2025 MCSD E-RATE CYBERSECURITY PILOT PROGRAM RFP

Marion County School District

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Purpose & Terminology

SUBJECT: This Request for Proposals (RFP) is for cybersecurity services and equipment under the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) E-Rate Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program to protect approximately 2,000 devices across Marion County School District schools and facilities.

PURPOSE: Proposals are sought to secure cost-efficient cybersecurity solutions, including email security, endpoint protection, web filtering, network access control (NAC), threat intelligence, and security information and event management (SIEM) with monitoring, to safeguard the district's broadband networks and data. These solutions will support approximately 1,600 student devices and 400 employee and server devices. The contract term will be determined by USAC approval, with pricing options for 1, 2, and 3-year terms, and a price redetermination after the second year based on changes approved by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). This RFP tests eligible cybersecurity measures under the E-Rate pilot, potentially leading to permanent funding integration.

BACKGROUND: The Marion County School District's students, teachers, staff, and administrators rely heavily on digital resources requiring secure internet access. With rising cyber threats (e.g., malware, phishing, unauthorized access), the district aims to enhance protections for its educational environment. This RFP explores options supported through the E-Rate Cybersecurity Pilot Program, focusing on advanced services and equipment to ensure data integrity and network resilience.

Terms:

- USAC: Universal Service Administrative Company

- SPAC: Service Provider Annual Certification

- SPIN: Service Provider Identification Number

- The District: Marion County School District

- P-ESL: Pilot Eligible Services List (FCC's list of fundable cybersecurity items)

Schedule of Events

This RFP package consists of the following sections:

- General Conditions

- Detailed Specifications

- District Responsibilities

- Service Provider Responsibilities

- Evaluation Rubric

Proposal Forms:

Send sealed proposals to:

Timothy Bryant, Technology Director

1010 Highway 13 North

Columbia, MS 39429-2047

Proposals must be clearly marked "2025 MCSD E-Rate Cybersecurity Bid." Emailed proposals must be password-protected PDFs sent to tbryant@marionk12.org with subject "2025 MCSD E-Rate Cybersecurity Bid," and passwords sent separately post-deadline.

Proposals will be received until 2:00 PM CDT, September 15, 2025, at the address above or via email. They must be received on or before 2:00 PM CDT, Monday, September 15, 2025.

Schedule:

Event	Date(s)
Release of RFP to Service Providers	August 18, 2025

| Deadline for Submission of Proposals | September 15, 2025, 2:00 PM CDT |

| Opening and Evaluation of Proposals | September 15, 2025, 2:30 PM CDT |

Inquiries & Basis of Award

Inquiries:

All correspondence and inquiries must be via email to tbryant@marionk12.org. If no response within 48 hours, call Timothy Bryant at 601-736-7148 to confirm receipt. Leave a message if necessary.

All Questions and Answers will be posted in the Q&A Section at https://www.marionk12.org/technology.

Basis of Award:

1. E-Rate approval by USAC.

2. Valid USAC SPIN and SPAC.

3. Minimum three references.

4. Ability to secure permits if construction is needed.

5. 24x7x365 helpdesk and network management system.

6. Proposals evaluated per rubric on Page 15.

General Conditions

1. **Location of Sites**: Work is on District-owned property and negotiated right-of-ways.

2. **Scope of Work**: Unless otherwise stated, the Service Provider shall provide all materials, labor, tools, equipment, transportation, temporary construction, licenses, and services to execute and deliver cybersecurity solutions by July 1, 2025. This includes professional installation services for all components (email security, endpoint protection, web filtering, NAC, threat intelligence, SIEM). Licenses and permits (e.g., right-of-way for infrastructure) shall be secured and paid by the Service Provider.

3. **Protection in General**: The Service Provider shall protect all buildings, furniture, equipment, personal items, trees, shrubs, lawns, and landscaping on school property. Damaged property shall be repaired or replaced at the Service Provider's expense, including restoration (e.g., leveling, sod replacement).

4. **Change in Contract**: The District is not responsible for extra costs unless approved in writing by the Technology Director before work begins.

5. **Existing Conditions**: Providers are assumed to have reviewed District infrastructure specifications (available upon request via tbryant@marionk12.org). The demarc shall be in each building's MDF closet or as specified by District technical personnel. No claims for lack of knowledge will be considered.

6. **Insurance**: Within 10 days of award, provide a Certificate of Insurance:

   - Worker's Compensation: Per Mississippi laws.

   - District Protective Liability: $1,000,000 per person, $1,000,000 per accident.

   - Public Liability: $1,000,000 per person, $1,000,000 per accident; Property Damage: $100,000 per accident, $500,000 aggregate.

   - Policy must not lapse, be canceled, or change without 10 days' written notice to the District.

7. **Workmanship**: Work shall be professional. District observation does not relieve the Service Provider of responsibility.

8. **Financing**: The contract is binding for USAC submission. A Purchase Order will be issued post-USAC approval, reflecting the District's non-discounted share. Payment and reimbursement follow USAC rules (District pays, seeks Form 472 reimbursement).

9. **Proposal Submission**: Sealed bids (physical to the address above or password-protected PDF to tbryant@marionk12.org) are due September 15, 2025, 2:00 PM CDT. Passwords for electronic bids must be emailed separately post-deadline. Bids open publicly at 2:30 PM CDT.

10. **Provider Qualifications**: Valid USAC SPIN/SPAC, 5+ years in business, experience with similar K-12 cybersecurity projects. Submit incorporation papers and licenses (if construction involved).

Detailed Specifications

Cybersecurity Services and Equipment: Solutions must align with the FCC's Pilot Eligible Services List (P-ESL) categories: Advanced/Next-Generation Firewalls, Endpoint Protection, Identity Protection and Authentication, Monitoring, Detection, and Response. Proposals must include pricing for **1, 2, and 3-year terms**, with maintenance/support and professional installation services for all components (email security, endpoint protection, web filtering, NAC, threat intelligence, SIEM). Solutions must be compatible with the District's Cisco wireless, Fortinet firewalls, PureStorage, Synology, Microsoft 365, and Google Workspace.

- **Email Security (Identity Protection and Authentication)**:

  - Features: Anti-spam, anti-malware, phishing protection, and encryption for ~350 premium mailboxes (staff) and ~1,800 low-resource users (students).

  - Requirements: Cloud-based gateway with API connector for advanced management, real-time threat detection, sandboxing, and data loss prevention. Must support seamless integration with both Google Gmail and Microsoft 365 Exchange Online, ensuring compatibility for mixed email environments, and scale for 3 years.

- Installation: Professional services for setup, configuration, and basic training coincident with installation.

  - Maintenance: 24x7x365 support, updates, and performance reporting for 1, 2, and 3-year terms.

- **Endpoint Protection (Endpoint Protection)**:

  - **Standard Tier (1,600 student devices)**: Cloud-native antivirus, anti-malware, and EDR for Chromebooks/Windows. Includes AI-driven threat hunting, real-time updates, device control (USB/port), and firewall management bundles. Supports ~1,600 devices.

  - **Premium Tier (400 employee/server devices)**: Includes standard features plus advanced EDR, XDR, managed threat hunting, incident response, and asset discovery. Supports Windows/MacOS/Linux servers.

  - Installation: Professional services for deployment, configuration, and training.

  - Maintenance: Licensing with 24x7x365 support for 1, 2, and 3-year terms.

- **Web Filtering (Identity Protection and Authentication)**:

  - Features: URL filtering, content blocking, and DNS-layer security for ~1,600 student devices (primarily Chromebooks) and additional endpoints including Windows OS, iOS, and MacOS devices (e.g., teacher laptops, desktops, and a small number of iPads/Macs).

  - Requirements: Granular user/group-based controls, real-time monitoring, CIPA-compliant reporting, AI-driven student safety alerts (e.g., self-harm, bullying detection). Cloud-based dashboard with security/impact and signal features. Must support seamless integration with Google Workspace, Microsoft 365, and cross-platform clients for Windows OS, iOS, and MacOS, including browser extensions and agents for full coverage on mixed OS environments.

  - Installation: Professional services for setup, policy configuration, and training.

  - Maintenance: Scalable for 3 years with 24x7x365 support for 1, 2, and 3-year terms.

- **Network Access Control (NAC) (Monitoring, Detection, and Response)**:

- Features: Device visibility, automated access control, and policy enforcement for ~2,000 endpoints (Wi-Fi, wired, IoT).

  - Requirements: Real-time profiling, quarantine, and integration with Cisco switches, Fortinet firewalls, and Active Directory. Cloud or on-premises.

  - Installation: Professional services for hardware/software setup, integration, and training.

  - Maintenance: Licensing with 24x7x365 support for 1, 2, and 3-year terms.

- **Threat Intelligence (Monitoring, Detection, and Response)**:

  - Features: Real-time indicators of compromise (IoC), threat graph for ~2,000 licenses (including 38 high-priority server licenses).

  - Requirements: AI-driven updates, vulnerability scanning, integration with endpoint/email/NAC. Enhances detection and response across systems.

  - Installation: Professional services for integration and configuration.

  - Maintenance: Licensing with 24x7x365 support for 1, 2, and 3-year terms.

- **SIEM with Monitoring (Monitoring, Detection, and Response)**:

  - Features: Real-time log analysis, anomaly detection, and threat correlation for ~2,000 endpoints.

  - Requirements: 24x7x365 monitoring dashboard, incident response, compliance reporting (CIPA, FERPA). Cloud or on-premises, integrates with Cisco/Fortinet/Active Directory.

  - Installation: Professional services for deployment, log configuration, and training.

  - Maintenance: Licensing with 24x7x365 support for 1, 2, and 3-year terms.

Implementation: Complete by July 1, 2025. Installation includes hardware/software setup, configuration, and training, compatible with Cisco wireless, Fortinet firewalls, PureStorage, Synology, Microsoft 365, and Google Workspace.

District Responsibilities

- Provide network documentation (e.g., Cisco/Fortinet configurations) for integration.

- Designate MDF closet or alternate locations for equipment.

- Pay non-discounted share post-USAC approval.

- File Form 472 for reimbursement.

Service Provider Responsibilities

- Provide all materials, labor, licenses, permits, and installation services for all components.

- Ensure compatibility with Microsoft 365, Google Workspace, Cisco, Fortinet, PureStorage, Synology.

- Protect district property; repair damages at own expense.

- Submit SPIN/SPAC, three references, incorporation papers, licenses (if construction).

- Maintain 24x7x365 helpdesk; provide quarterly performance reports.

- Complete installation by July 1, 2025, with training.

Evaluation Rubric

Proposals evaluated on a 100-point scale, with price as the primary factor per E-Rate rules:

Criteria	Weight	Description
Price	20%	Total eligible cost for 1, 2, and 3-year terms, including installation/maintenance. Lowest compliant bid scores highest.

| Prior Experience | 15% | Quality of the District's prior interactions with the bidding company (e.g., reliability, support, project success). Higher scores for positive past experiences with similar projects. |

| Personnel Qualifications | 15% | Certifications (e.g., CISSP, vendor-specific), expertise of implementation and support teams. |

| Management Capability | 10% | Quality of 24x7x365 helpdesk, project management, reporting systems. |

| Warranty Terms | 15% | Coverage length (3+ years), response times, SLAs. |

| Interoperability | 10% | Compatibility with Cisco, Fortinet, Microsoft 365, Google Workspace, PureStorage, Synology. |

| ITS EPL Vendor | 5% | Bonus for Mississippi ITS Express Products List vendors. |

| Features | 10% | Alignment with specs (e.g., AI threat hunting, student safety alerts). |

The District reserves the right to reject non-compliant proposals.

Proposal Submission Form

- **Format**: Include pricing for **1, 2, and 3-year terms**, itemized by service (email security, endpoint protection standard/premium, web filtering, NAC, threat intelligence, SIEM), including installation and maintenance.

- **Submission**: Sealed bids, physical to 1010 Highway 13 North, Columbia, MS 39429-2047, or password-protected PDF to tbryant@marionk12.org with subject "2025 MCSD E-Rate Cybersecurity Bid." Passwords must be emailed separately post-deadline (September 15, 2025, 2:00 PM CDT).

- **Content**: Include technical specs, RFP compliance, rubric self-assessment, required attachments (Page 20).

Proposal Worksheets

- **Technical Specifications**: Detail compliance with RFP requirements (e.g., 1,600 student devices, 400 employee/server, ~2,000 endpoints).

- **Cost Breakdown**: Itemize costs for **1, 2, and 3-year terms**, including installation and support.

- **Rubric Response**: Provide evidence for each criterion (e.g., references, certifications, SLAs).

Contact Information

Timothy Bryant, Technology Director

1010 Highway 13 North

Columbia, MS 39429-2047

Phone: 601-736-7148

Email: tbryant@marionk12.org

Website: https://www.marionk12.org/technology

Required Attachment List

- Valid USAC SPIN and SPAC proof.

- Three references from K-12 cybersecurity projects.

- Incorporation papers.

- General Contractor License (if construction).

- Detailed technical specifications.

- Certificate of Insurance.

- Rubric self-assessment (Page 15).

District Building Information

Facilities receiving cybersecurity services:

- East Marion Elementary School: 527 East Marion School Rd, Columbia, MS 39429

- East Marion High School: 527 East Marion School Rd, Columbia, MS 39429

- West Marion Primary School: 20 Cedar St, Foxworth, MS 39483

- West Marion Elementary School: 2 West Marion St, Foxworth, MS 39483

- West Marion High School: 2 West Marion St, Foxworth, MS 39483

- Marion County CTC: 1010 Highway 13 North, Columbia, MS 39429

- Central Office: 1010 Highway 13 North, Columbia, MS 39429-2047

[Note: Replace with your actual building list from original RFP page 28, including NCES codes.]

References

- FCC E-Rate Cybersecurity Pilot Program Eligible Services List (www.usac.org)

- USAC E-Rate Program Guidelines (www.usac.org)

- Mississippi Code Annotated §31-7-13

- Mississippi Procurement Manual (www.dfa.ms.gov)

Submission of Proposals

- **Deadline**: Sealed bids due September 15, 2025, 2:00 PM CDT, at 1010 Highway 13 North, Columbia, MS 39429-2047, or via password-protected PDF to tbryant@marionk12.org with subject "2025 MCSD E-Rate Cybersecurity Bid." Passwords must be emailed separately post-deadline.

- **Public Opening**: Bids opened publicly on September 15, 2025, 2:30 PM CDT, at 1010 Highway 13 North, Columbia, MS 39429-2047, or via virtual link at https://www.marionk12.org/technology.

- **Rights Reserved**: The District may reject any/all non-compliant proposals.