

March 28, 2025

To: MERSD School Committee

From: Michelle Cresta, Director of Finance & Operations

Copy: Pam Beaudoin, Superintendent of Schools

Re: Stabilization Appropriation for Network Switch

I am writing to request your support and authorization to purchase a replacement network switch for the district.

Currently we have two network switches. Both switches have reached their useful life, one in 2014 and the other in 2022. These network switches have not been able to receive software updates for many years due to their age. This has made maintenance increasingly difficult. In addition, the expansion of wireless access throughout the building has significantly reduced our reliance on hardwired connections and the number of switches required. This upgrade will enable us to have more secure and reliable equipment as well as reduce the number of switches by one.

The replacement cost of the network switch is eligible for an E-Rate discount. The E-Rate program is a federally funded program which provides discounts for the cost of internet access, internal connections, and network equipment. The funding awards are broken down into category 1 awards for internet and recurring connection costs and category 2 awards for network equipment. We have approximately \$44,000 in remaining discounts towards the purchase of network equipment. If this discount is not claimed in the coming months in anticipation for the upcoming funding year, the funds will no longer be available to us.

The total cost of a replacement network switch with a proposal using the Massachusetts State Contract pricing is \$110,970. The approximate E-Rate funding available is \$44,000 which will result in a net cost to the district in the amount of \$66,970 for the replacement switch. I am requesting that the authorization be made in the full amount of the contract which the district will need to sign in order to move forward with this project.

Suggested Motion:

Motion that the School Committee authorize an appropriation from the Stabilization fund up to \$110,970 for the purchase and installation of a replacement of network switch.