



SWWC Launches New Cybersecurity Program

SWWC has launched its new Cybersecurity Program offering services tailored to PK-12 education and the public sector. The initial offerings include Vulnerability Assessments and Comprehensive Cybersecurity Services, both of which are critical in the evolving threat landscape that organizations operate in every day. SWWC's Cybersecurity Program is now available to our members, as well as schools and public agencies beyond our regional borders.

"The students, staff and citizens we serve among our membership deserve the confidence that all we do electronically and online is being done with their safety and security at the forefront of our actions," explains Josh Sumption, SWWC Director of Technology. Now is the time for your school or organization to learn more and enroll as a "Pioneer" in our Comprehensive Cybersecurity Services. The deadline to finalize service contracts is October 31, 2021.

SWWC Cybersecurity is staffed by trained Cybersecurity experts that will become an integral part of your technology department team. Though nearly all of the work we do will be performed remotely, we will leverage technology to securely integrate our team into yours. Schools and other agencies subscribing to this unique service will have access to our best-in-class solutions for assessing, analyzing and monitoring your systems, and when necessary, responding to incidents that do occur. Our goal is to mitigate threats as much as possible, ensure that subscribers to the service are "insurable" for Cyber Liability, and that our proactive long-term solutions will result in fewer claims.

"The service came partly out of necessity, and partly out of our vision to be the leaders in providing best in class technology solutions to our members and beyond," said Sumption. Over the past four years, a Cybersecurity Assessment service has been offered on an informal basis. Now with the establishment of our Cybersecurity Program, these assessments are now available in a manner that is easy to understand and "grow" with.

Forrest Fosheim, Senior Network Coordinator with SWWC, explains, "We've offered Cybersecurity assessments in the past and followed a model that was pretty much one-size-fits-all. The first time through, the process can be extremely overwhelming and cause a district to be intimidated because it really feels like an interrogation at times. Our new approach offers an entry-level, mid-level and full-scale approach to the assessments, allowing for the intensity of what we are looking at to increase with each follow-up assessment." The new approach allows for some of the more routine, yet major, issues to be resolved, followed by a reassessment and deeper look into the organizations security posture. "We really hope to observe a district (or public agency's) security maturity level increase with each follow-up assessment conducted," states Fosheim.

Over the past 18 years, SWWC has expanded its offerings into that of a managed service provider and trusted partner, and now provides some level of technology services to all of its 54 member school districts, as well as, several public sector agencies and other organizations. With this growth in services, the SWWC Technology Department has grown from a staff of six

to 22. Through this growth has come great diversity and specializations in technical expertise, providing great advantages to those accessing SWWC Technology Services. By design, SWWC's approach to Cybersecurity will echo the specialized models of leadership and support in technology. "Over the past year, our technology team has determined that Cybersecurity is something that requires dedication and specialization in order to be done right. After conversations with member school district technology staff, the message was clear and consistent: Cybersecurity is far too important to add to current technology staff duties, and hiring a staff member devoted to just cybersecurity will not provide school districts with the expertise and knowledge needed to handle Cyber properly," Sumption added.

To learn more about the SWWC Cybersecurity Program visit www.swwc.org/cybersecurity, or contact Josh Sumption, Director of Technology at josh.sumption@swwc.org or 507-537-2265.