

Chronology- E-Rate Category 1

The Division of Information and Instructional Technology (DIIT) seeks approval to procure E-Rate Category 1 network services that expand bandwidth capacity, reinforce districtwide network resiliency, and protect continuity of instruction and business operations across the DeKalb County School District.

As instructional programs, assessment platforms, and operational systems continue to migrate to cloud-based environments, reliable connectivity has become critical to the daily functioning of every school. The district currently relies on a single primary Internet pathway and the self-provisioned fiber network. Although effective, this configuration presents risks: fiber damage, construction-related disruptions, or upstream failures can interrupt access to essential digital resources, impacting teaching, learning, payroll, transportation, safety systems, and district communications. To address this, DIIT pursued services designed to strengthen bandwidth capacity, create diverse secondary network paths, and safeguard district operations from connectivity disruption.

To maximize purchasing power and reduce overall cost, DIIT pursued funding through the federal E-Rate program administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). DCSD qualifies for a 90% reimbursement, allowing the district to secure essential services at a fraction of the full commercial cost while supporting equitable access to digital learning.

Planning and bid evaluation included a detailed review of fiber routes, redundancy models, bidder responses, and one- and multi-year cost impacts. The project resulted in three distinct service components, each serving a different operational purpose.

Key Partners and Services

The following services and partners will support the district's network connectivity and resiliency needs. Costs will be finalized upon award:

Zayo- \$37,500 Dark Fiber (District Cost \$3,750)

- Provides the physical fiber path between the DCSD data center and the Internet exchange point
- Supports connectivity for instructional platforms, assessments, student devices, and business systems
- Selected as the lowest total evaluated cost based on recurring lease, equipment, and maintenance analysis

Cogent- \$99,999.00 Internet Access 100Gb (District Cost \$9,999.90)

- Increases Internet bandwidth capacity to support instructional and operational demand
- Provides resilient Internet connectivity in the event of failure of the PeachNet state circuit
- Helps prevent districtwide service degradation caused by high utilization

AT&T- \$1,253,374.32 Lit Fiber Network (District Cost \$125,337.43)

- Establishes an independent secondary network connection to each school
- Protects instruction and business functions from unplanned outages or fiber cuts
- Supports continuous operations at AIC, Sam Moss, and WBBBC even during primary network disruption

Together, these services provide a layered approach to reliability: dark fiber enables Internet access, 100Gb Internet expands capacity and resiliency, and lit fiber ensures continuity of operations in the event of network disruption. These three components are complementary—not duplicative—and form a unified strategy to safeguard teaching, learning, and business services across the district.

This will allow the district to continue strengthening its digital infrastructure while minimizing financial impact. By combining E-Rate funding with a comprehensive resiliency approach, DCSD can support continuous access to digital resources, preserve business continuity, and ensure a stable, future-ready network for all schools.

Financial Impact:

Project	Total Cost <i>(without E-rate discount)</i>	District Cost <i>(with 90% E-rate discount)</i>	Total Savings
Zayo- Dark Fiber	\$37,500	\$3,750	\$23,750
Cogent- 100gb Internet Access	\$99,999	\$9,999.90	\$89,999.10
AT&T- Lit Fiber	\$1,253,374.32	\$125,337.43	\$1,128,036.89
Total	\$1,390,873.32	\$139,087.33	\$1,251,785.99