



Franklin County Schools: An Introduction to VOIP

April 2023



Current Status of Telephone Service

Current Provider: Brightspeed (formerly Centurylink/Lumen)

Current Status:

- Failing weekly-both line (Brightspeed) and inside equipment (FCS) components
- Repairs are frequent and costly. Parts are dated and hard to find.
- Two schools, CCMS and YES, have had multiple issues this year.





Cost of Current Telephone Service

Total Service Cost Monthly: \$6,849.45 (\$82,193.40)

Repairs Cost varies

Analog/Repair Costs to FCS

- 2023 - \$97,291.55 (to date)
- 2022 - \$85,830.59
- 2021 - \$84,043.22
- Total - **\$267,165.36** (current year and 2 previous years)





Telephone Service: Why an upgrade is necessary

- Current system is outdated. Copper lines (the current FCS model) are becoming obsolete as utility providers shift to fiber lines. Copper lines are not as efficient as fiber-optic cables.
- Parts for copper lines are difficult to obtain when repairs are needed.
- Support/Repair for copper lines is decreasing significantly. Support for copper lines is not be a priority for phone companies.
- Network connectivity/Internet access is rarely down. Total downtime this school year (for internet service) has been 4 hours for a replacement part in the data center.
- Overall efficiency of the telecommunications piece of education.

Article below for quick reference.

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20220505005697/en/One-Source-Encourages-North-Carolina-Businesses-to-Replace-Copper-Phone-Lines-by-Early-August-Deadline>





What is VOIP?

- **VOIP: Voice Over Internet Protocol**
- Technology that allows you to make voice calls using a broadband Internet connection instead of a regular (or analog) phone line
- Converts voice into a digital signal that travels over the internet
- An internet connection and a device (computer, phone, tablet) is required





FCS Investigates VOIP for the 2023-2024 School Year

- An RFP was posted on December 9, 2022.
- A committee of 10 people in a variety of roles in FCS convened on January 12, 2023 to begin the evaluation of 23 proposals.
- The committee met a total of 4 times, for a total of 8 hours.
- For understanding, discussions began with defining our current phone system and progressed into defining VOIP and features that compared to our current phone system, along with the need to make a change.
- The committee divided into small groups and did evaluations of proposals. Evaluations were compared between small groups to assess various aspects of the proposals for consistency of rubric items.





Rubric Used to Evaluation Proposals

VENDOR	Weighting Percentage
Cost of the Eligible Goods and Services	
Hardware Breakout	15.00%
Professional Services / Installation	15.00%
Recurring Expenses	15.00%
Quality of previous Vendor experience	20.00%
Complete bid submission	20.00%
Onsite (server in house) vs. Cloud	5.00%
References	5.00%
NC References	5.00%
Total Points	100.00%





Results of RFP Process

After a review of the 24 submitted proposals, three vendors emerged as the strongest potential partners for this work :

- CDW/Ambit
- Converage Networks
- Carolina Digital Phone

An additional followup meeting was held with each of the above vendors in order to clarify aspects of their proposals. All vendors received the same questions prior to the meeting.

Upon completion, CDW/Ambit is the recommended VOIP vendor.



Projected Costs for 2023-2024

Startup Costs for 2023-2024: \$260,000 (Current Capital Outlay request)

- *Includes Hardware, Installation, Yearly recurring expense for year 1*

Additional funding to ensure compatibility with VOIP: \$135,000 (Current Capital Outlay request)

Annual Costs beginning in the 2024-2025: \$47,808 (5-year contract)





Additional Considerations

To ensure that the transition from a copper-line phone system to one reliant on fiber/internet connectivity, a team from the district (to include Sondra Ayscue, Mike Hedger, Dr. Larry Webb, Bradley Moss, Dawn Mabrey, Quinnley Coley, and Dr. Lela Nichols) met with a security contractor to discuss how fire panels and security systems may be impacted with the migration from one system to another. We are confident that any issues with the transition will be minimal and there may be a cost savings to the district.





Additional Considerations

Implementing VOIP in the district will lend itself to also evaluating the paging systems on each FCS site. Paging systems and speaker hardware will be replaced and added as needed to ensure that sites can communicate efficiently in each office, room, and building.



Recommendation:

Approval of CDW/Ambit as the vendor for VOIP vendor beginning July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2028.





Questions?

