



Lincoln Public Schools

ROBERT FORD
DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY

Memorandum

Date: October 14, 2021
To: School Committee
From: Rob Ford, Director of Technology

Subject: Hanscom E-Rate Project and Funding Request

The federal E-Rate program supports school districts by helping to fund internet service and networking equipment. Each year districts apply for funds in different categories and, if approved, receive partial funding based on the district's socioeconomic profile. Each year the Lincoln Public Schools apply for and receive Category 1 funding for our internet service, covering 40% of our internet costs.

The E-Rate program also makes Category 2 funds available to support districts purchasing network infrastructure equipment. Prior to FY15, districts such as Lincoln rarely received category 2 funding. Then, from the 2015 through 2019 funding years, the E-Rate program adopted a five year plan to provide more equitable access to E-Rate funds by setting a per-student category 2 "budget" that districts could apply for during those years. This plan was eventually extended by one year for funding year 2020, with districts eligible for an additional 1/5 of their original 5-year budget.

LPS took full advantage of these category 2 funds, and received 40% funding for network upgrades on both campuses up to the full amount eligible across all six years. From 2006-2020, across both Category 1 and 2, LPS received \$264,562 in funding through E-Rate.

Funding year 2021 started a new Category 2 five-year plan for E-Rate. The new plan is generally similar to the previous plan, with some additional flexibility provided to allow planning at the district level, rather than having each school's funding completely siloed. Across the five years of the plan we expect to be eligible for ~\$72,000 in funding.

For funding year 2021, we identified and applied for one E-Rate Category 2 project to replace 30 wireless access points at Hanscom Middle School. These wireless access points are now in their 6th year of service and are due for replacement. The new wireless access points support newer WiFi standards and technologies, and are specifically designed for better performance in dense WiFi environments like a school. Expected outcomes of this replacement will be fewer dropped connections and better wireless performance for students and staff. The total cost of the project, which includes five years of licensing and support, will be \$29,760.90, and we have received an E-Rate funding commitment for 40% of the cost, or \$11,904.36.

In order to secure the committed E-Rate funds, we are requesting a transfer from the Hanscom reserve of \$17,856.54. If this is approved, we will place the equipment order as soon as the funds are available, and will begin implementation in early winter.

If the Committee has any questions, I will be happy to address them.

cc: Rebecca McFall, Superintendent
Mary Ellen Normen, Administrator for Business and Finance