

Executive Summary

Topic: Network Replacement Equipment

CIT Board Meeting: Monday, April 6, 2020

Summary

The FCC extended the current 5 year period for Category 2 eRate funding an additional year, covering fiscal year 2020. Additional funding was also made to increase school budgets to \$1.95 per student. eRate dollars are available to each building based on student enrollment and the Warren County School District receives an 80% reimbursement on dollars spent up to the eRate budget amount. This provides the district approximately \$209,900 in eRate budget to spend this year and since this is the final year in the funding period, eRate reimbursement should be considered use it or lose it.

Last year, WCSD began a pilot to introduce One-to-One laptop devices to students in 6th and 9th grade levels. The pilot has gone well and the district plans to extend the program further, covering students in 7th and 10th grade for the 2020-2021 school year. This added volume of laptop computers connecting wirelessly is expected to place an increasing strain on WiFi networks within the school buildings. It is recommended that we install a new Cisco Meraki wireless solution that will replace existing wireless equipment. This upgrade is recommended in all buildings with the exception of Warren Area High School which was upgraded last year.

Secondly, with construction of the Warren County Career Center nearing completion, new network switches are required to complete the network infrastructure. It is recommended to further utilize eRate funding for that building to purchase the network switches in addition to WiFi network upgrades.

eRate has explicit processes for bidding items that will be funded with eRate dollars. We have followed that process by issuing PEPPM Mini Bids for the equipment. The Cisco Meraki MR46 WiFi 6 access points we are planning to purchase were offered in a bid response by ePlus Technology. The actual number of access points required for completion of this work far surpasses the available eRate budget, therefore we are recommending purchase of an additional 100 APs outside of eRate, so they may be installed without the eRate encumbrance of being earmarked solely for a single building. The following buildings wireless network needs are being addressed: Beaty-Warren Middle School, Eisenhower Middle High School, Eisenhower Elementary School, Sheffield Area Middle High School, Sheffield Area Elementary School, Warren Area Elementary Center, Warren County Career Center, Youngsville Elementary School and Youngsville Middle High School.

The Cisco network switches that we are planning to purchase were offered in a bid response by ePlus Technology. In addition to Warren County Career Center, Switches to replace those in the Anderson building that are at end of life are also included.

The out of pocket spend for the Cisco wireless network equipment will be 276,562.95. The 100 additional APs will cost \$97,765. The anticipated eRate reimbursement is \$144,380.

The out of pocket spend for Cisco network switch equipment will be \$193,297.52. The anticipated eRate reimbursement is \$65,520.