# School Connectivity IT Funding
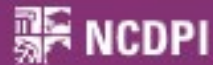
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North Carolina Department of
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

# School Connectivity
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
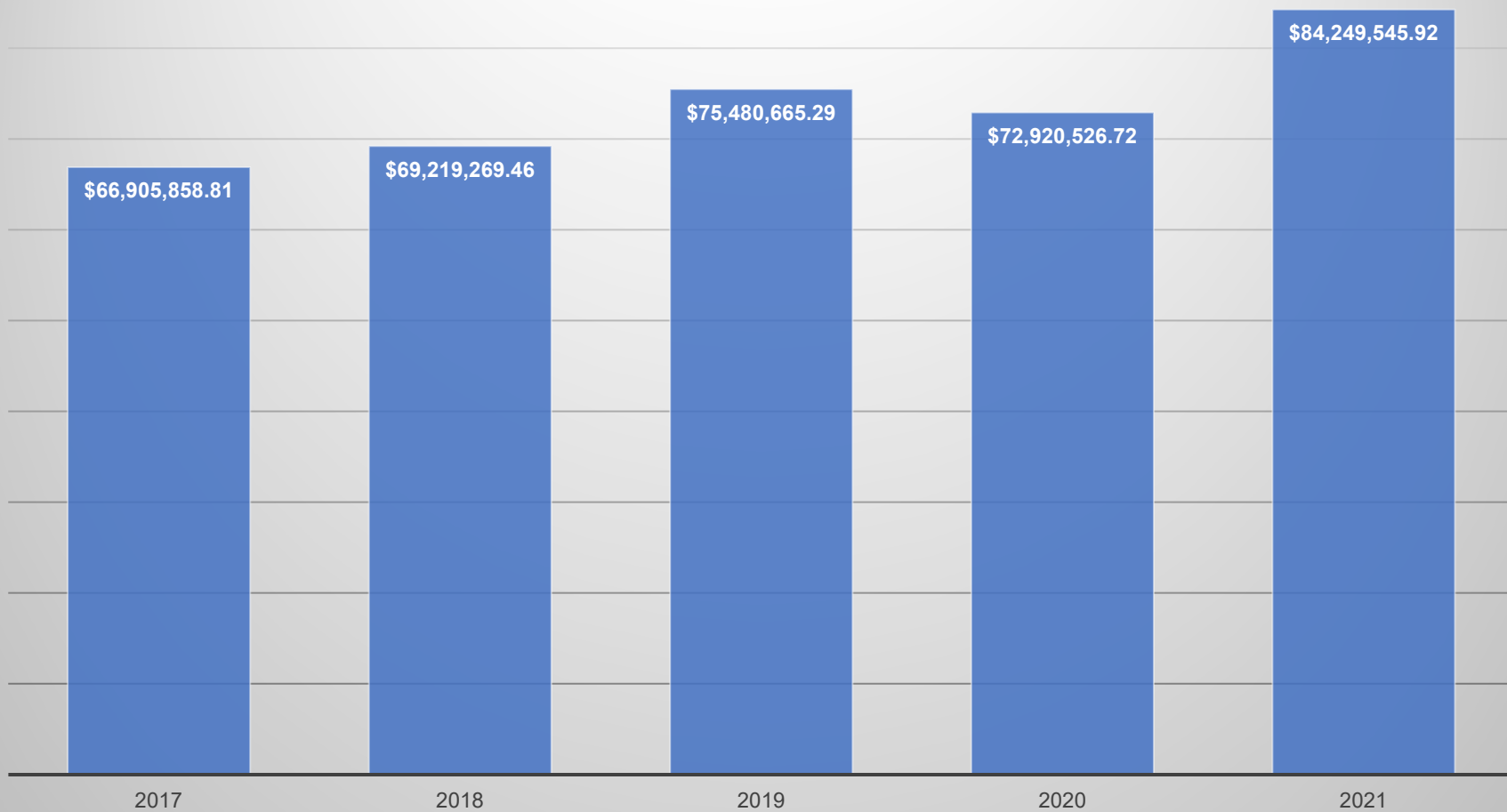
NCDPI

*Celebrating 15 years of service to PSUs!*

Zero-Cost Products / Services:

- Internet Access
- Content Filtering
- Fully Managed Firewall
  - New: Next-Generation Palo Alto firewalls managed 24x7 exclusively by MCNC
- Expert Network Engineering Assistance
- Expert E-rate Program Filing Assistance
- NEW! Cybersecurity Program Offerings

# IT Funding: E-rate Program

- Federal discount program, not a grant
- Essentially for everything needed to deliver wireless to the classroom
- Discounts based on free/reduced lunch eligibility and urban/rural status
- Up to 90% discount. Statewide average is 73%
- School Connectivity allocates the "non-discounted portion" to PSUs directly

North Carolina E-rate Funding History

- 2017: $66,905,858.81
- 2018: $69,219,269.46
- 2019: $75,480,665.29
- 2020: $72,920,526.72
- 2021: $84,249,545.92

North Carolina Department of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

# E-rate Financial Mechanics

- Service providers will invoice E-rate directly for the discounted portion and only invoice the PSU for the "non-discounted portion"

- School Connectivity allocates the non-discounted portion directly to PSUs via PRC 073 or 036

# IT Funding: E-rate Program

## PRC073

- School districts
- Allotted after funding commitment
- Does not roll over
- Can be spent on almost anything

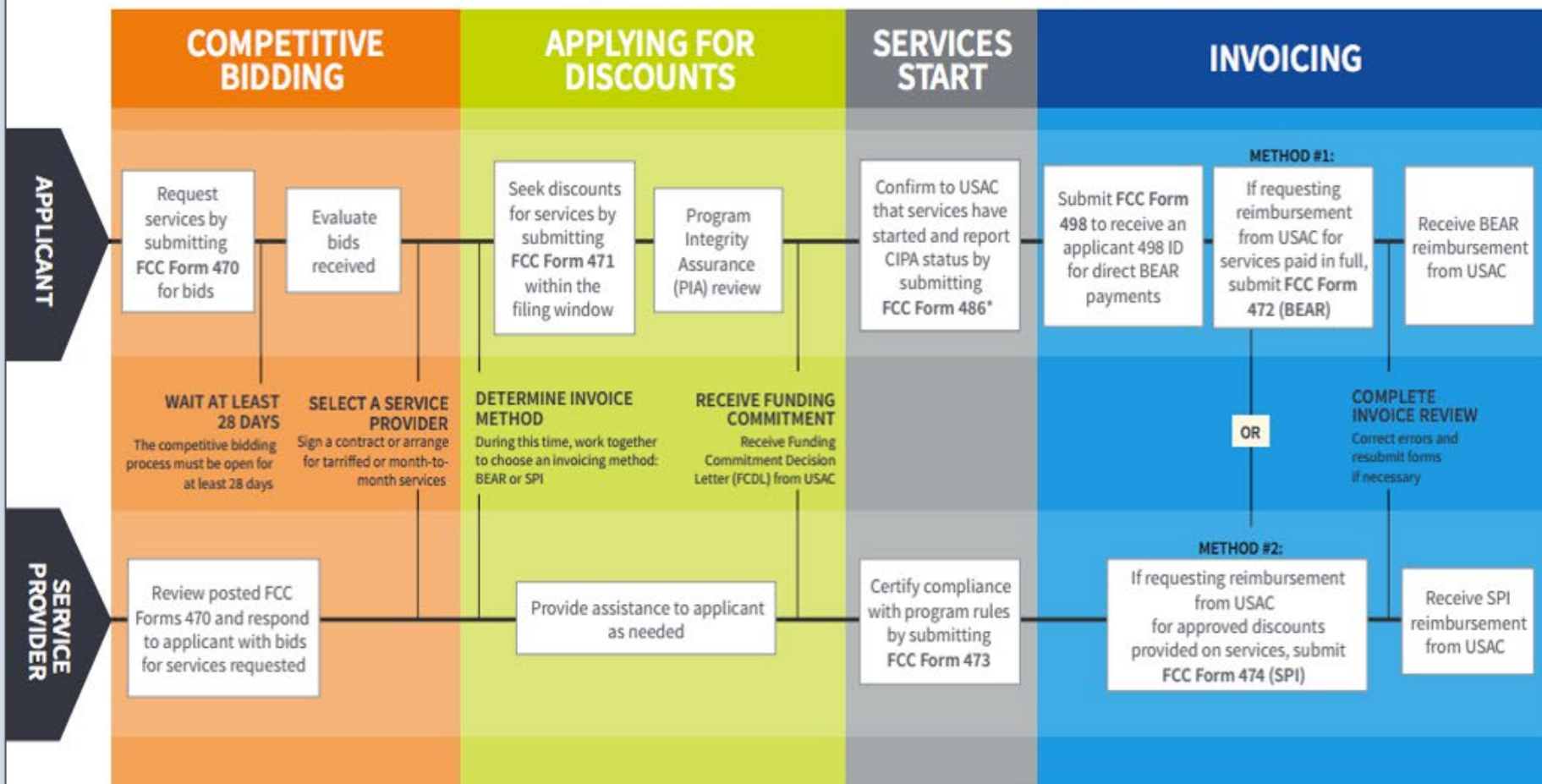## PRC036

- Charters
- Allotted after funding commitment
- School Connectivity designation
- Roll over?

https://tinyurl.com/AllotmentPolicyManual2020-21

# BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

**APPLICANTS:** Applicants must first have an entity number and an E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) account.
**SERVICE PROVIDERS:** Service providers must first obtain a Service Provider Identification Number (SPIN /service provider 498 ID) by submitting FCC Form 498.

| | COMPETITIVE BIDDING | APPLYING FOR DISCOUNTS | SERVICES START | INVOICING |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**APPLICANT**

Request services by submitting FCC Form 470 for bids → Evaluate bids received → Seek discounts for services by submitting FCC Form 471 within the filing window → Program Integrity Assurance (PIA) review → Confirm to USAC that services have started and report CIPA status by submitting FCC Form 486* → Submit FCC Form 498 to receive an applicant 498 ID for direct BEAR payments

**METHOD #1:**
If requesting reimbursement from USAC for services paid in full, submit FCC Form 472 (BEAR) → Receive BEAR reimbursement from USAC

**WAIT AT LEAST 28 DAYS**
The competitive bidding process must be open for at least 28 days

**SELECT A SERVICE PROVIDER**
Sign a contract or arrange for tarriffed or month-to-month services

**DETERMINE INVOICE METHOD**
During this time, work together to choose an invoicing method: BEAR or SPI

**RECEIVE FUNDING COMMITMENT**
Receive Funding Commitment Decision Letter (FCDL) from USAC

**OR**

**COMPLETE INVOICE REVIEW**
Correct errors and resubmit forms if necessary

**SERVICE PROVIDER**

Review posted FCC Forms 470 and respond to applicant with bids for services requested → Provide assistance to applicant as needed → Certify compliance with program rules by submitting FCC Form 473

**METHOD #2:**
If requesting reimbursement from USAC for approved discounts provided on services, submit FCC Form 474 (SPI) → Receive SPI reimbursement from USAC

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Website: The application process is broken down in detail for both applicants and service providers on the Schools and Libraries Program website (www.usac.org/sl).
- Glossary of Terms: Definitions for program terms and acronyms.
- *Consortium members report their CIPA status by submitting the FCC Form 479 to their consortium leader. The consortium leader then files the FCC Form 486.
- To adjust funding commitments and/or modify the dates for receipt of services after the FCDL is issued, file the FCC Form 500.

# IT Funding: E-rate Program

- Schools apply for funding: January - March

- Funding year: July 1 – June 30

- Recurring services end June 30

- Equipment must be installed by September 30

    (but that crosses fiscal years, doesn't it?)

# Fiscal Gymnastics

- Don't wait on PRC drop to submit POs
  - Supply chain delays are REAL
  - Fiscal year-end implications
  - E-rate deadline for delivery/installation is Sept. 30

- If not invoiced before fiscal year-end, use PRC funds for other planned purchases!
  - Use PRC funds for local funded this fiscal, then local funds for E-rate next fiscal
  - Manage carry-over and have a plan!

# Invoicing

SPI (Service Provider Invoicing)
- Discounted billing
- You only pay non-discounted portion

BEAR (Billed Entity Applicant Reimbursement)
- You pay 100% cost up front
- File for reimbursement from E-rate
- Form 498 required

# School Finance Officer Role

- Must be added as user in E-rate portal
  - Given rights as General Financial Contact
- Must complete Form 498 for EFT
  - Requires bank, account number, UEI number (replaces DUNS number)

- Watch for PRC deposits into school accounts
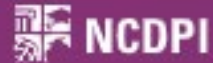- Notify your E-rate / technology personnel of PRC fund arrival
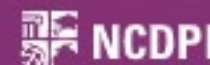
# *K-12 Cybersecurity Program*

## Mission:

To continuously improve the confidentiality, integrity, and availability

of every North Carolina Public School Unit's

instructional and business Information Technology infrastructure.

## *K-12 Cybersecurity Program*

# We are here to help PSUs reduce cybersecurity risk

- **Provide expert guidance**
- **Provide the best tools**
- **Augment local IT expertise**
- **Describe rather than Prescribe**

*We need the CFO's help to be successful!*

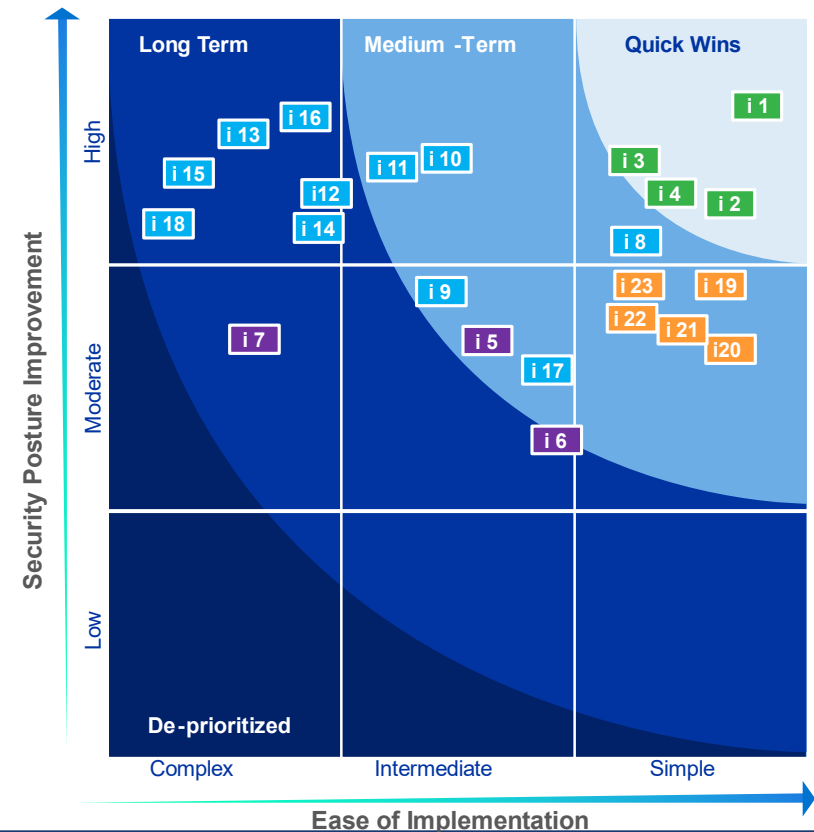# K-12 Cybersecurity Program – Summary

**To continuously improve the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of every NC Public School Unit's instructional and business Information Technology infrastructure.**

**From Risk Assessment to Execution of Remediation**
Laying the foundation for a successful program

**1**

## How the program started:

- Assessments of a diverse sample of PSUs was completed to determine current state of cybersecurity at a diverse sample of PSUs.

- A maturity rating for each regional district was produced along with a roadmap to mature cyber for NC K-12 schools.



Security Posture Improvement (vertical axis): High, Moderate, Low
Ease of Implementation (horizontal axis): Complex, Intermediate, Simple

Long Term | Medium -Term | Quick Wins

i 16, i 13, i 15, i 18, i12, i 14, i 11, i 10, i 1, i 3, i 4, i 2, i 8, i 9, i 23, i 19, i 22, i 21, i20, i 7, i 5, i 17, i 6

De-prioritized

# K-12 Cybersecurity Program – Summary

**To continuously improve the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of every NC Public School Unit's instructional and business Information Technology infrastructure.**
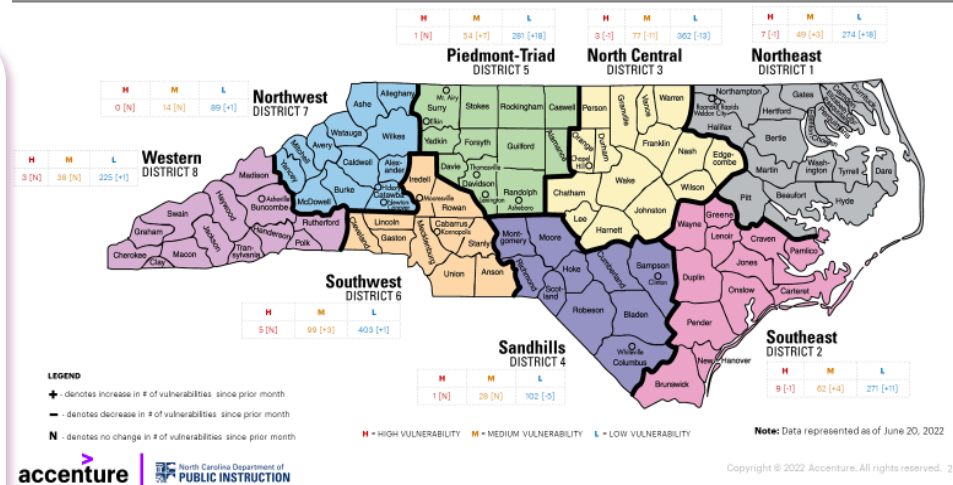
**From Risk Assessment to Execution of Remediation**
Laying the foundation for a successful program

**2**

## Remediation efforts, creating the foundation:

- Foundational program governance established to oversee and drive program adoption.

- Metrics created to track overall program, tools, and service adoption.

- An Advisory Committee comprised of PSU IT Directors created to collaborate and prioritize efforts.



NCDPI K-12 Cybersecurity – Vulnerabilities Report Per Regional District

# K-12 Cybersecurity Program – Summary

**To continuously improve the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of every NC Public School Unit's instructional and business Information Technology infrastructure.**

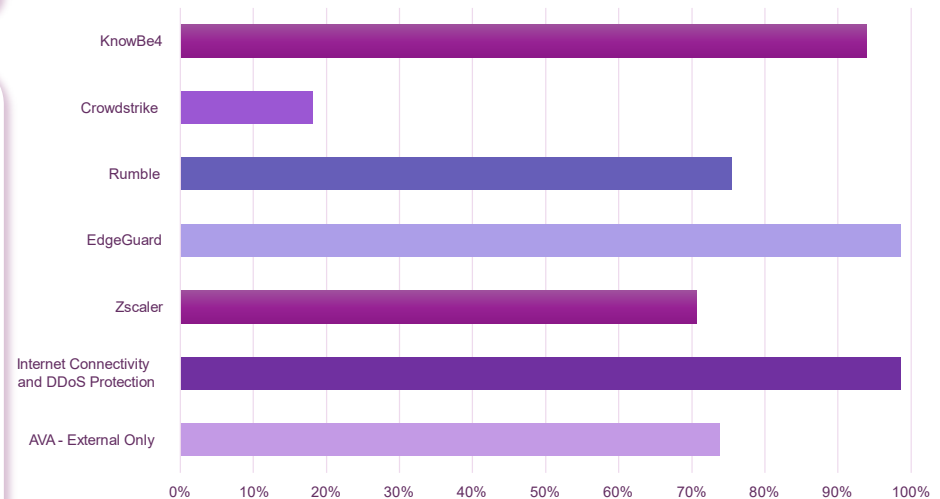**From Risk Assessment to Execution of Remediation**
Laying the foundation for a successful program

**3**

### Enhancements to offerings and developing an outreach strategy:

- Additional tools and services were procured to immediately fill a security gap or to pilot services that could further reduce risk.

- Procedural document templates created by request of PSUs to guide them in key areas, such as Incident Response.

**PSU Participation Levels**

| Category | Approx. % |
|---|---|
| KnowBe4 | ~94% |
| Crowdstrike | ~18% |
| Rumble | ~75% |
| EdgeGuard | ~98% |
| Zscaler | ~70% |
| Internet Connectivity and DDoS Protection | ~98% |
| AVA - External Only | ~73% |

# K-12 Cybersecurity Program – Summary

**To continuously improve the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of every NC Public School Unit's instructional and business Information Technology infrastructure.**

**From Risk Assessment to Execution of Remediation**
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**4** **Launching hands on and custom campaigns to engage PSUs further:**

The program aims to further enhance K-12 cyber maturity via targeted outreach campaigns to PSUs to increased the use of standardized, and managed tools and services.

The program will also launch monthly content to drive cyber awareness to PSU leadership and staff.



K-12 CYBERSECURITY PROGRAM
#CYBERSECURITY_AWARENESS_MONTH

North Carolina Department of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

October is
**Cybersecurity Awareness Month**

What ways are you being **cyber resilient** this month?

Find exciting new resources on the
**Cybersecurity Program Portal**

K12cybersafe.com

North Carolina Department of
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