Columbus County Schools

Request for Proposals for Wide Area Network Service

BEN 127014 - E-rate Form 470 #270000302

Unsolicited e-mails and phone calls will not be accepted.

Schedule of Events	
Description	**Date**
Posting Date	**November 13, 2026**
Questions Due Date: **Questions must be submitted to:** **Adam Sellers** **asellers@columbus.k12.nc.us**	**November 20, 2026 10am Eastern**
Answers posted in USAC One Portal, EPC as an addenda to the Form 470 RFP document	**November 20, 2026 5pm Eastern**
SEALED Proposal Due Date (proposals WILL NOT be accepted after this date/time). Delivered or Mailed, with the following data on the outside of the envelope: **Adam Sellers** **Director of Technology** **89 School Road** **Hallsboro, NC 28442** **ATTN: Form 470# 270000302**	**December 18, 2026 10am Eastern**

Schedule of Events	
Bid Opening Date/Time **Location (see above address)** **Conference Room**	**December 18, 2026 10am Eastern**
Award Announcement	**January 11, 2027 Board Meeting**

Other bid data:

All responses MUST have 470 # 270000302 on the outside of mailed or hand delivered bid materials.

One signed paper copy
One unsigned copy
One electronic copy (provided on USB flash drive

Section 1: Overview

Columbus County Schools (CCS) is requesting proposals for symmetrical leased lit fiber transport, without Internet access, for delivery of wide area network (WAN) services to the district. Internet Access is provided by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Service is expected to originate at the district hub location and be delivered to each site. See **Appendix A.** June 30, 2027 represents the expiration of the current WAN service contract. Service MUST begin on July 1, 2027 for all entities, including the new East View Elementary-Middle School, scheduled to open fall of 2027. A minimum of 5-year original term contract, with five(5) one-year voluntary extensions, will be considered.

1. Pricing is requested for
   a) 1 Gbps for each location
      and
   b) 10 Gbps at the hub location (Board of Education Building)

Section 2: Service Requests

1. Applicant is seeking bids for a fully managed WAN solution that connects individual instructional / non-instructional facilities in the same school district to the hub. See Section 3 for solution requirements.
2. Network Design and Construction Routes
   a. CCS is seeking and considering designs for a resilient network.
   b. CCS stated decision criteria (outlined in the RFP) will be used to determine if an award is made as a result of this RFP. The applicant has,

in accordance with E-rate guidelines, rated cost of service as the highest weighted factor in its decision criteria.

c. Due to current and future bandwidth needs, respondents are encouraged to provide dedicated infrastructure to CCS.
d. Respondents should clearly illustrate proposed network design and construction routes. Respondents should show evidence that they looked at alternate routes for the build and should provide narrative language supporting rationale for chosen build route(s).
e. Design must provide resiliency to ensure a single fiber cut or site failure will not affect the rest of the WAN connections.
f. CCS is not advocating or mandating any preconceived network design or construction route and leaves this decision up to the vendor to present their best solution while recognizing the cited termination locations.

Section 3: Solution Specifications

1. Wide Area Network
    a. CCS requires dedicated, symmetrical WAN transport bandwidth of 1 Gbps at each designated school and district facility, connecting to a central head-end location provisioned with 10 Gbps of aggregate WAN transport capacity.
    b. Contract options are requested for 60-month terms of service and 5 (five), optional 12-month term extensions.
    c. Original Term: July 1, 2027 to June 30, 2032
        i. 1st option - July 1, 2032 to June 30, 2033
        ii. 2nd option - July 1, 2033 to June 30, 2034
        iii. 3rd option - July 1, 2034 to June 30, 2035
        iv. 4th option - July 1, 2035 to June 30, 2036
        v. 5th option - July 1, 2036 to June 30, 2037
    d. Each respondent is required to complete the attached pricing sheet Appendix D with this RFP.
        i. Monthly recurring cost MUST include taxes and fees, and any additional non-recurring costs are **required** to be broken out and listed separately.
        ii. Respondents are free to propose alternate pricing terms provided they have also included pricing in the requested format.
        iii. No increased pricing will be allowed during the term of the quoted NRC and MRC rate in each pricing cell of the matrix.
    e. All costs, including state and local taxes and federal fees, required to deliver the proposed solution must be included in the bid. If there are charges for static IP addresses, they should be included. By submitting a bid, the respondent certifies that it has engineered a full solution including all monthly recurring charges and all installation charges. Costs added to the quote after the respondent has submitted their bid are solely the responsibility of the respondent and not the applicant.

f. If a bandwidth upgrade is requested mid-contract the term length does not reset or renew.
g. Regardless of installation date, billing for any newly added location, including East View Elementary-Middle School, shall not begin until the service has been fully installed, tested, verified operational, and formally accepted by Columbus County Schools. The service must be available for use and meet all applicable performance and SLA requirements before billing may commence. No charges shall accrue prior to written acceptance by the district.
h. Site additions or deletions will be addressed via a contract amendment.
    i. Two entities are closing during the first year of the contract and will need to be removed from the contract, including pricing. (See list of SITES below)
i. All disconnect, downgrade, relocation, and early termination fees must be clearly identified in the proposal. Fees not disclosed in the original proposal shall not be charged to the district.
j. All solutions must adhere to the Service Level Agreement (SLA) terms in Section 4.

Section 4: Service Level Agreement

1. Proposed services must meet the following specifications:
    a. The provider will make all reasonable efforts to ensure 99.99% network availability of each circuit.
    b. .25% frame/packet loss commitment
    c. 25ms round trip network latency commitment
    d. 10ms network jitter commitment
    e. There is no right of provider to limit or throttle the capacity of the circuit at any time for any reason
    f. Vendor stated commitment is to respond to any outage within two (2) hours and a four (4) hour restoration of service.

2. Network operations center: Solution will provide customer support functions including problem tracking, resolution and escalation support management on a 24x7x365 basis. Customer has the right and is encouraged to call concerning any problems that may arise relative to its connection with vendor provided services.
3. Trouble reporting and response: Upon interruption, degradation or loss of service, Customer may contact Vendor by defined method with a response based on trouble level. Upon contact from the Customer, the Vendor support team will initiate an immediate response to resolve any Customer issue. Customer will receive rapid feedback on trouble resolution, including potential resolution time.

Length of Service Outage	**Credit is the following percentage of monthly recurring cost**
Less than 2 hours	No Credit
Greater than two (2) hours and less than four (4) hours	5%
Greater than four (4) hours and less than eight (8) hours	10%
Greater than eight (8) hours and less than twelve (12) hours	15%
Greater than twelve (12) hours and less than sixteen (16) hours	20%
Greater than sixteen (16) hours and less than twenty-four (24) hours	35%
Greater than twenty-four (24) hours	50%

4. Escalation: In the event that service has not been restored in a timely manner, or the Customer does not feel that adequate attention has been allocated, the Customer can escalate the trouble resolution by request. A list of escalation contacts will be provided when the implementation schedule is completed.
5. Resolution: The Customer will be notified immediately once the problem is resolved and will be asked for verbal closure of the incident.
6. Trouble reporting, escalation and resolution: A detailed trouble reporting, escalation and resolution plan will be provided to the district.
7. Measurement: Time starts from the time the Customer contacts the vendor and identifies the problem. Credits for outages should be the following:
8. Reports: Upon request, an incident report will be made available to the Customer within five (5) working days of resolution of the trouble.
9. Link performance per segment: The service will maintain the proposed link performance throughout the term of the contract.
10. Historical uptime: Provide aggregate uptime statistics for your proposed service

in the geographic area encompassing Applicant.

Section 5: General Terms for All Proposals

1. **Failure to include any requested information noted as required by the respondent is grounds for disqualification.**
2. Description of Proposal
    a. All sites must be included in the bid. Failure to include all site names and addresses in a bid option could be considered ground for disqualification.
    b. Service Providers: provide a description of their proposal for all services and solutions.
        i. Description: include an overview of the proposal, any deviations from the requested architecture, design or requirements, assumptions made, and other detail Applicant may find useful or necessary (or could differentiate the solution from a competing proposal).
    c. Service Providers must have a USAC 498 ID that is shown on the proposal.
    d. Service Providers must have a FCC Form 473 (Service Provider Annual Certification (SPAC) Form) to certify that they will comply with Schools and Libraries (E-rate) Program rules.
    e. Service Providers must have a SPAC Form on file for each funding year covered during the contract and optional extensions.
    f. Service Providers must include an option to continue service month by month after expiration of service to ensure the district is not without a Wide Area Network while transitioning to a new contracted service.
3. Site names and addresses
    a. If their solution is chosen, respondents are required to include sites names and addresses on the contract.
4. Reselling and subcontracting
    a. Any respondent who intends to resell or subcontract a lit service from a 3rd party must supply proof in writing that said party can provide service at all proposed Applicant locations.
    b. If, at any point following the bid submission, any changes from the 3rd party alter the costs or significantly change scope of proposed service then Applicant will not be liable for the cost increase and reserves the right to disqualify the bid and cancel any signed contracts without penalty.
5. Timeline
    a. For each response, respondents must include a timeline for bringing all sites online.
    b. For each response, respondents must include a detailed summary of the process including expected downtime you would use to transition over from our existing Wide Area Network to the proposed Wide Area Network
    c. The district requires that the Wide Area Network be built out and ready for service by the start of the contract (July 1, 2027). For the new East View Elementary-Middle, we anticipate service to start July 1, 2027, however,

due to weather and other construction delays, service must be available (installed and tested) by the start of school opening, which is anticipated to be October, 2027.

d. Vendor agrees to pay the cost to previous provider, if Wide Area Network is not ready for service by the start of the contract (July 1, 2027).

6. Demarcation
    a. All solutions must terminate service or infrastructure in the demarcation point at each site specified in the pricing sheet.
    b. Solutions bringing service to the property line but not to the demarcation point are not acceptable.
    c. Respondents must specify specific demarcation setup included in base fees, e.g. wall mounted CPE and CAT6a handoff, rack mount patch panel, etc.
7. Network Diagram
    a. For each response, respondents must include a network diagram displaying the paths to be used to serve each endpoint.
    b. Diagrams must show if circuits are routed through any aggregation hubs, equipment, or third-party facilities between hub site and each endpoint.
        i. If this detailed information cannot be supplied, then at a minimum the quantity of each must be supplied in order to provide a picture of potential latency.
8. References
    a. For each response, respondent must provide 3 references from current or recent customers (similarly situated K-12) with projects equivalent to the size of Applicant. – Appendix B
9. Complete and include the checklist on Appendix C.
10. Complete and include Pricing Sheet.found on Appendix D.
11. E-rate Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) Review
    a. If their solution is chosen, respondents are required to promptly provide Applicant with any information being requested as part of PIA review.
    b. Vendors may assist applicants with preparing funding requests or responding to PIA questions and may speak directly with PIA reviewers.
    c. **All responses must agree, in writing, to this section in the Appendix C Checklist. Failure to answer is grounds for disqualification.**
12. Required Notice to Proceed and Funding Availability
    a. Applicant will follow the purchasing policies of the Applicant Board and requirements and procedures of the FCC's E-rate program as administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company to be eligible for all available funding.
    b. The implementation of any associated contracts resulting from this competitive bid process will be dependent on the district's' issuance of a written Notice to Proceed.
    c. E-rate funding notification alone will not signify Notice to Proceed. The district will have the right to allow the contract to expire without implementation if appropriate funding (including any state matching funds) does not come available.

Section 6: Evaluation Criteria

1. **Leased Lit Fiber (without Internet access)**

Criteria includes but not limited to the following:
E-rate eligible recurring and one-time circuit costs
Complete bid submission
Prior Experience with Company
Proposed contract terms and conditions
E-rate ineligible recurring or one-time costs
Provider references

2. **Criteria Explanation**
    1. E-rate eligible costs: the total cost of ownership for the eligible components of the proposed service. Total cost of ownership takes into account all one-time and recurring costs. Note that E-rate eligible costs refers to the pre-discount cost of the solution, not the post-discount portion of costs that are the responsibility of the Applicant. This criterion must be the highest weighted per E-rate program rules.
    2. Complete bid submission: Bids concisely address Applicant's requirements, as set forth in the RFP, and do not contain a significant amount of corporate boilerplate marketing information
    3. Quality of previous experiences with the company: Support, services delivered, personnel interactions, billing, etc.
    4. Proposed contract terms and conditions: Proposed contract has flexibility and terms desired by Applicant
    5. E-rate ineligible costs: Any costs of the proposed service that are not eligible for E-rate funding. This does not refer to the post-discount portion of eligible costs that are the responsibility of the Applicant.
    6. Provider references: response included K12 references that were similar in size and scope.

Appendix A - Sites

BEN	Site	Address	City	Zip Code	Band width	Latitude Longitude
17053074*	New Construction: East View Elementary-Middle School	1501 Green Swamp Road South	Bolton	28423	1 Gb	34°19'05.83"N -78°23'57.12"W
29712 **	Acme Delco Elementary	16337 Old Lake Rd	Riegelwood	28456	1 Gb	34°20'50.54"N -78°15'16.28"W
29679	Chadbourn Elementary	409 East 3rd Street	Chadbourn	28431	1 Gb	34°19'33.00"N -78°49'13.73"W
29704	East Columbus Junior-Senior High	32 Gator Lane	Lake Waccamaw	28450	1 Gb	34°20'08.80"N -78°30'06.69"W
29693 **	Hallsboro-Artesia Elementary	1337 Giles Byrd Road	Hallsboro	28442	1 Gb	34°18'39.40"N -78°34'44.68"W
29739	Nakina Middle	9822 Seven Creeks Highway	Nakina	28455	1 Gb	34°06'28.95"N -78°39'15.12"W
29746	Old Dock Elementary	12489 New Britton Highway East	Whiteville	28472	1 Gb	34°09'52.26"N -78°35'43.99"W
29730	South Columbus High	40 Stallion Drive	Tabor City	28463	1 Gb	34°10'23.34"N -78°48'53.83"W
17018034	Tabor City School	203 Stake Road	Tabor City	28463	1 Gb	34°09'08.12"N -78°52'26.22"W
29678	West Columbus High	7294 Andrew Jackson Highway SW	Cerro Gordo	28430	1 Gb	34°19'41.10"N -78°55'26.58"W
17018033	West Columbus School	7685 Andrew Jackson Hwy SW	Cerro Gordo	28430	1 Gb	34°19'44.88"N -78°55'52.56"W
29747	Williams Township	10400 James B White Highway South	Whiteville	28472	1 Gb	34°12'14.20"N -78°45'49.32"W
16024419	Columbus County Dept of Transportation	1231 Chadbourn Highway	Whiteville	28472	1 Gb	34°20'10.99"N -78°43'30.87"W
17031350	Columbus County Schools Plant Operations / Technology	89 School Rd	Hallsboro	28442	1 Gb	34°19'14.63"N -78°35'36.73"W
16030807	Columbus County Schools Board Education Bldg	2586 James B White Hwy N	Whiteville	28472	10 Gb	34°22'22.26"N -78°43'01.64"W

***Anticipated opening date is Fall, October/November 2027.**

****Anticipated closing date ~ January 2028.**

Appendix B - References

School District or Library System	Contact Name	Email Address	Telephone Number

Appendix C - Checklist

- 5-year with five 1-year extensions, 1 Gbps at sites, 10Gbps at Head End
- Network design
- Construction routes are included
- Network design provides resiliency
- Bandwidth is scalable
- Pricing spreadsheet is attached
    - If needed, pricing includes NRC
    - Pricing includes MRC
    - Pricing includes all taxes and fees
    - Understand that costs added to the quote after the bid is submitted are the responsibility of the company and not the Applicant
- The contract will allow for bandwidth upgrades via a contract amendment
- Site additions or reductions will be addressed via a contract amendment
- Disconnect fees
- Downgrade fees
- Agree to SLA
- Proposal includes all site names and addresses
- If notified of winning this bid, the contract will include all site names and addresses
- Cut-over dates
- Agrees to pay the cost to previous provider, if Wide Area Network is not ready for service by the start of the contract
- Three references
- It is understood that failure to provide all items requested in this RFP are grounds for disqualification

- USAC 498 ID (SPIN)
- Must have a SPAC Form on file for each funding year covered
- Upon award of a contract, Bulk Upload Spreadsheets will be provided
- An aggregate uptime of 99.9% uptime will be provided
- Circuits will not be throttled
- Protest deadlines are understood
- By submitting a proposal, we are agreeing to the requirements of the RFP

Appendix D - Pricing Sheet

Entity No	Site	Premium Metro Ethernet Service	E-Rate Eligible Monthly Rate	E-Rate Ineligible Monthly Rate	E-Rate Eligible Nonrecurring Charge	E-Rate Ineligible Nonrecurring Charge
17053074*	New Construction: East View Elementary-Middle School	1 Gb				
29712 **	Acme Delco Elementary	1 Gb				
29679	Chadbourn Elementary	1 Gb				
29704	East Columbus Junior-Senior High	1 Gb				
29693 **	Hallsboro-Artesia Elementary	1 Gb				
29739	Nakina Middle	1 Gb				
29746	Old Dock Elementary	1 Gb				
29730	South Columbus High	1 Gb				
17018034	Tabor City School	1 Gb				
29678	West Columbus High	1 Gb				
17018033	West Columbus School	1 Gb				
29747	Williams Township	1 Gb				
16024419	Columbus County Dept of Transportation	1 Gb				
17031350	Columbus County Schools Plant Operations / Technology	1 Gb				
16030807	Columbus County Schools Board Education Bldg	10 Gb				

	Sub-total 1G Taxes/Fees 1G	$_____ $_____				
	Sub-total 10G Taxes/ Fees 10G	$_____ $_____				
	Total MRC	$_____				
	Total Annual	$ _____				

***Anticipated opening date is Fall, October 2027.**

****Anticipated closing date ~ January 2028.**