

Request For Proposals Addendum

Addendum #1: Vendor Questions & Answers

Date: Thursday, October 9, 2025

RFP 8-FRWALL-0126 E-Rate Firewall – Form 470# 260000276

To: All Prospective Vendors

The following vendor-submitted questions were received in response to the referenced solicitation. Responses are provided below for the benefit of all prospective respondents.

Question 1: Would it be possible for one organization to submit multiple solutions as separate submissions?

Answer: Yes, it is possible to bid different solutions, however, they must be submitted in accordance with the RFP and must be clearly notated as “Solution A”, “Solution B”, etc. The solutions may not be lumped together.

Question 2: Is there interest in a co-managed solution for the products in this RFP?

Answer: IDEA prefers not to have a co-managed solution. However, any proposal submitted must meet all aspects as outlined in the RFP.

Question 3: Will the winning bidder receive a copy of the existing PAN firewall configurations and any other related (VPN clients) to assist with migration to the new platforms?

Answer: Yes, once awarded, we can send a configuration file.

Question 4: Part 1 of the General Information states: "All proposals must include detailed architecture, optics, transceivers, licensing, services, support contracts, and professional services, including design, implementation, and training".

- a. *Will bidders be able to receive a diagram of the current network environment?*
- b. *Will bidders be able to receive information (table or matrix) with existing port connections that provide interface speeds, lags, required media type (copper, DACs, SFP/SPF+ (Short reach or Long reach)? We want to provide a*

competitive bid and don't want to include too few or too many transceivers that might affect cost or take our proposal out of compliance.

Answer: Diagrams will only be provided only to awarded bidder for security and privacy purposes. Please see below to help assist you as best as we can regarding your questions.

- All firewalls must have the following ports available:
 - 4-8 copper 10 GB ports. Excluding the management port.
 - a. 8 (minimum) fiber ports must be 10 GB short haul multi-mode included with SFP+ modules. Speeds may be over 10GB please provide proper SFP modules.
 - If twinax cables or fiber patch cables are included in the bid, they must be at least 5 meters.
- *** These requirements are for the 5410 port or equivalent that will be in the two data centers (RGV and Austin)

All firewalls must have the following ports available: (Midland)

- 1-4 copper 10 GB ports. Excluding the management port.
 - 2 (minimum) fiber ports must be 10 GB short haul multi-mode included with SFP+ modules. Speeds may be over 10GB please provide proper SFP modules.
 - If twinax cables or fiber patch cables are included in the bid, they must be at least 5 meters.
- *** These requirements are for the 1410 port or equivalent that will be in located in Midland Tx.

Question 5: How many endpoints will be using the client-based IPSec VPN access?

Answer: 500

Question 6: For Firewall management and usage/security logging, do you prefer "vendor cloud hosted" or on-prem IDEA managed platform deployments?

Answer: Either option is acceptable

Question 7: Can you provide anticipated Firewall traffic increases year over year that should be considered in to accommodate throughput and growth?

Answer: 15 Gbps per second on each firewall with a 5 to 10% increase year over year.

Question 8: Is any network architecture changing internally or from the internet service provider's, based on the performance & capabilities of the new firewalls?

Answer: No changes anticipated at this time.

Question 9: Is a Security Operations Center-as-a-Service (SOCaaS) desirable for these new firewalls?

Answer: No. IDEA desires a physical firewall, not a SOCaaS solution. Offerors must review the RFP for all requirements of this solicitation.

Question 10: Can you provide more details on IDEA's broader Zero Trust and layered defense strategy?

Answer: We are utilizing a defense in depth strategy by with a cloud zero trust platform.

Question 11: What model of Palo Alto's do you have at each site today?

- a. Austin
- b. Weslaco
- c. Midland

Answer: Please review the SOW which states that we need 4 NGFW equivalent to a Palo Alto 5410 and 1 NGFW that is equivalent to a Palo Alto 1410. Current Firewalls are of equal or lesser capacity.

Question 12: Do you prefer Virtual or Physical Panorama?

Answer: Either option is acceptable. Preferred choice is virtual.

Question 13: What is your virtual environment to host virtual Panorama?

Answer: vmware

Question 14: Are the firewalls at the Austin and Weslaco location in high-availability mode today. If yes, what type (Active/Passive, Active/Active, Clustered)?

Answer: No, they are Active/Active and have an ether channel connection to the outside router. We are not looking to perform HA (Active/Passive).

Question 15: Do you have TLS/SSL decryption enabled on your current Palo Alto Firewalls today?

- a. What percentage of the traffic is being TLS/SSL decrypted today?

Answer: Yes, approximately 20% of traffic is decrypted.

Question 16: Do you expect to enable TLS/SSL decryption on the newly deployed firewalls if not enabled today?

- a. What percentage of the traffic will be TLS/SSL decrypted if that needs to be enabled?

Answer: Yes

Question 17: How many Client based RA-VPN users do you have?

Answer: up to 500

Question 18: What is your current MFA solution?

Answer: DUO

Question 19: What do you use for Identity integration with the Palo's today?

Answer: They are connected via an agent to our Internal LDAP Server, (Active Directory).

Question 20: For each site, can you explain what ISP Links you have today?

- a. Austin –
- b. Weslaco-
- c. Midland –

Answer: Austin – 2 10GB connections (separate 10GB fiber) 20 usable GB
Weslaco- 2 10GB connections (separate 10GB fiber) 20 usable GB
Midland – 1GB connection

Question 21: What is the ISP throughput at each site?

- a. Austin
- b. Weslaco
- c. Midland

Answer: Approximately 15 gbps flows through both Austin and Weslaco datacenters. Midland is sub 500 mbps.

Question 22: What are the ISP handoff's to the firewalls today (Copper / Fiber) or are they handed off to an external switch?

- a. Austin
- b. Weslaco
- c. Midland

Answer: Fiber (metro switch from providers, then 10GB fiber to a switch)

Question 23: Do you expect the ISP links to increase in throughput over the next 3 years?

- a. If yes, explain for each site.

Answer: Currently at 20 GB per egress point, in 3 years we are looking to go potentially to 40 GB+

Question 24: Do you have a separate URL filtering solution for students in place?

- a. If yes, is it on premise or cloud based?

Answer: Yes, Cloud based for endpoints (iboss). But Advanced URL filtering is utilized on the firewalls for other traffic and guest traffic.

Question 25: How many Faculty and Staff users do you have?

Answer: Staff & Faculty- 12,726

Question 26: How many Students users do you have?

Answer: 90,301

Question 27: Are you considering managed services as part of the RFP

Answer: Not at this time.

Question 28: Would you like training and certification to be included in the bid.

Answer: Yes

Attachments:

- IDEA Public Schools Pre-Proposal Meeting Slides (8-FRWALL-0126)

END OF ADDENDUM

**IDEA Public Schools
Request for Proposals (RFP)
For
8-FRWALL-0126 Texas
E-Rate Firewall**

Pre-Proposal Meeting

Wednesday, September 24, 2025 @ 10:00 AM CST

Humberto Hinojosa, Procurement Analyst



Recording

This meeting will be recorded and transcribed for future reference

Please type your name, title, phone number, email address, and organization in the chat

Pre-Proposal Agenda

- Welcome
- Agenda & Solicitation Overview
- Proposal Submission & Selection
- Project Scope and Overview
- Q&A
- Wrap-up



Point of Contact (POC)

All inquiries regarding this solicitation should be directed to IDEA's:

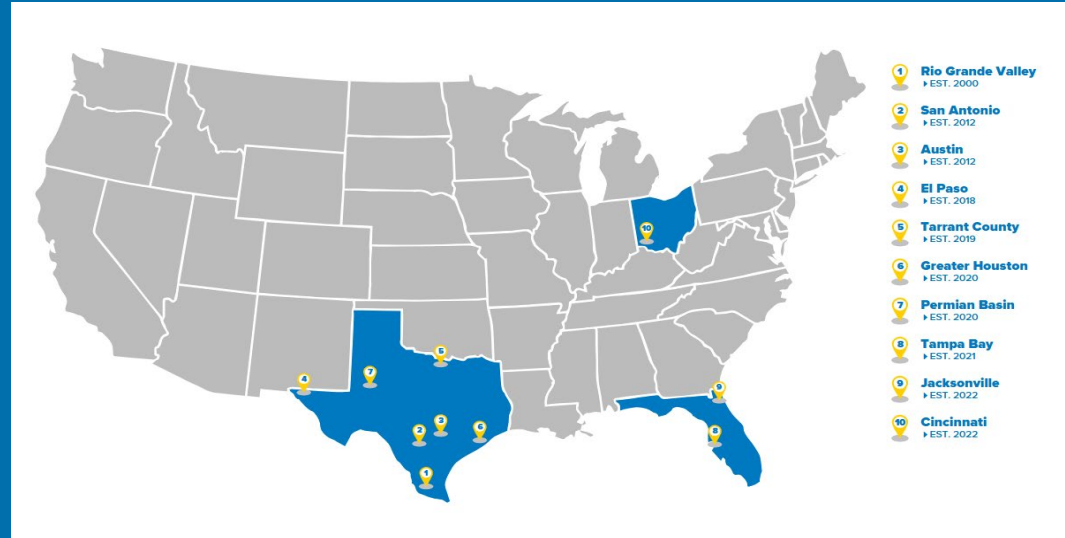
Procurement Department

solicitations@ideapublicschools.org



Disclaimer

This Document serves to aid interested vendors doing business with IDEA. This Document does not constitute legal advice or bind IDEA in any manner. Anything stated at this pre-submittal conference is not intended to change any terms and/or conditions stated in the advertised solicitation document. Any authorized changes will be made in writing in the form of an Addendum issued by IDEA's Procurement Department.



Solicitation Overview

Purpose of Request for Proposal (RFP): IDEA Public Schools (“IDEA”) is issuing a Request for Proposal (“RFP”) to identify provider(s) that can offer a Next Generation Firewall (NGFW) solution to replace and enhance its existing perimeter firewall infrastructure. The selected solution should reflect the industry’s best practices, support advanced threat protection, and integrate into our broader Zero Trust and layered defense posture.

IDEA is specifically evaluating the (1) Palo Alto Networks 5410 firewall appliance or “equivalent”, for the main two data centers located at: IDEA Health Professions at 5816 Wilcab Rd B, Austin, TX 78721 and IDEA Headquarters at 2115 W Pike Blvd, Weslaco, TX 78596 and a (2) Palo Alto 1410 appliance or “equivalent” for the IDEA Travis location at 900 E Gist Ave, Midland, TX 79701. Vendors may propose alternative platforms; however, they must be fully comparable in performance, threat protection capabilities, and supported services to what is requested. If an alternative solution is proposed, the vendor must provide data sheets that demonstrate equivalency to the equipment requested. Failure for a vendor to demonstrate equivalency to the requested solution will disqualify their proposal. All proposals must include detailed architecture, optics, transceivers, licensing, services, support contracts, and professional services, including design, implementation, and training

The detailed scope of work can be found on page 8 in Part IV – Scope and Specifications of the Proposal.

Required Proposal Format

Respondents must follow the format instructions detailed on page 12 in ***Part VI – PROPOSAL SUBMISSION, REQUIREMENTS & PROVISIONS*** when preparing and submitting a Proposal. Each section of the proposals must be clearly marked.

 **Failure to follow all the proposal's organizational requirements may result in disqualification.**

1. Cover Page – Complete and insert **Attachment A**
2. Executive Summary – Provide an Executive Summary of two (2) pages or less, an overview of the Proposal and the vendor's experience as it relates to the specifications of the RFP.
3. Summary of Experience & Qualifications – The Respondent should focus on its experience in providing and managing the delivery of products and/or services similar to those described in this RFP, within a similar environment, particularly in a school setting.
4. Response to Evaluation Criteria – Provide a detailed response to each Evaluation Criteria listed in Part VII- Evaluation Criteria of this solicitation.
5. Cost Summary – Respondent must specify all costs associated with providing the goods and/or services required herein. The costs shall include amounts that Respondent may include on its invoice for goods, shipping and delivery, hardware, software, licensing, training, project management, customization, implementation, ongoing maintenance, support, administrative fees, processing fees, and any unforeseen expenses. Respondent shall provide a complete fee and itemized cost detail supporting all elements of its Proposal. The cost detail must include a narrative for each fee or cost element. If Respondent does not expect IDEA to incur any costs, Respondent shall state "No costs to IDEA". Utilize **Attachment K** for proposed pricing.
6. Required Forms – **ALL FORMS REQUIRING SIGNATURE MUST BE SIGNED AS INDICATED**
 - Attachment A** – Title Page. This form must be completed and included as the cover sheet for Proposals submitted in response to this RFP.
 - Attachment B** – Vendor Acknowledgement
 - Attachment C** – Evidence of Insurance
 - Attachment D** – IDEA Conflict of Interest Form
 - Attachment E** – Texas Ethics Commission Form CIQ
 - Attachment F** – Felony Conviction Disclosure Statement
 - Attachment G** – Certification Regarding Lobbying
 - Attachment H** – Contract Provisions for Contracts Involving Federal Funds
 - Attachment I** – Reference Sheet
 - Attachment J** – Litigation, Terminations, Claims
 - Attachment K** – Proposed Pricing
 - Attachment L** – IRS Form W-9
 - Attachment M** – Deviations and Exceptions
 - Attachment N** – Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace
 - Attachment O** – Child Support Certification
 - Appendix A** – Sites
 - Appendix B** – RFP Completion Checklist
 - Additional Documentation (Optional)** – Additional documents may be submitted in instances where additional documentation is needed and not already captured.

Request for Proposals Tentative Timeline

Timeline:

All dates and times are tentative and subject to change.

First Advertisement & RFP Issue Date:	Wednesday, September 03, 2025
Second Advertisement Date:	Wednesday, September 10, 2025
Pre-Proposal Meeting:	Wednesday, September 24, 2025 @ 10:00 AM CST
Respondent Question Cut-Off Date:	Wednesday, October 1, 2025, NO Later than 5:00 PM CST
Questions Response from IDEA:	Thursday, October 9, 2025
Proposals Due by Date & Time:	Monday, November 10, 2025, NO Later than 2:00 PM CST
Anticipated Evaluation Period:	November 11, 2025 – November 17, 2025
Anticipated Board Meeting & Approval:	January 2026
Initial Proposed Contract Term:	July 1, 2026- June 30, 2027
Renewal option #1:	July 1, 2027- June 30, 2028
Renewal option #2:	July 1, 2028- June 30, 2029

Submittal Procedures

Due: Monday, November 10, 2025 @ 2:00 PM CST

Proposal Submission: Proposals may be submitted using the [Public Purchase](#) or [Tyler Munis Self-Service](#) website, or by sending One (1) clearly identified hard copy ORIGINAL of the Proposal to:

IDEA Public Schools
RFP # 8-FRWALL-0126 Texas
E-Rate Firewall Form 470 # 260000276
Attn: Purchasing Department
2115 West Pike Blvd, Weslaco, TX 78596

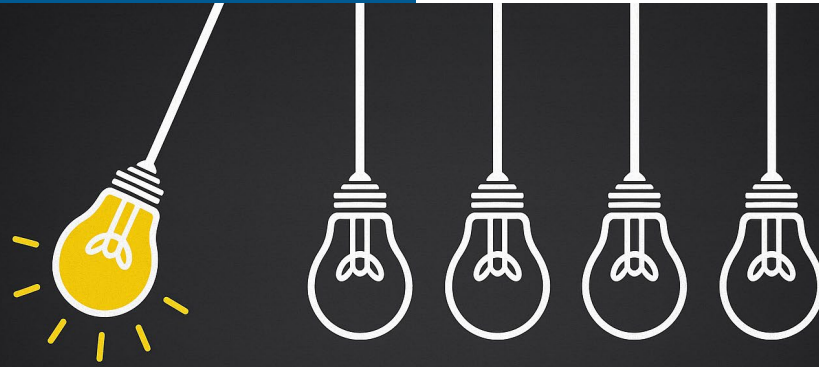
⚠ RFP submissions must follow the format instructions detailed on page 12 in *Part VI – PROPOSAL SUBMISSION, REQUIREMENTS & PROVISIONS* when preparing and submitting a Proposal. Each section of the proposals must be clearly marked.

Evaluation Criteria



Evaluation Criteria	Weight (Points)	Description
Cost of E-Rate Eligible Products and/or Services	26	Vendor's proposed price for all E-Rate eligible products and/or services, evaluated for competitiveness, reasonableness, and alignment with project requirements.
Technical & Functional Suitability (Meets Needs)	20	The degree to which the proposed solution satisfies IDEA's technical and functional requirements, including firewall performance, equivalency to requested equipment, security features, centralized management, scalability, and integration with IDEA's Zero Trust architecture.
Reputation & Reliability	14	Vendor's demonstrated reliability and reputation, supported by past performance, references from K-12 or multi-site educational environments, third-party certifications, and proven success with NGFW deployments of similar size and complexity.
Total Cost of Ownership	10	Assessment of the vendor's proposed total lifecycle cost, including district-responsible non-E-Rate costs (ineligible equipment, licensing, support, training, and professional services) required to fully implement and maintain the solution over the agreement term.
Quality of Proposed Goods and/or Services	10	Evaluation of the quality and completeness of proposed hardware, software, licensing, support, migration services, post-installation support, documentation, and training.
Terms & Conditions	10	The favorability and alignment of vendor's proposed contract terms with IDEA's requirements, including warranty, service-level agreements, and compliance with applicable laws and procurement rules.
Completeness of Proposal	5	Vendor's submission of all required documents, certifications, pricing attachments, equivalency documentation (if applicable), and adherence to formatting and submission instructions.
Responsiveness of Vendor	5	Vendor's demonstrated capacity to provide qualified staff, meet implementation timelines, coordinate after-hours migration, communicate proactively, and resolve challenges effectively during the project lifecycle.
Total Possible Score	100	

⚠ A detailed explanation of the evaluation criteria can be found on page 14 in **Part VII – Evaluation Criteria** of the RFP.



ANY QUESTIONS?

Closing

If you haven't already, please type name, title, contact information, and organization in the chat

