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March 24, 2014

Dear Telecommunications Service Provider,

You are invited to attend an important discussion regarding a new statewide initiative to improve the data telecommunications infrastructure of K-12 schools in New Jersey. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJ DOE) has launched the Digital Readiness for Learning and Assessment Project- Regional Broadband Component (DRLAP-Broadband) to help schools prepare for online assessments and digital learning applications. A key part of this project is an effort to organize schools into regional purchasing consortia to aggregate their demand and get the best value on upgraded telecommunications services.

Any telecommunications provider/Internet service provider interested in serving New Jersey schools is invited to hear more about this project by attending an informational meeting on April 7, 2014.

In addition, service providers are encouraged to complete a 20-question Request for Information (RFI) about your company's potential consortium service offerings to New Jersey schools.

Event: NJ DRLAP – Broadband Component – Vendor Outreach Seminar
Date: Monday, April 7, 2014
Time: 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm
Location: Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission – Board Room
1660 Stelton Road, Piscataway, NJ 08854

Please click the link below to register for this event and receive the RFI. Each individual must register separately, so please forward this email to all interested parties. The event password is: ***broadband***.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/new-jersey-digital-readiness-for-learning-assessment-project-drlap-broadband-component-vendor-registration-10980750721>

If you cannot attend the meeting but still want the RFI, please email me, John Matthews of Dellicker Strategies at jmatthews@dellicker.com. You do not need to attend the meeting to respond to the RFI.

Dellicker Strategies, a technology consulting firm working with NJDOE, will be conducting this meeting and overseeing the upcoming regional procurements. Dellicker Strategies has helped more than 500 school organizations successfully upgrade their telecommunications infrastructure since 2005.

Sincerely,

John Matthews
Dellicker Strategies, LLC
717-491-2936



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Digital Readiness for Learning and Assessment Project- Regional Broadband Component

Telecommunications Service Provider Request for Information March 24, 2014

This Request for Information (RFI) seeks to determine general service availability and budgetary pricing for Wide Area Network (WAN) and Internet services to K-12 schools across New Jersey. Information from this RFI will be used to prepare one or more Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for release later this year to provide high-speed data telecommunications services to potentially hundreds of schools. We anticipate RFPs to be organized by regional purchasing consortia for aggregated E-Rate competitive bids.

General Information

Beginning next academic year, schools across New Jersey are required to move from paper-based standardized tests to fully online systems for assessing student academic performance. In addition, many schools are adopting new models of digital learning to improve academic achievement. Recent surveys have identified gaps between what schools need to support these emerging applications and what schools currently have, especially in the area of broadband access.

To address the issue, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJ DOE) has launched the Digital Readiness for Learning and Assessment Project- Regional Broadband Component (DRLAP-Broadband). This project is designed to help schools upgrade their data telecommunications capacity using purchasing consortia to aggregate demand. NJ DOE has enlisted the services of Dellicker Strategies to manage this part of the project and lead the DRLAP-Broadband team.

Contact Information

Dellicker Strategies is a Lehigh Valley Pennsylvania-based consulting firm that specializes in helping schools improve their technology infrastructure for various educational technology applications, especially blended learning. Since 2005, Dellicker Strategies has negotiated more than \$150 million in new telecommunications contracts for schools, universities, hospitals and businesses. John Matthews of Dellicker Strategies will be your point-of-contact for this RFI. He may be contacted at:

Email: jmatthews@dellicker.com
Phone: 717-491-2936
Web: www.dellicker.com

Purpose

The DRLAP-Broadband team will help various New Jersey educational service agencies (ESAs) organize schools into regional E-Rate consortia to purchase telecommunications services collaboratively. The idea is for schools to buy more services for a better value together instead of purchasing fewer services for a higher price alone. Generally, this process expands the marketplace benefiting buyers and sellers alike.

This RFI is a tool to help schools make decisions about their voluntary participation in upcoming regional procurements for WAN and Internet services. Service providers are not required to respond to this RFI in order to submit bids in a future RFP. However, information provided by service providers now is especially important for helping schools make participation decisions about future consortium bids.

This RFI is designed to help schools understand and evaluate the potential benefits of buying broadband services in large quantities with other schools through regional consortia. The RFI seeks to provide each vendor maximum flexibility in offering solutions within their respective service areas and consistent with their company strengths. Creativity is encouraged, as are partnerships with other telecommunications providers. Companies should use this RFI as an opportunity to promote their services to K-12 schools.

Timeline

Now through April, schools will be submitting information to the DRLAP-Broadband team about their own interests and abilities to participate in regional purchasing consortia. Meanwhile, this RFI will be used to collect information from telecommunications service providers about their potential consortium service offerings to schools. By May, all of this information will be compiled, analyzed and presented to schools so they can make decisions about the services they seek to buy as part of the consortia. Based on their feedback, the DRLAP-Broadband team will prepare one or more RFPs to procure services for all the schools that seek to participate in the consortium procurement process. To summarize:

- RFI is available today and due by close of business on April 25, 2014
- Requests for Proposals (RFPs) will be issued in June/July and due around mid-late August
- Award decisions will be made through the fall.
- All contracts will be signed prior to the 2015-16 E-Rate deadline (anticipated March 2015)
- New services target date is July 1, 2015

Response Instructions

Please respond to each numbered paragraph in boldface **BLUE** in Section II *Questions for Service Providers*. Email your response to this RFI to John Matthews of Dellicker Strategies by April 25, 2014 in Word or PDF format. Providers do not need to send paper copies. Please be clear and concise:

Submit to: jmatthews@dellicker.com.

Important! This is not a bid. It is only an RFI. This RFI is a tool to inform future procurements but will not be used to actually purchase services. Schools will not buy services pursuant to this RFI.

Questions for Service Providers

New Jersey schools must balance ever-increasing needs for higher capacity and better quality networks with ongoing budgetary constraints. It is the intention of the DRLAP-Broadband team to present various networking options for schools to consider that meet or exceed their anticipated requirements for online assessments and future digital learning. These options include basic broadband service, WAN services and dedicated Internet access. Based on the results of this RFI, schools will self-select the appropriate type of service for their particular needs to be purchased via regional consortia.

Basic Broadband Internet Service

At present, hundreds of schools in NJ receive Internet service via broadband connections to Internet Service Providers (ISP) through popular and affordable technologies such as cable modems, DSL circuits, asymmetric fiber services or wireless connections. With these types of services, schools typically connect directly to their ISP in order to receive Internet access, usually on a best-effort basis.

- 1. Describe the type(s) of basic broadband Internet services you offer to New Jersey schools.**
 - a. What kind of service does your company offer (e.g. cable modem, DSL)**
 - b. Describe bandwidth options in megabits per second Mbps (upstream & downstream)**
 - c. Identify service add-ons (e.g. content filtering and firewall)**
 - d. Identify the type of equipment you would provide as part of the service and any additional equipment a school would be required to have on its own**

- 2. Describe pricing options for each level of basic broadband Internet Service, including installation fees (pre-E-Rate)**

- 3. Identify the locations where you offer basic broadband Internet service (e.g. list LATA/Region/County or submit service map)**

- 4. Explain how purchasing basic broadband Internet service through a consortium could result in better value for New Jersey schools. Be specific and creative. For example, what volume of sales (e.g. how many schools or how much revenue) would impact pricing points and/or service packages?**

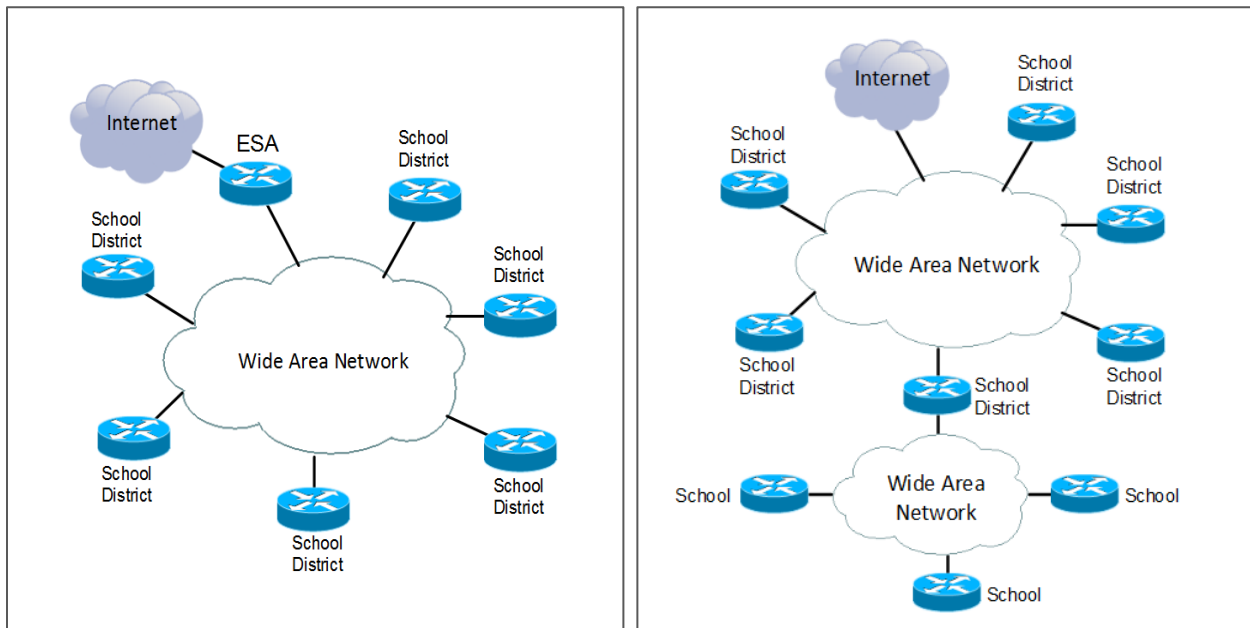
- 5. Provide any additional information relevant to the consortium purchase of basic broadband Internet service.**

Wide Area Network Services

ESAs and school districts are exploring the concept of regional WANs to enable private information exchange among member schools. WANs would be used to provide any-to-any connectivity among participating schools to distribute important educational applications and deliver Internet access. Examples of regional WANs are depicted in the network diagrams below.

Figure 1 below depicts two examples of how schools can use regional WANs to exchange information. The diagram on the left illustrates an arrangement in which bulk Internet is delivered to an ESA headend that distributes Internet service to other districts through the cloud. The diagram on the right shows Internet delivered to the WAN cloud for distribution to the schools and depicts how buildings within districts might be connected. WANs also could provide point-to-point circuits in a star topology.

FIGURE 1. EXAMPLES OF K-12 REGIONAL WIDE AREA NETWORKS



These examples are illustrative, not prescriptive. Schools and service providers may choose many different designs to have the same effect. However, all WANs should provide any-to-any connectivity among member districts and enable the distribution of commodity Internet via the WAN transport links.

- 6. Describe the type(s) of WAN services you offer to New Jersey schools.**
 - a. What kind of WAN services does your company offer (e.g. point-to-point dedicated fiber, Metro-Ethernet transport, MPLS via dedicated access circuits)**
 - b. Describe bandwidth options in megabits per second Mbps**

-
- c. Describe service add-ons (e.g. managed network services)
 - d. Identify the type of equipment you would provide as part of the service and any additional equipment a school would be required to have on its own
 7. Provide budgetary pricing for 10 Mbps WAN transport, 100 Mbps WAN transport and 1,000 Mbps WAN transport from your network to a serviceable point in your territory for a 48 month term.

Notes:

- For the RFP, service providers will respond to actual identified school locations
 - Please submit pricing in a clear format or use the attached spreadsheet (preferred)
 - Be sure to identify installation costs and taxes/fees in pre-E-Rate dollars
 - You may vary these bandwidth amounts or term as required (e.g. submit 9 Mbps instead of 10 Mbps or offer 36 or 60 month options)
8. Identify the locations where you offer WAN services (e.g. list LATA/Region/County or submit service map)
 9. Explain how purchasing WAN services through a consortium could result in better value for New Jersey schools. Be specific and creative. For example, what volume of sales (e.g. how many schools or how much revenue) would impact pricing points and/or service packages?
 10. Do you have the ability to distribute Internet access through your WAN to separate nodes on the network representing different school districts or buildings?
 11. Provide any additional information relevant to the consortium purchase of WAN services.

Dedicated Internet Access

Dedicated Internet Access is delivered to a specific location via dedicated transport and is backed by a commercial-quality service level agreement. In these ways, it differs from the basic broadband Internet service previously described. When purchased by schools, dedicated Internet access typically is delivered to a district hub-site or headend and distributed to other campus locations through a WAN.

12. Describe the type(s) of dedicated Internet access you offer to New Jersey schools.
 - a. What kind of service does your company offer (e.g. tier two service from multiple ISPs)
 - b. Describe bandwidth options in megabits per second Mbps
 - c. Describe service add-ons (e.g. content filtering and firewall)

-
- d. Identify the type of equipment you would provide as part of the service and any additional equipment a school would be required to have on its own

13. Provide budgetary pricing to each of the following locations as follows:

North New Jersey: 327 East Ridgewood Avenue; Paramus, NJ 07652; 201-343-XXXX
Central New Jersey: 1660 Stelton Road, Piscataway, NJ 08854; 732-777-XXXX
South New Jersey: 107 Gilbreth Parkway, Mullica Hill, NJ 08062; 856-582-XXXX

- e. 100 Mbps dedicated Internet access (transport and port) for 36 months
f. 500 Mbps dedicated Internet access (transport and port) for 36 months
g. 1,000 Mbps dedicated Internet access (transport and port) for 36 months
h. 5,000 Mbps dedicated Internet access (transport and port) for 36 months
i. 10,000 Mbps dedicated Internet access (transport and port) for 36 months

Notes:

- For the RFP, service providers will respond to actual identified headend locations
- Please submit pricing in a clear format or use the attached spreadsheet (preferred)
- Be sure to identify installation costs and taxes/fees in pre-E-Rate dollars
- You may vary these bandwidth amounts or terms as required (e.g. submit 2,000 Mbps instead of 1,000 Mbps or offer 12 or 24 month terms)

14. Identify the locations where you offer dedicated Internet access services (e.g. list LATA/Region/County or submit service map)

15. Explain how purchasing dedicated Internet access through a consortium could result in better value for New Jersey schools. Be specific and creative. For example, would schools receive discounts if they purchased dedicated Internet access bundled with a WAN service offering?

16. Provide any additional information relevant to the consortium purchase of dedicated Internet access.

Additional Questions

The following additional questions apply to the technical designs of future service offerings and administrative options for delivering services.

17. Schools in regional consortia may sign consolidated contracts with service providers or maintain separate contracts school-by-school. Do you have any preferences or limitations regarding contracts with school consortia?

a. Would your company provide pricing discounts for consolidated contracts?

18. Does your company have an E-Rate SPIN? If yes, please provide. If not, you still have time to apply prior to the release of upcoming regional RFPs.

19. Are you willing to partner with other telecommunications companies to provide services to school consortia that may include schools outside your current service territory? Explain.

20. Please provide any additional information relevant to the consortium purchase of WAN and Internet services to New Jersey K-12 schools.

Notes and Qualifications

It is our intent to allow providers maximum creativity in offering ideas to the school districts about how to get more value from their data telecommunications spending. Providers may present an unlimited number of "Provider's Choice" variations consistent with the buyers' general intentions without meeting the specific parameters of the described options. Remember, the point of the RFI is to demonstrate the value of consortium purchasing to the schools; the better your ideas the more potential customers!

Please be brief. We appreciate your clarity and brevity. The easiest way to respond is to cut-and-paste the questions into a clean document and answer in numbered order. Please use the pricing spreadsheets to submit pricing information where applicable.

Wherever applicable, please emphasize your interest and ability to offer volume discounts on price. Be specific. We need to understand your price-points in order to enlist the schools' participation.

This is not about squeezing vendors' profit margins. When done effectively, regional aggregation can significantly grow the marketplace for advanced telecommunications services. This project is about helping schools purchase a lot more bandwidth to accommodate online assessments and digital learning.

It is perfectly acceptable to submit information for some service offerings but not all.

Our team of consultants and representatives of NJ DOE will read your submissions and conduct analysis. We also will allow schools to review your responses after acknowledging the need to keep your information confidential. While we do not intend to disseminate any documents beyond this group of planners and educators, service providers should not submit any confidential or proprietary information.

Remember, this RFI is designed to determine broad service availability and budgetary pricing in the context of regional purchasing consortia. The eventual RFP will contain specific schools and specific instructions about the services sought region-by-region. This RFI is NOT a solicitation for proposals and will not be used to purchase services. Instead, it is designed to gather relevant information to help schools plan for collaborative procurement opportunities in the near future.

Instructions for Completing the Pricing Spreadsheets

Please submit budgetary pricing in a clear and concise format of your choosing or use our prepared spreadsheets (preferred). To submit using our spreadsheets, please follow the directions below:

- The NJ DRLAP Pricing Spreadsheets attachment contains two Excel worksheets to present pricing for WAN transport and dedicated Internet access. For broadband Internet service, providers may use their own format.
- White cells provide information, green cells require input (if applicable) and grey cells calculate automatically
- For the WAN transport tab:
 - Input the non-recurring cost and monthly recurring costs in Columns E and F respectively for the requested bandwidth level s and a 48 month term
 - Providers should assume the hypothetical school is in their service territory
 - Use Column H to provide clarifying information
 - Additional rows are for “provider’s choice” offerings
- For the dedicated Internet access tab:
 - Notice three separate sections for north, central and south
 - In Column E, provide the total non-recurring costs including port and transport
 - In Column F and G, input monthly port and transport costs separately as applicable.
 - Total pricing should calculate in Column H
 - Companies may submit “provider’s choice” options in the additional rows

Be sure to present all pricing information in pre-E-Rate dollars!

Be sure to include all taxes and fees!

If you have any questions, please contact John Matthews via email or by phone at 717-491-2936.

Thank you. End of RFI.