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S&G Communications

Network Services - UCaaS - Structured Cabling – WIFI – VoIP Phone Systems

K-12 Network Security with Fortinet Firewall

In our last two newsletters, we introduced:

- The concept of including a firewall with the internet service request on your Form 470.

- When bundled with internet, USAC confirms it will be a Category 1 expense reimbursable at your e-rate percentage, reserving your limited category 2 dollars for other equipment.

- Obtaining the firewall from the ISP uses their skilled security engineers to manage and monitor your network defenses.

This is the third newsletter in our K-12 network securiy series on including a firewall from your carrier in your 470 E-rate requests. To see the earilier newsletters, click on the icons below:

K-12 Network Security Part 1	K-12 Network Security Part 2
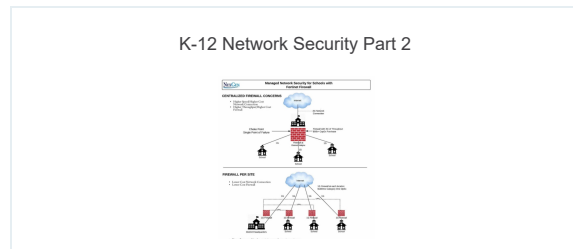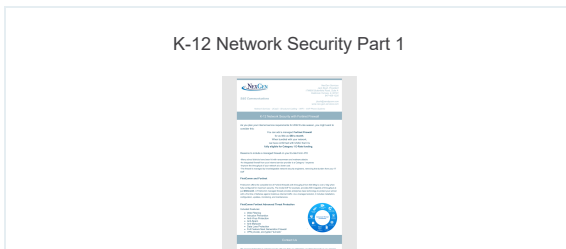
K-12 Cyber Threats

In 2019 over 1200 schools were impacted by cyber threats, primarily ransomware where a cyber criminal encrypts your data and charges a fee to return your data to use.

As we utilized technology to support remote learning in 2020/2021, school cyber attacks increased as we enlarged the attack surface.

In 2021, ransomware is growing exponentially as cyber criminals have learned it is the easiest way to make money. The average cost to recover data was $141,000 typically paid in bitcoin.

The problem has intensified due to vulnerabilities found in school systems where many districts still lack the IT staff and security protocols needed for to protect the systems. For cyber criminals, this means easier access to financial documents and sensitive data.

FirstComm Network and Fortinet Firewall

- First Comm will install a Fortinet firewall at each site so it can be configured to the security needs appropriate for primary, middle, or high school students.

- The overall network can be more economical by providing each school with a direct internet connection rather than routing all traffic through a higher speed and more expensive connection at a central site.

- A firewall at each site allows each school direct internet access and full utilization of the bandwidth at that site without encountering a choke point at a centralized firewall.

- You can add a managed **Fortinet Firewall** for as little as **$50 a month*.** When bundled with your FirstComm network, we have confirmed with USAC that it is **fully eligible for Category 1 E-rate funding.**

- The First Comm network pricing, when bundled with the Fortinet firewall, will be more economical than telco or cable company pricing.

- FirstComm will include the firewall on your monthly internet service bill so it is easily identifiable as a Category 1 expense.

- The FirstComm Network Operations Center (NOC) and security engineers are located in Oak Brook.

- They will configure, install, and maintain the firewall freeing your IT resources for other functions.

- They will keep the firewall updated - one of the most important facets of protecting your systems from the constantly evolving methods used by hackers.

- FirstComm uses both telco and cable facilities for the "last mile" connection to your sides and can use both if you require an "always up" service.

*The Fortinet model 40F provides 600 megabits of throughput at just $50/month; the 60F ptobifrd 1 GIG of throughput at just $100/month.

Contact Us

Contact us for assistance in determining your internet and firewall requirements and to obtain a combined internet service and firewall proposal from FirstComm.

NexGen's engineers, several of whom are IT staff members at large educational facilities, can help you with all of your technology upgrades. For more information, contact Jack Bush at 847-459-1220 or jbush@sandgcom.com

 NexGen / S&G Communications is an E-rate approved vendor.

NexGen Services/S&G Communications

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