate reimbursement is allowed:

District cost after 80% erate reimbursement = \$109,371.04

It is recommended the contract be approved with High Point Networks for a total of \$218,742.08.