

IKON INSIGHTS

TECHNOLOGY NEWS FOR K-12 SCHOOLS

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This monthly publication provided courtesy of IKON Business Group.

IKON is a premium IT consulting company focused on providing K-12 schools with customized technology solutions and personalized support.

Get More Free Tips, Tools and Services on Our Website:
www.ikonbusinessgroup.com
(212)334.6481

FCC ANNOUNCES THIRD ECF APPLICATION WINDOW

The FCC's Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) is a \$7.17 billion program that will help schools and libraries provide the tools and services their communities need for remote learning during the COVID-19 emergency period. For eligible schools and libraries, the ECF Program will cover reasonable costs of laptop and tablet computers; Wi-Fi hotspots; modems; routers; and broadband connectivity purchases for off-campus use by students, school staff, and library patrons.

A third ECF application filing window will open on April 28, 2022 and close on May 13, 2022. During this third application filing window, eligible schools, libraries, and consortia of eligible schools and libraries can submit requests for funding to purchase eligible equipment and up to 12 months of services between July 1, 2022 and December 31, 2023.

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ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

Schools, libraries, and consortia of schools and libraries that are eligible for support under the FCC's E-Rate program, are automatically eligible to request and receive support through the Emergency Connectivity Fund Program.

Otherwise, you are still eligible if you are:

- an elementary or secondary school (including private, charter, and religious schools!)
- a library
- a library consortium

ELIGIBLE DEVICES

- WiFi-enabled devices, such as Chromebooks, iPads and other laptops or tablets (but NOT desktop computers or mobile devices)
- Wi-Fi hotspots
- Modems
- Routers
- Broadband connections

AS AN E-RATE APPROVED VENDOR, IKON CAN SERVICE ALL OF YOUR ECF NEEDS, INCLUDING:

- Purchase and deployment of laptops, tablets, and Chromebooks
- Purchase of hotspot devices with Internet connectivity
- Insurance coverage on both existing and new devices

IKON Business Group is focused on providing K-12 schools with customized technology solutions and personalized support. Learn how we can help you take advantage of ECF funds and get connected devices to your students now.

To book a complimentary ECF Discovery Call - visit www.ikonbusinessgroup.com/ecf, or call us at: (212) 334-6481.

CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT: THE CO-OP SCHOOL

IKON'S EXPERTISE IN K-12 TECHNOLOGY HELPS BROOKLYN-BASED SCHOOL STREAMLINE IT INFRASTRUCTURE AND REDUCE OVERHEAD



The Co-op School was founded in 2003 by a group of parents looking for a high-quality and affordable preschool option. Since then, it has evolved into a fully staffed and licensed independent school that teaches kids from the age of 2 all the way through 8th grade. The Co-op School's name stems from the fact that students' families come from a wide range of backgrounds to form a "cooperative" and share responsibility for the development, fundraising, and maintenance of the school. At the heart of The Co-op School is a child-focused approach to learning that values the individuality and unique needs of each student within a diverse classroom environment.

As Business Director, Maureen Boucher is responsible for managing the school's finances and overseeing capital projects. In 2018, Boucher began the search for a competent IT partner as the growing school made plans to relocate to a new 33,000 square-foot facility in Brooklyn's Bedford Stuyvesant neighborhood. While researching IT service providers, Boucher interviewed several firms and asked for proposals.

"The skillset that IKON brings and their laser-focus on K-12 schools were key differentiators. It's important for us to work with vendors who are invested in our community. Working with a managed services provider who specializes in the education space has been invaluable."

IKON worked closely with The Co-op School on all aspects of their new construction technology planning which included hardwiring the entire building, facilitating high-speed internet access, installing a new phone system, and implementing a digital ID badge system. While undergoing new construction, a major consideration for the school was ensuring there were enough Wi-Fi access points to support students and staff working from laptops throughout the building.

To read more, visit: ikonbusinessgroup.com/case-studies/the-co-op-school/.

3 OPTIONS FOR IT SUPPORT AND HOW TO CHOOSE THE ONE THAT FITS YOUR K-12 SCHOOL

If you're an Operations Manager or Executive Director of a K-12 school, chances are you have looked into IT support options. For those unfamiliar with the world of IT support, it can be confusing trying to figure out which option is best for your school. When determining IT needs, there are three predominant options:

TIME AND MATERIALS

Those in the industry who use the time-and-materials option are often referred to as "break-fix services." This essentially means that you pay an agreed-upon hourly rate for a technician to "fix" a problem when something "breaks." Many people like this option because it is the most straightforward and simple way to pay for IT assistance, but it often doesn't work in your favor and can even lead you to pay more for basic services.

MANAGED IT SERVICES

In this option, the IT services company takes over the role of your in-house IT department for a fixed and agreed-upon monthly rate. They'll install, support, and maintain all of the users, devices, and PCs that are connected to your network on a routine basis. This model allows you to plan for IT services in your monthly budget and provides routine maintenance and IT support. Hiring a managed services provider will help protect your organization and prevent common "disasters" such as rogue employees, lost devices, hardware failures, fires, natural disasters, and a host of other issues that can interrupt or outright destroy your IT infrastructure.

TECHNOLOGY AS A SERVICE

The final option that you will run into on your hunt for IT support is technology as a service. These companies offer everything that managed IT services offer but with the addition of new hardware, software, and support. You'll need to read the fine print, though since many of these companies do not cover third-party software. The greatest benefit of technology as a service is that you'll avoid the heavy cost of new hardware and software when you need it, but you will be paying far more for the same hardware and software over time.

Choosing the correct form of IT support for your K-12 school is incredibly important and something you want to attend to. Mistakes could have disastrous effects on your organization. If you're unsure of which model will work best for you, give us a call. We'd be glad to help you find the perfect IT support for your school.

FREE EBOOK:

THE NYC METRO GUIDE TO IT SUPPORT SERVICES AND FEES FOR K-12 SCHOOLS



Read This Guide, and You'll Discover:

- The 3 most common ways IT services companies charge for their services, and the pros and cons of each approach.
- A common billing model that puts ALL THE RISK on you when buying IT services; you'll learn what it is and why you need to avoid agreeing to it.
- Exclusions, hidden fees and other "gotcha" clauses IT companies put in their contracts that you DON'T want to agree to.
- How to make sure you know exactly what you're getting to avoid disappointment, frustration and added costs later on that you didn't anticipate.
- 21 revealing questions to ask your IT support firm BEFORE giving them access to your computer network, e-mail and data.

Get your copy today at: <https://www.ikonbusinessgroup.com/itbuyersguide/>

KEEP YOUR SCHOOL COMPLIANT BY FOLLOWING THESE TIPS

A failure to remain compliant can spell doom. But what many Executive Directors and Operations Managers don't realize is that compliance and security go hand in hand. Compliance is in place to prevent security breaches and give guidelines for what to do if a breach does occur.

Your school won't become compliant on its own. It takes plenty of time, effort, and money. Before you spend time and money trying to figure out if your school is compliant or not, you should ask yourself the following:

- Does my organization have antivirus software, and is my network protected by a firewall?
- What data are we encrypting?
- Do I have a system in place to manage network-connected devices?
- Are there disaster recovery plans in place, and do I use backup solutions?
- Is there a business continuity strategy?
- Do I have cybersecurity training for staff?

Answering these questions will give you a better idea of what needs to be done. Before you rush out to buy technology and equipment to fill any holes, you should focus on training your team.

According to a study by IBM, 95% of cyber security breaches stem from human error. The reality is that employees who have not bought into a cyber-secure culture are putting your school at risk. You must have some type of employee training in place so they can learn all they can about cyber security. Without proper training, you cannot expect your employees to be inherently cyber-secure.

After you've fully trained your staff, you can put more focus into bringing in the proper technology and equipment to plug any lapses in your compliance plan. If you don't have antivirus software or firewalls, you should invest in them before anything else. Once those are in place, you can focus on a few specific pieces of technology to make your school more compliant.

One of the best investments you can make is to put an email spam filter in place. Email-based phishing attacks are one of the easiest ways for a cybercriminal to gain access to your school's valuable information. All it takes is one click on the wrong link to compromise the entire network. With a filter, you won't have to worry about your staff accidentally clicking on a sketchy email because it will never make it to their mailbox in the first place.

You should also introduce strong security password practices and multi-factor authentication. Part of your staff training should include tips and strategies for creating strong passwords. Oftentimes, people will use the same passwords for every account, leaving your organization vulnerable. Multifactor authentication ensures your staff will receive a text message authorizing their login and is a simple way to ensure your bases are covered.

Staying compliant is an important part of your technology infrastructure. However, it takes time to put these practices into place. If you feel like you don't have time to get your cyber security measures in place or if you simply need more information about managed services providers, give us a call. We would be glad to help.



After the upgrade, crashes were far less frequent and seldom fatal.