



# THE HUB

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The Alabama Supercomputer Authority  
Newsletter

## ASA Spotlight: Montgomery Public Schools



Our September ASA Spotlight is on Montgomery Public Schools. Dr. Michael Powell, Chief Technology Officer, wrote the following article in regards to how being a member of the AREN Consortium and utilizing ASA services benefit the Montgomery Public Schools.

Montgomery Public Schools (MPS), with over 26,000 students and approximately 4,000 employees, has achieved a state-of-the-art architectural enterprise network thanks to strong internal leadership, numerous business collaborations, and dedicated community partnerships. This "esprit de corps" strives for nothing but the best for the students and the community it serves in Montgomery County.

MPS has implemented a one-to-one initiative, ensuring every student in the district is equipped with a Chromebook device used across all MPS school sites to enhance teaching and learning. Recognizing the district's size with over 26,000 students, MPS leadership prioritized increased, supported internet bandwidth to enrich instructional value and ensure high availability of internet-based learning materials that complement traditional classroom instruction. MPS utilizes various internet-based applications delivered through a Single Sign-On (SSO) platform for easy access and portal-based availability throughout the school day. The Innovation and Technology department at MPS provides continuous support for all student-related technology resources aimed at promoting academic success.

The safety and security posture of MPS district and schools has been enhanced by having the necessary stable and supported internet bandwidth. Access to numerous surveillance video cameras and proximity card readers is essential for providing a safe and secure environment where all MPS students can learn.

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# ASA Spotlight: Montgomery Public Schools (cont'd)



Montgomery Public Schools Innovation and Technology Department Employees

One notable business partnership is with the Alabama Supercomputer Authority (ASA), which began on July 1, 2023. This collaboration significantly enhances our capabilities by extending the necessary bandwidth to all Montgomery Public Schools (MPS) sites, supporting academic, administrative, safety, and security needs. Our main throughput is 20 gigabits of bandwidth, along with allocated bandwidth, differentiated for elementary and secondary schools. This partnership with ASA has added value by providing stable and secure internet access, including WAN connectivity and managed firewall services. Additionally, content filtering is an added feature that restricts and controls the content MPS internet users can safely access.

ASA's security and network operations centers serve as our boots on the ground, providing crucial support after hours on weekdays and throughout the weekends. Both the Security Operations Center (SOC) and Network Operations Center (NOC) quickly notify us of potential threats or internet outages at the district and school levels. We greatly appreciate having an extra set of eyes for support, thanks to ASA's 24-hour, year-round IT help desk.

The ability to enhance bandwidth and monitor critical systems contributes to the high availability and resiliency of our instructional technology resources, ultimately supporting the overall goal of promoting student success in Montgomery Public Schools.

Modern cybersecurity requirements increasingly demand Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) over VPN. ASA has assisted us in implementing this, enabling secure access to critical systems from remote locations, providing IT support after hours, and ensuring availability on weekends.

Since transitioning to ASA, district leadership and the Innovation and Technology department have been highly satisfied with the delivery of internet services and IT support. We look forward to continuing this partnership as we progressively enhance the services offered to Montgomery Public Schools, promoting college and career readiness and preparing all our students to be productive citizens.



# E-Rate Update by Nichole Gipson

## Client Services Director

Would your school district or library like to join ASA’s E-rate Consortium or add WAN service for Funding Year (FY) 2025? We are currently in the early stages of gathering data for filing our FY2025 E-rate Application for Category One Services (Managed Internet Access and Managed WAN Services) for all consortium members.

We have recently emailed the Consortium Announcement and Letter of Agency (LOA) form to public K-12 school districts and libraries. The Consortium Announcement gives an overview of the base level services that ASA can provide to your school or library for FY2025 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026). It also specifies that each participating school district or library must submit a signed LOA to ASA to be included in the consortium. Signing the LOA authorizes ASA to include your school district or library in our E-rate application. If you have not yet submitted a signed LOA and wish to participate in our State E-rate consortium, please click the link BELOW to access the necessary form. Completed forms, as well as any questions, should be emailed to [docs@asc.edu](mailto:docs@asc.edu) or **faxed to 334-242-0637**. Signed LOAs must be returned by **October 1, 2024**.

If you are interested in receiving quotes for additional bandwidth or if you have additional school or library sites that you wish to add to our E-rate application, please email your requests to **Tyler Carr at [tcarr@asc.edu](mailto:tcarr@asc.edu)**.

<https://www.asc.edu/service-area/e-rate>

# Welcome!

## WELCOME NEW CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

ASA is thrilled to welcome our new Consortium members for Funding Year 2024! We look forward to working with each of you to support your educational and technology needs and are excited about the opportunities ahead.



### E-RATE PRODUCTIVITY CENTER (EPC) PROFILE

To prepare for the FY2025 E-rate application filing window it is crucial that each Consortium member updates their E-rate Productivity Center (EPC) profile. The USAC administrative window will open before the filing window, so please review and update your entity profiles once they become available. This ensures that discount calculations and other information are accurate. If you have not yet set up an EPC profile, please contact USAC’s Customer Service Center at 888-203-8100 for assistance.

# A Message from the CEO - Debra Wallace



## Today's Digital Age

In today's digital age, the integration of technology into education is not just a luxury but a necessity. ASA recognizes that schools are increasingly reliant on digital tools and resources to enhance learning experiences, streamline administrative tasks, and facilitate communication between students, teachers, and parents. However, with this increased reliance on technology comes a significant responsibility to ensure the security of the networks that support these systems. Network security is critical in protecting sensitive information, such as student records, grades, and personal data, from cyber threats. ASA's Security Operations Center implements robust security measures, including firewalls, encryption, and regular security audits to safeguard its digital infrastructure.

Moreover, educating students and staff about the importance of cybersecurity is equally important. As schools prepare students for the future, teaching them about safe online practices and the potential risks associated with digital technology is crucial. This knowledge not only helps protect the school's network but also empowers students to be responsible digital citizens. By prioritizing network security and technology education, schools can create a safe and conducive learning environment while equipping students with the knowledge they need to navigate the digital world securely.

## Member Satisfaction Survey

We will soon be distributing our Member Satisfaction Survey. We kindly ask you to take a few minutes to share your thoughts and opinions on our services. Your feedback is invaluable to us as we strive to provide excellent service and continuously improve. Thank you for taking the time to share your insights. We appreciate your input and look forward to continuing to work with you.



2024 Fall Symposium and E-Rate Boot Camp

Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach, AL

**September 23 & 24  
Stop by our booth!**