

Ashe County Schools
Request for Proposal
Internal Phone System Replacement

General Information and Instructions:

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is being used to obtain proposals for a replacement of the current telephone systems in use at the Ashe County School District, which includes 8 physical locations.

District Profile:

The Ashe County School District is located in Jefferson, NC. Total enrollment is approximately 2800 students. Students in preschool attend Ashe Early Learning Center. K-6 grades students attend Blue Ridge Elementary, Mountain View Elementary and Westwood Elementary. Ashe County Middle School is home to students in grades 7 & 8. Ashe County High School is home to ninth through twelfth grade students. We will not be replacing the Early College at this time. The district also includes a central support services building and a bus garage.

Purpose of the Project:

The purpose of this project is to replace the existing telephone systems at each location with the best solution that provides a reliable, secure and scalable, communications platform designed to meet our current needs today and into the future. The solution must support, among other things, centralized administration, inter-site dialing and directory, advanced features, inter-site voice and fax mail with unified messaging, integration with current intercom systems, inbound call center functionality, user mobility, emergency services, compatible with all FCC laws, rules and regulations and support for remote and home office workers all while keeping our same telephone numbers. The proposed system may consist of on-premises hardware, reside in a virtual environment, or be hosted in a cloud environment. The project is to be implemented in phases, starting with the replacement of the telephone system at Ashe County Middle and Mountain View Sites first then quickly, cutting users over to the new system in a phased approach. The next phase of the project will be to replace the telephone systems at each of our other locations, one at a time, adding them to the new communications solution. Installation would need to take place while students are not in the classroom. The winning vendor will work with the District's Technology Director to finalize a full implementation plan. The District would like to have each building/location completed and billed by June 15, 2023.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this project is to replace our existing telephone systems with a state-of-the-art communications solution with these objectives:

- Comprehensive solution from industry leading manufacturer and vendors
- Reliable and scalable platform with minimum infrastructure
- Cost effective total solution including product, installation, and maintenance
- Centralized administration and management of hardware and software
- Easy to use phones, applications, and features with superior voice quality
- Transparent features and dialing between phones regardless of location
- Mobility of users regardless of location
- System should support the safety of all users
- Centralized auto attendants and Voice messaging to all users
- Choice of regular voice mail or unified messaging for all users
- Integration with other telephone applications
- Integration with corporate email and instant messaging applications
- Ability to interface with new/existing paging/intercom systems
- Ability to custom client phones to modify bell schedules (where existing infrastructure permits)
- Superior customer support
- Able to respond to outages/troubleshoot/identify issues within 2 hours
- Quote should include estimated monthly charges for trunks/lines etc.; installation, adapters, software and all other fees should be itemized

Building Name	Address	Main Phone Number	# of Phones	
Ashe County Middle School	255 Northwest Lane Warrensville, NC 28693	336-384-3593	2 – Receptionist 10 – Executive 52 – Classroom/Basic	
Mountain View Elementary	2789 US Hwy. 221 N. Jefferson, NC 28640	336-982-4200	2 – Receptionist 4 – Executive 62 – Classroom/Basic	
Blue Ridge Elementary	5778 Hwy 88 West Warrensville, NC 28693	336-384-4500	1 – Receptionist 4 – Executive 70 – Classroom/Basic	
Ashe County High School	184 Campus Dr. West Jefferson, NC 28694	336-846-2400	2 – Receptionist 7 – Executive 100 – Classroom/Basic	
Westwood Elementary	4083 US Hwy. 221 South West Jefferson, NC 28694	336-877-2921	2 – Receptionist 2 – Executive 80 – Classroom/Basic	
Ashe County Schools District Office	320 South Street Jefferson, NC 28640	336-246-7175	5 – Receptionist 20 – Executive 25 – Classroom/Basic	

Ashe Early Learning Center	406 School Avenue West Jefferson, NC 28694	336-846-3221	3 – Executive 7 – Classroom/Basic	
Ashe County Schools Bus Garage	364 Campus Drive West Jefferson, NC 28694	336-846-9103	3 – Executive 3 – Classroom/Basic	

RFP Coordinator

Upon release of this RFP, all communications concerning the proposal must be directed to the RFP Coordinator listed below.

- Name: Amy Walker, Director of Technology
- Address: 320 South Street, Jefferson, NC 28640
- Phone: 336-246-7175
- Fax: 336-246-7609
- Email: amy.walker@ashe.k12.nc.us

Quoting/Pricing

Vendor is requested to provide a detailed quote for on-premises or hosted solutions.

- Include hardware and software maintenance and support for 1, 3, and 5-year options
- Support shall be 24x7
- Cost of any training
- Describe software licensing model for all components of the VoIP solution
- Any work to be subcontracted shall be clearly identified and the subcontractor shall be approved by the Ashe County School District prior to contract issuance.
- All proposals shall be quoted as fixed price and be good for 90 days.

RFP Evaluation Factors

Ashe County School District will evaluate the proposals to determine the most advantageous proposal. We will use the following factors to evaluate the proposals.

- Ability of the proposed system(s) to meet the stated requirements (15)
- Proposed vendor experience and qualifications related to delivering, installing and maintaining the proposed system (20)
- Total cost of ownership for the proposed system (10)
- References of comparable installations noting quality of past performances (15)
- Documented installation plans for off hours implementation (10)
- Documented training plans for users and Information Technology staff (10)
- System warranty, technical support and annual maintenance offerings (10)
- RFP response document completeness (10)

Vendor Acknowledgements

The winning bidder will agree to the following as part of the contract:

- Vendor will hold a kickoff meeting within two weeks of contract award
- Installation planning of new system will begin within 3 weeks of contract award
- Due to Funding constraints, all work must be completed and billed by June 15, 2023.
- Vendor will supply a detailed timeline for installation of the new system
- Final cutovers at each site will occur on a weekend to minimize downtime and service interruption
- Vendor agrees to be on-site two business days following the cut to respond to any issues
- Vendor will conduct user training for Tech Staff (all facets including hardware, software and programming) and users to be completed within 2 weeks of system deployment
- Vendor is required to provide a Certificate of Insurance upon notification that they have submitted the winning bid (All contracted/subcontracted workers must pass a background check to work on ACS campuses)

System Architecture

The Ashe County School District requires a Centralized PRI or SIP Trunk service with site survivability. There is 1 fax line at each site, fire alarm line at each site, (2) panic buttons (1 line) at each site and one site with an elevator line.

- The proposed system must support connectivity of analog phones, fax machines, modems, and other analog devices. How are analog phones and devices such as fax machines connected to the system?
- The proposed solution must support the ability to integrate additional standards-based applications and devices with the base system. Describe how the proposed solution provides the ability to add and integrate standards-based protocol applications and devices to the base system.
- IP Phone sets must be provisioned, configured, and maintained from the telephone server. Items managed by the telephone server:
 1. User Extension/Identity
 2. Contacts/BLF Keys
 3. Firmware Updates
 4. Applications
- The configuration method used by the solution should be browser based. (Chrome, Firefox, Safari)
- The telephone system must have open API standards to allow for future integrations and customization.
- All main telephone features and functions must be included without additional cost.
 1. IVR
 2. Voicemail with voicemail to email
 3. Call Queues

4. Switchboard/Operator Console
 5. Converged Phones
- The proposed system must integrate with existing paging/intercom systems to allow for paging, bells, music and announcements to various zones by using a phone.

Remote Sites and Main/Remote Survivability

- The proposed solution must support the deployment at selected remote locations of full call processing feature functionality with redundancy to the central system.
- The proposed solution must support the deployment of full voicemail and auto attendant feature functionality at selected remote locations.
- The proposed solution must provide the ability to administer all locations from one phonebook incorporating extension dialing between locations.
- “Main Site Survivability” is defined as the ability for specific connected devices to continue making and receiving calls via a local PRI, SIP, or analog trunk in the event the main system goes down.
- “Remote Site Survivability” is defined as the ability for remote sites to make or receive calls via a local PRI, SIP, or analog trunk in the event that the remote site loses its internal connection back to the main site

Remote Employees

- The proposed solution must support the ability for remote employees to use IP phones from a location that is remote to connect to the system.
- The proposed solution must support the ability for workers to use their VOIP phones at any location connected to the corporate network with their own extension and their own telephone/messaging configuration.
- The proposed solution must provide some method for users to place calls through the system from personal cellular devices in such a way that the cellular number is masked with the user’s extension.

Scalability

- The proposed solution must be able to scale the number of IP Phones, voicemail boxes, and other features, as required over the next 5 years.
- The proposed solution must be able to add call processing systems to remote locations without the need to add additional capacity at the central call processing system across the corporate WAN as we need them over the next 5 years.
- The proposed solution must be able to scale messaging mailbox and auto attendant capacity.

Interoperability

- The proposed solution must be architected on open standards with the ability to support other vendors' SIP-based devices.

Collaboration

- The proposed solution must easily integrate with Outlook, mobile devices, 3rd party web applications and video as examples of collaboration.

Phone System Features

- The IP Phone system must have features to enable customizable views for customers and administrators, allowing for individual access to calling, conferencing recording, call queues, reporting and troubleshooting capabilities.

Phone system feature list - each item listed below is Mandatory and must be included for the proposal to be considered. Features marked mandatory does not insinuate that ACS will purchase all features.

Call Method

- VOIP
- SIP Trunking
- 4-digit dialing

Call Control

- Hold
- Assisted Transfer
- Call Parking
- Do Not Disturb
- Send Calls
- Directed and Group Pickup

Unified Communications

- Voice over IP
- Fax

Extensions

- IP Phone/ATA extensions
- Extensions Templates
- 3,4,5, or 6-digit long extensions
- Extension/Hunt groups with multiple ring patterns
- Masking of outbound Caller ID on a per call basis or permanent (Executive extensions masked with Secretary's, etc.)

Voicemail

- Multiple Custom Greetings
- Custom Message Notification
- Voicemail to your Email Inbox

Switchboard Panel

- School Directory
- See who else is on the phone
- Caller ID
- Click-to-transfer
- Pickup up others call

Auto Attendant

- Record Sound/message
- Play Recorded Sound/message
- Email Recorded Sound
- Dial Extension
- Send to Voicemail
- Send to external number
- Send to Email
- Go to another menu
- Upload Recorded Message

Paging and intercom

- 2-way Intercom
- 1-way Paging
- Overhead Paging
- Direct Paging and Intercom

Online Tools

- User's web-based presence application
- Administrators Web interface
- Switchboard Web Interface (Operator-Console)

Administration

- Phone Setup
- Bulk import for extensions
- Access Control
- Comprehensive Monitoring
- Distinctive Ringtones

Logging and Reporting

- Scheduled reports
- Current Calls
- Real-time views of SIP and PRI channel activity
- Call Logs
- Call Reporting
- Queue Status
- Queue Reports
- Error Logs

More Features

- Dial by Name Directory
- VOIP Provider Diagnostic Tools

Bidding Instructions

Before making their bid, the vendor shall examine the instructions and specifications carefully to make themselves thoroughly familiar with all requirements.

- All bids shall include firm prices, which are to be held for a period of ninety (90) days after date bids are due to allow adequate time to tabulate bids and make selections desired. No vendor may withdraw a bid within ninety (90) days of receipt of the bid.
- All questions from vendors must be made through email to address amy.walker@ashe.k12.nc.us and shall be received no later than 2:00 pm on March 1, 2023.
- Each bid shall be submitted electronically in PDF format to: amanda.coldiron@ashe.k12.nc.us
- Although price is a determining factor, ACS may reject any or all bids, if it is in their best interest to do so, and may award a contract as they see fit in their sole and absolute discretion. ACS will accept the bid that offers the best overall value to the district.
- Bidding vendor is required to provide a list of (3) three references, make sure to include any educational based entities. References should include: Entity Name, Address, Contact name and title, Phone number and email address, # of students, and applications in use at that entity. References should have experience with the system the vendor is quoting.
- ACS is not liable for any costs incurred by the vendor(s) in connection with preparation and submission of a response to the RFP
- The price quoted shall include all delivery, assembly, interface, and installation costs. Each bidding vendor shall include 2 different pricing scenarios.
 1. ACS Tech staff configures and deploys each phone to designated locations, after training from winning vendor.
 2. Winning vendor doing 100% of the install (including configuring each phone & delivering to designated locations.
- Site survey/walk-throughs are not required, but available upon request.

- All responses are due at 2 pm on March 1, 2023; in PDF format, sent via email to amanda.coldiron@ashe.k12.nc.us. The winning vendor will be selected and approved March 6, 2023 at 6 pm by the Ashe County School Board of Education.