

Iredell-Statesville Schools
WAN Connectivity - Request for Proposals (RFP)
FY 2027 E-rate Form 470 Application # 270000665

Wide Area Network (WAN) Connection For Two New Construction Schools

SECTION 1: SCOPE OF WORK DESCRIPTION

Iredell-Statesville Schools hereafter referred to as “ISS”, “Applicant” or “the district”, is requesting proposals from network service providers/vendors for delivery of wide area network (WAN) services between the district’s existing network hub to 2 (two) new construction schools with a **service start date of July 1, 2027 (e.g. the earliest E-rate funding date for Funding Year 2027, aka fiscal yr 27-28) AND with an option to exercise early turn-up when ready no earlier than April 1, 2027.** These schools are expected to open in August of 2027.

A. NEW SCHOOLS & EXISTING UPSTREAM LOCATIONS

The 2 new schools’ locations are:

Weathers Creek High School (WCHS)

246 Overcash Rd
Troutman, NC 28166

Approximate Google Maps/Earth coordinates: 35.683902, -80.824477

Coordinates are near the roadside handhole/pullbox location at main campus entrance on Overcash Rd; However, demarc will be approximately 1/3rd mile from the entrance with most handhole/pullbox locations parallel to Weathers Creek Way (new road circling the campus). Demarc will be in media center head end. See Appendix A.

Parkertown Elementary School (PES)

218 Parkertown Rd
Mooresville, NC 28115

Approximate Google Maps/Earth coordinates: 35.642864, -80.851417

Coordinates are near southwest building corner adjacent to bus lot, handhole/pullbox locations are expected to be between road shoulder and building frontage. Demarc will be in the main building, likely Room 015, but potentially other locations TBD, per Appendix A.

See Appendix A for site plans, floorplans and further descriptions for each school.

The current district hub and NCREN Internet access point-of-presence **is located at 549 N. Race St, Statesville, NC 28677.**

ALL BIDDERS NOTE, POSSIBLE HUB MIGRATION: By submitting a bid, service providers understand that **the district WAN hub/datacenter location may potentially move to another site by or before 2030.** The district shall give provider(s) as much notice as possible for the migration. Prospective **“Alternate Hub” locations** for such a move are most likely to be one of the following:

Statesville High School

474 N Center St

Statesville, NC 28677

Google Maps/Earth approx coordinates: 35.7928896, -80.89175756

Career Academy and Technical School (CATS)
350 Old Murdock Rd,
Troutman, NC 28166
Google Maps/Earth approx coordinates: 35.71489962, -80.88688840

The current incumbent WAN service provider provides 10Gbps symmetrical fiber WAN connectivity at all other school district sites, as identified in the current-year (FY2026) Form 471 app # 261036946 for the school and NIF Recipients of Service identified in FRN 2699054256. The need for the 2 schools' connectivity in previously rural areas comes at a time between contract renewals with the incumbent service provider. The 2 new sites are also not yet similarly situated in the connectivity marketplace as surrounding areas and other district sites, so the district seeks equivalent or comparable connectivity to the new sites as with the existing sites.

All bidders shall note that by submitting a bid they understand that ISS reserves the right to select new service provider(s) other than the incumbent, or the incumbent service provider, or multiple service providers, and/or multiple network topologies/modalities, school-by-school in order to deliver the best connectivity option(s) on-time to its stakeholders for each of the new schools.

Possible termination endpoints

The district sites identified below are potential endpoints for the new service(s) in order to connect the hub, depending on the technology/transport(s) and route(s) proposed. Applicant will consider all reasonably viable physical terrestrial or wireless transport solutions that best addresses the needs of each school and the needs of the district overall under the circumstances and is compatible with E-rate rules and/or FCC regulations. The challenge of these rural locations is both in the lack of network infrastructure in the immediate vicinity and the fact that network traffic must cross Interstate 77 to reach the district hub for NCREN Internet connectivity.

Sites include (but are not limited to):

- 1) The district **hub** at 549 N. Race St. Statesville, NC 28677. This is the preferred direct path/route endpoint for either an end-run private (physical layer 1) connection, or for a routed layer 2/3 virtual private connection for either school.
- 2) Optional, middle-mile nodes: If service to the hub is cost-prohibitive for the provider or might take substantially longer than 5 months to build, the district will consider alternative routes that meet minimum requirements. One such solution being explored is a layer 1 connection using **a last-mile/intermediate endpoint at a school facility** (aka, a tie-in node, or "hop"). This could potentially terminate at a nearby existing school's MDF core switch as the node, depending on cost-effectiveness and other metrics. Possible sites *might* include:
 - a) Shepherd Elementary School, 1748 Charlotte Hwy (US 21), Mooresville, NC 28115 (Note: Shortest drive to PES at 1.6 miles and WCHS at 4.8 miles and does not require crossing Interstate 77)
 - b) Troutman Elementary School, 220 S Main St (US 21), Troutman, NC 28166 (further, and west of I-77)
 - c) Career Academy & Technical School (CATS)*, 350 Old Murdock Rd, Troutman, NC 28166 (further, and west of I-77)
 - d) Third Creek Middle School, 359 Barkley Rd E, Statesville, NC 28677 (substantially further, but east of I-77)

These 4 sites appear closest to the new construction sites enroute to the hub, but estimated mileage may not represent the most viable path for providers to build. If other school locations are better situated for the provider, all sites can be found in USAC's EPC E-rate portal or on the top menu at <https://www.issnc.org/>. Also note that abstaining from bidding this option does not disqualify any direct connection bid in option #1.

* Note: If the CATS location is identified as an endpoint option for a last-mile solution for either school, the hub demarc migration to CATS may be excluded for that option.

Service providers may quote options for as many or as few termination points as desired based on cost-effectiveness, bandwidth availability, reliability, logistics of installation or other factors deemed feasible.

B. MINIMUM AND PREFERRED REQUIREMENTS; SERVICE TERMS; APPLICABLE E-RATE & FCC POLICY

MINIMUM REQUIRED AGREEMENT CONDITIONS - Service providers must acknowledge in their bid that they agree to these terms for bid consideration.

1. Contract term length **MUST** be bid at a minimum of 3 of the following:
 - a. 3-year term with FIVE 1-year voluntary extensions
 - b. 8-year term with no extensions
 - c. And at least one of the following term lengths:
 1. 2-year term with SIX 1-year voluntary extensions
 2. 7-year term with ONE 1-year voluntary extension

NOTES: Per E-rate rules, no indefinite number of term extensions. Finite voluntary extensions only. The reason for 2- and 7-year options is if the school for any reason is delayed in opening in August of 2027 for up to one year (August 2028). In that case the district will still require the contract expiration to be coterminous with other district WAN service contract options.

2. The service provider **MUST** discount invoices using the SPI method upon award of E-rate commitments.

PREFERRED SERVICE AGREEMENT OPTIONS & CONDITIONS

3. Early turn-up date option available as early as April 1 or ASAP before July 1. (to be paid out of pocket paid prior to earliest E-rate service start date of July 1)
4. The district strongly prefers only a fixed monthly recurring charge with no separate up-front installation or construction costs. Alternatively, if clearly identifiable NRCs (nonrecurring charges) for installation costs within the property line may be cost-allocated from special construction charges, then the district would agree to amortizing the cost of special construction as MRC and paying on-site installation as NRC. But all installation costs should be identified, whether inside or outside the property line.
5. The district prefers to avoid special construction charges, since application review may take longer and make timing constraints for turn-up potentially tighter. But if the district agrees to special construction charges, the service provider shall agree to facilitate any information, document or process required to expedite the Form 471 E-rate funding application. *See below.*
6. Agreement to discount invoices in advance of E-rate funding commitment. A due diligence review of the E-rate funding application and review process by both parties is welcome in order to assure the success of the funding .

Special Construction

Special construction refers to the upfront, non-recurring costs associated with the installation of new fiber to or between eligible entities. Special construction charges eligible for Category 1 support consist of three components: construction of network facilities, design and engineering, project management. However, this is typically meant for such costs beyond the property line as a capital investment in the service provider's network, not necessarily more typical installation costs exclusively within a school property line.

If the district files for special construction, the winning service provider(s) must be a close, highly trusted partner in the E-rate administration and application review process, be prepared to facilitate targeted, thorough yet effective

information and documentation required for PIA reviews at any time, and be as transparent as possible with all USAC-requested cost data & construction planning.

Service providers should have a dedicated FCC compliance staff and be familiar with and prepared to help the district comply with all E-rate regulations, rules and procedures, especially those regarding special construction (if applicable to the application), lowest corresponding price (and their exceptions), competitive bidding and other program frameworks.

The service provider must ensure:

- NRCs (nonrecurring charges) are identified for each option proposed if applicable.
- That NRCs are identifiable, reasonable and traceable to their cost centers such as for on-premise installation within the school property line or capital cost of special construction outside the school property line.
- Any trade secret is marked but that they acknowledge the district may be required to disclose it to USAC for review or audit purposes, yet will keep such information in confidence to the extent that the law and board policy allow.

Under special construction rules the winning provider(s) will be required to assist the district with much or all of the following information.

Required at time of bidding:

1. Total non-recurring cost (NRC) per site
2. NRC cost per foot, per run, if fiber
3. Percentage of aerial vs burial route, if fiber
4. Route and/or infrastructure maps in Google Earth format (.kmz) or high-resolution professional CAD pdf (36" x 24" minimum equivalent print resolution)
5. If wireless equivalent, cost per communication infrastructure endpoint and new terrestrial links to/from transmission points

Potentially requested by PIA in addition to the above:

- Engineering plans
- Cost centers/cost accounting of construction
- Market data
- Maps of the provider's existing network infrastructure

FCC Lowest Corresponding Price (LCP), policy & exceptions

In addition to program compliance above, all cost proposals must reflect the LCP (Lowest Corresponding Price) in accordance with FCC at 47 C.F.R. § 54.500.

However, if instead of charging Special Construction NRCs the provider amortizes the investment over the initial term of the contract, this changes the compliance profile of the fees charged. Although FCC rules require pricing be commensurate with similarly situated customers for LCP compliance, the district understands that the 2 schools are in rural areas that have historically been underserved in the broadband market compared to other nearby areas in Iredell or other more developed Charlotte Metro communities. According to 47 CFR § 54.504(c)(2), the non-compensatory exception rule :

"Service providers may request higher rates if they can show that the lowest corresponding price is not compensatory, because the relevant school, library, or consortium including those entities is not similarly

situated to and subscribing to a similar set of services to the customer paying the lowest corresponding price.”

Therefore, if amortizing capital costs as MRCs instead of charging Special Construction NRCs, the service provider should be prepared and able to justify and identify its investment in the new infrastructure required to deliver service to these schools. The service provider should be able and ready to help demonstrate the lack of previous competitive broadband investments in the vicinity of the school sites. But the communities the schools will serve have a growing number of housing developments, so we expect the winning service provider(s) to recoup this kind of investment over the coming years in not only service to schools and government, but also the growing commercial and residential marketplace.

SECTION 2: BID SCHEDULE & DELIVERY

OPTIONAL SITE VISITS: **Tuesday, September 22, 2026 at 9AM** starting at WCHS construction site. District staff will provide interested service providers access to the construction site within allowable safety limits. **The site visit will proceed to Parkertown Elementary after the WCHS visit concludes.** Time at each site will vary, perhaps 60 minutes maximum each.

****RSVP NOTE**:** Due to safety measures and scheduling, interested service providers MUST RSVP by emailing BOTH jparker@iss.k12.nc.us AND tcochrane@iss.k12.nc.us no later than **Friday, September 18, 2026.**

Questions deadline (by email): **Thursday, September 24, 2026 at 9AM ET.**
All final questions must be emailed to isstechrfp@iss.k12.nc.us AND jparker@iss.k12.nc.us AND fy2027@erate4schools.com by this deadline. No phone calls will be accepted and no additional meetings beyond the site visit. Responses to anonymized questions both received by email and at the site visit will be posted 28 days before the final bid deadline.

BID DEADLINE & DELIVERY: **Friday, October 23, 2026 at 12 NOON ET** by EMAIL to BOTH isstechrfp@iss.k12.nc.us AND fy2027@erate4schools.com

BID PRICING FORMAT

In addition to standard vendor literature or cover letters, **all service provider bids must use the pricing worksheet attached to this RFP/Form 470 to submit cost proposals.** This can be used with or without the provider's existing price sheets, proposal narrative or other documents submitted. The pricing worksheets may be adjusted with descriptions/options/costs etc. as needed but please do not remove columns or substantially reformat the spreadsheet. Additional columns to the right or rows at bottom may be added as needed for more complete responses.

SECTION 3: CONNECTIVITY DESCRIPTION, TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & DESIRED OPTIONS

Connectivity Description & Requirements

The **connectivity transport & architecture** for the school's solution may include:

- 1) A new private, continuous/end-run fiber P2P connection (aka all passive physical layer 1 connection). This may be construed as leased lit fiber or a data transmission service for wide area network services under the E-rate Eligible Services List.

- 2) A private fiber Ethernet layer 2/3 WAN connection with guaranteed low latency, CIR and encryption over the service provider's network. This may be construed as a data transmission service for wide area network purposes under the E-rate Eligible Services List.
- 3) Any other commercially-available wired or wireless transport with guaranteed bandwidth, and similar scalability, high reliability & availability and low latency that meets minimum requirements below.

Note regarding possible hub migration: If the provider bids any option for the current network hub (549 N. Race St) as a proposed termination for either one or both schools, the provider MUST identify all costs in advance with the bid submission to move the service's termination to EITHER of the "Alternate Hub" locations identified above. Providers may assume the move will most likely occur within 12 to 24 months after July 1, 2027. Also note that the transport at the new hub MUST be the same physical type as the initial connection to the original hub.

Performance, transport and connection requirements

Minimum INITIAL symmetrical bandwidth:	10Gbps
Minimum SCALABLE symmetrical bandwidth:	40Gbps
Minimum SLA specifications:	
Latency from school to hub:	<5ms if layer 2/3 switched, <1ms if layer 1
Availability:	>99.99%

Current handoff at other sites is CPE equipment to customer's SFP using LC duplex connector, 2-strand multi-mode. Proposals should provide similar or equivalent hand-off. Handoff with SM fiber will not disqualify bids but connector type should be specified.

The service transport offered can hypothetically go beyond fiber aerial/burial fiber construction, such as leased dedicated wireless infrastructure construction, etc. The district will entertain all offers for service regardless of eligible transport and type of installation so long as it meets required minimum criteria herein and is competitively priced and cost-effective.

Service Level Agreement

The SLA must be disclosed at the time of bidding and specify :

- Response procedures for outages greater than 1 hours during business hours or greater than 4 hours after business hours
- Billing credits for such outages
- Description of service tiers such as 8x5 vs 24x7x365
- Troubleshooting procedures and escalation paths
- NOC contact information
- Outage, action and repair/resolution notification systems or standards
- Latency, packet loss, availability guarantee and other service standards
- Monitoring portal instructions, if available

Preferred features

Fiber burial at and entirely within the property line (see handholes/pull boxes in appendices' drawings)

SECTION 4: OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By submitting a proposal response to this RFP and FCC Form 470, service providers acknowledge and agree that :

- No merger clauses of any contract(s) arising from this RFP may cause any terms of such contract(s) to supersede any provisions of this RFP. The Service Provider agrees that the final contract shall incorporate and not override any terms or conditions set forth in this RFP, minus any agreed-upon exceptions, and that the RFP will be

incorporated into the final contract.

- If there is any such merger clause or provision in conflict with this RFP it shall be void to the extent that there is any relevant conflict, and
- if any such conflict exists among or between any terms and conditions of this RFP and any contract arising from the service provider's proposals, that the terms and conditions of this RFP shall survive and shall control.
- The district reserves the right to request that any resulting contract arising from this RFP be made contingent upon E-rate, state, local or other funding. However, service providers are also advised that given the expected time table for opening these schools, a Notice To Proceed may be issued before funding is awarded or allotted to the district. Again, if the service provider can discount invoices in advance of funding, this can help the district as a community partner to open the school on time.