Frequently Asked Questions about Regional Wide Area Networks for New Jersey Schools

The New Jersey Digital Readiness for Learning and Assessment Project- Broadband Component aims to help schools improve their Internet access by purchasing services in bulk to reduce prices, increase bandwidth and improve service. One way to accomplish this is to use a regional Wide Area Network.

What is a Wide Area Network?

A Wide Area Network (WAN) is a group of interconnected computers spanning a large geographic area.

Are there different kinds of WANs?

Yes. In New Jersey, many schools use inter-campus WANs to connect buildings in the same school district. In other states, many schools also use inter-district regional WANs to connect buildings across district boundaries. The best-known WAN is the Internet, which links millions of computers worldwide.

How is using an inter-district regional WAN different from what schools do now?

Almost all New Jersey districts purchase Internet access individually district-by-district from an Internet Service Provider (ISP). In an inter-district regional WAN, districts still buy Internet access from an ISP, but they aggregate their demand and purchase Internet access together in large quantities for better value.

How can a regional WAN make Internet access cheaper?

Because schools can buy in bulk and receive volume discounts. For example, a district can buy 100 megabits per second (Mbps) of Internet by itself at the 100 Mbps price. Or, it can buy 100 Mbps of Internet as part of a group at the 10,000 Mbps price. The latter choice will be less expensive. Schools can save money by purchasing large quantities of Internet access and distributing it through a regional WAN.

How can a regional WAN make Internet access faster?

If the price is cheaper, schools can afford to buy more. For the upcoming consortium procurement, schools will select a regional WAN circuit of 100 Mbps or 1,000 Mbps. As long as the amount of Internet access doesn't exceed the regional WAN circuit speed (either 100 Mbps or 1,000 Mbps), districts can order as much Internet as they want. Then if they need more later on, they simply order more.

What if I need more than 1,000 Mbps?

Let us know and we will accommodate. Just send an email to jmatthews@dellicker.com.

How can a regional WAN make Internet access better?

Regional WANs provide the same upload and download speeds so schools can send out information as fast as they can receive it. Regional WAN Internet access is backed by service level agreements that guarantee uptime and provide penalties for too much downtime. And, because Internet is dedicated to each district, schools do not need to share it with other users as in a cable modem arrangement.

Who manages the regional WAN?

Most network management services will be provided by the vendor(s) that delivers the service. However, three New Jersey educational service agencies will provide supplemental services as required. They are: Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission (MRESC), Bergen County Technical Schools (BCTC) and Educational Information and Resource Center (EIRC). Examples of supplemental services include firewall services, content filtering, email services or disaster recovery services.

How do we sign up?

Contact our project consultant John Matthews of Dellicker Strategies for all the information:
Phone: 717-491-2936/Email: jmatthews@dellicker.com. **The deadline to sign up is June 13, 2014!**