Decatur County School System

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Next-Generation Firewall
For
Decatur County Schools

E-Rate Funding Year 2026-27

Released on:
January 23, 2026

Proposals Deadline:
February 23, 2026 at 2:00 PM EST

For all questions about this RFP contact:
Jason Logue, Director of Technology
jlogue@dcboe.com

All correspondence must be in writing.

Project Objectives:

1.0 Objective

The Decatur County School System intends to upgrade its central firewall which is used for the district-wide Internet connection.

1.1 Evaluation Methodology

Each proposal will be evaluated based on criteria and priorities defined by the Decatur County Schools Board of Education and SLD requirements. The BOE will decide the best submissions that are in the best interest of the long-term technology plan, not necessarily the lowest price. Proposals will first be evaluated based upon the base requirements. The evaluation criteria include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Vendors overall performance record based on available references, reliability, and meeting of the requirements as described in this RFP.
2. Vendor's ability to meet all the requirements detailed in the RFP.
3. Vendor's proposed hardware meets the specifications requested in this RFP.
4. Ability to have an engineer for warranty service within four (4) hours of Bainbridge.
5. Best overall value and in the best interest of the Decatur County Schools Board of Education
6. **Vendor agrees to provide a completed Category Two – Internal Connections (V21.0 or greater) USAC approved template for uploading to EPIC. Template and directions can be found at** https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/applying-for-discounts/fcc-form-471-filing/#bulk-upload-templates
7. Because this procurement is intended to utilize E-Rate Category 2 funding, vendors are strictly required to separate eligible and ineligible costs in their pricing proposals.
8. New equipment will be installed and configured by vendor's licensed engineer according to Decatur County Schools' Technology Department specifications. Subcontractors will not be allowed.
9. Decatur County Schools will only accept discounted billing. Vendor agrees to bill Decatur County School System for the "non-discount amount".

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Response Submission

Responses to this RFP must be submitted and delivered to the Decatur County School Board of Education by no later than 2:00 pm on February 23, 2026. It is the sole responsibility of the respondents to ensure that their responses arrive in a timely manner. The Customer reserves the right to reject all late arrivals. Envelopes containing RFPs shall be so marked as to be easily identified as containing RFP proposals. The outside of the envelope shall be identified as follows:

RFP ERATE 2026 Next-Generation Firewall
Mr. Jason Logue, Technology Director
Decatur County Schools Board of Education
1417 Dothan Road
Bainbridge, Georgia 39817

NOTE:

Envelopes/packages incorrectly labeled may be rejected.

Each package submitted must include BOTH a hard copy of the proposal and an electronic copy of the proposal and a completed Category Two – Internal Connections (V21.0 or greater) USAC approved template for uploading to EPIC. The electronic media must be stored on either a CD/DVD or USB drive. The package must also include the following completed forms:

- Certificate Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility (Appendix A)
- E-Rate Certification (Appendix B)
- Vendor Affidavit (Appendix C)

Oral, telephone, email, or fax bids shall not be considered, nor will modifications of proposals by such communication be considered. Delivery of the proposals will be considered authorized by The Vendor to supply SLD approved contract (s) for 471 use, if awarded. Vendor agrees to supply the BOE with all required 471 paperwork in approved format to meet filing deadlines.

2.1 Bidders' Conference/Site Visit

Vendors are welcome to view the school location(s) as necessary for equipment planning. Appointments may be made by contacting Jason Logue at the email address jlogue@dcboe.com. Vendors who schedule appointments must be qualified as per vendor qualifications listed in this RFP.

2.2 Subcontractors

Subcontractor work **is not acceptable** by the Decatur County BOE for technology projects. We expect The Vendor to perform all services with in-house personnel. Appropriate switch channel partners and licenses, Microsoft Engineers, RCDD and Ga. Low Voltage holders must be full-time employees. *Each*

vendor must be contractor certified in their respective hardware (i.e., cable, patch panels, fiber, etc.). All employees must be insured. Borrowed certifications will result in bid rejection and certification proof will be checked by the Decatur County BOE.

2.3 Addenda

Any interpretation, correction, or change of the RFP will be made by updating the RFP on the DCBOE Request for Bids/Proposals web site. It is the responsibility of vendors to check for changes made to the RFP.

2.4 Financing

After notification of award, The Vendor will receive purchase order(s) for the products and services for which The Vendor will be responsible because of the RFP. This project is projected to be funded through E-RATE. The actual installation of this project is totally contingent on E-RATE approval. Each vendor must supply a SPIN number on your bid response. Purchase order(s) will show the amount that is the responsibility of the local school system. **The final payment of this project will be made only after verifying that the firewall is functioning as expected. The Decatur County BOE will strictly enforce the bid guidelines and the quality of the installation.** Final testing will take place in the presence of a designated technology staff member. The Decatur County Schools Technology Staff will have total discretion to request any needed changes to meet current national, state, or industry standards.

2.7 Warranty

The Vendor shall fully warrant with the manufacturer's warranty all items provided under this RFP against defects in material and workmanship for the E-RATE funding year. *The primary warranty response is to come from the awarded vendor and should be on a per equipment basis on the RFP and detailed in the Bid Proposal*. The vendor will also be expected to provide on-site service in addition to the manufacture warranty, so please list this service in detail.

2.8 Right to Reject

The BOE reserves the right to accept or reject all proposals or sections thereof and when the rejection is in the best interest of the Decatur County School District. The Customer reserves the right to award without further discussion. Therefore, responses should be submitted initially with the most favorable terms that The Vendor can propose.

The BOE reserves the right to reject the proposal of a Vendor whom in the opinion of the Technology Department is not able to adequately perform the contract.

Contracts will be awarded to the highest ranked Vendor using an E-RATE formula where it is in the best interest of the Decatur County School System.

2.9 Discount Billing

Decatur County Schools will only accept discounted billing. This method is known in the E-RATE program as "Service Provider Invoicing" (SPI). Vendor agrees to bill Decatur County School System for the "non-discount amount".

3.0 Vendor Certification

Included within Vendor's Bid Packages, vendors must submit a declaration of Vendor's ability to meet all the requirements detailed in the RFP and submit certification requirements as listed in session 2.2 Subcontractors.

4.0 Pricing & Cost Allocation

To comply with E-Rate rules regarding ineligible services (e.g., Anti-Virus, Web Filtering logs, etc.), vendors must submit pricing in the following format. Failure to break out costs may result in disqualification.

Line Item	Description	E-Rate Eligible Price	E-Rate Ineligible Price	Total
Hardware	Firewall Appliance (Hardware & Basic OS)	$	$	$
Subscriptions	Threat Prevention, URL Filtering, AV Licenses	$	$	$
Support	Basic Maintenance / Technical Support	$	$	$
Services	Configuration & Installation Labor	$	$	$
TOTAL		$	$	$

5.0 Bid Scale

In addition to meeting the specifications described in this RFP, evaluation of all proposals will be based on the following grid criteria:

Factor	Weight
Price	40%
Technical Qualifications	30%
In-Area Engineer	20%
Prior experience with DCBOE	10%
Total	100%

SCOPE OF PROJECTED WORK

Bainbridge High School

The scope of this project is to install and configure a new next-generation firewall to be used for the district-wide Internet access of Decatur County Schools. A detailed parts list and pricing of ALL items to be installed must be included with the bid. This detailed parts list must be submitted using an approved USAC "Bulk Upload Template" Excel spreadsheet Attachment. Information can be found at https://www.usac.org/e-rate/applicant-process/applying-for-discounts/fcc-form-471-filing/#bulk-upload-templates

The requirements for the firewall are listed below. All proposed equipment must meet the capabilities described in this section. **All bids must be submitted as complete. Any additional components or licenses that are required to use and manage the firewall must be included in the bid.**

Hardware Requirements

- **Throughput:** Minimum 5 Gbps throughput with all Threat Prevention/IPS/AV features enabled
- **Sessions:** Supports at least 2M concurrent sessions
- **Interfaces:** The unit must include at least four SFP+ (10 Gigabit) ports
- **Redundancy:** Dual, hot-swappable power supplies
- **Form Factor:** Rack-mountable (1U or 2U) with rail kit included

Software Requirements

- **Web filtering:** Integrated Web/URL filtering which meets CIPA requirements
- **Threat detection:** Integrated Gateway Anti-Virus, Intrusion Prevention System (IPS), and Malware protection
- **Logging:** Local logging capable of retaining records of blocked activity for audit purposes
- **Load Balancing/Failover:** Must have the ability to accommodate two Internet connections for the purpose of failover and load balancing
- **Licensing:** The ability to use and manage the basic firewall and networking functionality must be

Support & Services

- **Installation:** Professional services for initial configuration, migration of rules from the existing firewall, and physical installation.
- **Vendor support:** 3-year vendor support contract (configuration assistance, troubleshooting, firewall security review & vulnerability check)
- **Manufacturer support:** 3-Year manufacturer support contract (24x7 technical support, hardware replacement, and firmware updates).

Important:

The ability to use and manage the basic firewall and networking functionality must be licensed perpetually (should a license be required) and must not be dependent on a cloud-based service. Advanced functionality such as content filtering, antivirus and threat detection may be licensed on a yearly plan.

Appendix A

Certificate Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility

The Decatur County School District is a recipient of Federal monies. As such we require that participating vendors not be debarred, suspended, ineligible or excluded from doing business with the Federal government or any agency thereof.

The prospective participant certifies, by submission of the proposal, that neither it, nor its principals, is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.

_____

Organization Name

_____

Name(s) and Title(s) of Authorized Representative(s)

_____ _____

Signature(s) Date

_____ _____

Notary Date

Appendix B

E-RATE CERTIFICATION

I, _____, certify that _____, is a
(Print or Type Name) (Company Name)
Service Provider as defined by the E-Rate Program and has not been suspended or disbarred from participating by the Federal Communications Commission. Our SPIN # is _____, and
(Type Service Provider ID)
we have operated under this SPIN for _____years.
(number)

I also certify to the acceptance of the following:

1. All information necessary to respond to any PIA (Program Integrity Assurance), Item 25 Selective Review, or Audit performed by the FCC, the SLD, or their designated authority, will be furnished completely and in a timely manner sufficient to meet the any response deadlines;
2. In the event an appeal is necessary, all the information necessary to complete the appeal will be furnished completely and in a timely manner to the Decatur County School System, it's attorney(s) or authorized agent;
3. Any contract awarded based upon this RFP in contingent upon the receipt of a Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) from the SLD that awards the requested discounts in full. In the event that partial funding or no funding is granted, the Decatur County School System reserves the right to cancel the contract in whole or in part;
4. The Decatur County School System will be invoiced for the only the matching funds portion, and it our responsibility, as the E-Rate Service Provider, to invoice the SLD for the remaining "non-discount" portion. This billing method is known as the SPI (Service Provider Invoice) method;
5. In the event the Decatur County School System wishes to perform a SPIN change, as afforded by the COPAN decision, permission will be granted within the contracted terms, provided 14 days prior written notice is given.

_____ _____
(Original Signature in Blue or Black Ink) (Today's Date)

_____
(Print or Type Name)

_____
(Title)

Appendix C
Vendor Affidavit under O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91(b)(1)

By executing this affidavit, the undersigned Vendor verifies its compliance with O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91, stating affirmatively that the individual, firm or corporation which is engaged in the physical performance of services on behalf of Decatur County School District has registered with, is authorized to use and uses the federal work authorization program commonly known as E-Verify, or any subsequent replacement program, in accordance with the applicable provisions and deadlines established in O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91. Furthermore, the undersigned Vendor will continue to use the federal work authorization program throughout the contract period and the undersigned Vendor will contract for services in satisfaction of such contract only with sub-Vendors who present an affidavit to the Vendor with the information required by O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91(b). Vendor hereby attests that its federal work authorization user identification number and date of authorization are as follows:

_____ _____

Federal Work Authorization Date of Authorization

User Identification Number

_____ _____

Name of Vendor Name of Project

Decatur County School District

Name of Public Employer

I hereby declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on _____, ___, 202_ in _____(city), _____(state).

_____

Signature of Authorized Officer or Agent

_____

Printed Name and Title of Authorized Officer or Agent

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN BEFORE ME ON THIS THE _____ DAY OF _____,202_.

_____

NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires:_____