



TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Information Systems Officers
Chief Business Officers

FROM: Valerie Lundy-Wagner, PhD, Vice Chancellor
Digital Innovation and Infrastructure (DII)

RE: Microsoft A5 Security Suite Implementation Update

To improve the system’s information security posture and that of all 73 community college districts, the Chancellor’s Office purchased a systemwide license of the Microsoft A5 Security Suite for fiscal year (FY) 2022-23 utilizing funds from the 2022 State Budget Act Assembly Bill (AB) 183, a one-time allocation of \$75 million “to implement local and systemwide technology and data security measures that support improved oversight of fraud mitigation and cybersecurity efforts.”

This memo provides information about local implementation service packages associated with the systemwide Microsoft A5 Security Suite license, including a brief description of the scope and pre-negotiated pricing, logistics, and long-term funding plans.

MICROSOFT A5 SECURITY SUITE IMPLEMENTATION AND COSTS

The Microsoft A5 Security Suite supports a systemwide approach to standard cybersecurity goals including Multi-Factor Authentication, Endpoint Detection and Response, and Privileged Identity Management (as noted in the January 20, 2023 memo, DII 22-300-06, “[FY 22-23 January IT Infrastructure and Cybersecurity Funding Updates](#)”). This solution was specifically identified to

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acknowledge variation in local IT capacity and resources, and furthermore because virtually all districts currently use Microsoft's products.

To facilitate timely implementation of the license, the Chancellor's Office has secured a standard implementation service package contract through CollegeBuys that is available to all districts with Microsoft-approved vendors. The service packages are divided into two distinct phases of work described below, which includes information about pricing.

Phase 1: Microsoft A5 Security Health Check

During the Health Check, a vendor will review the district's current environment to understand how it can best benefit from Microsoft A5 Security Suite and/or identify where the local district has successfully implemented various features properly aligned with Microsoft standards.

The Health Check will cost **\$12,040.00** and is expected to take approximately three (3) weeks to complete. **All districts are strongly encouraged to schedule a health check**, even if they do not anticipate needing either partial or full implementation services to properly install and configure the license. This phase of work will result in a district-level report detailing configuration recommendations with suggested next steps, specifically noting if the district requires full or partial implementation services, as described below. When a local district has an alternative solution that overlaps with an A5 Security feature, an abbreviated alternatives analysis will be performed to support district decision-making about vulnerability management.

Phase 2: Microsoft A5 Security Suite Implementation Support

Phase 2a: Microsoft A5 Security Suite Full Implementation Support

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The Full Implementation package includes a basic configuration for each of the following Microsoft A5 Security Suite Components:

- Conditional Access
- Multi-Factor Authentication
- Self-service Password Reset
- Active Directory Identity Protection
- Privileged Identity Management
- Defender for Identity
- Defender for Office 365
- Defender for Endpoint
- Defender for Cloud Apps
- Single Sign-On

The price for Full Implementation support is **\$84,000** and is expected to take approximately ten (10) weeks. With rare exceptions, districts should expect a firm fixed price.

Phase 2b: Microsoft A5 Security Suite Partial Implementation Support

If, based on the results of the Health Check, the district does not require a full implementation, the vendor will collaborate with the district and a Chancellor's Office representative to develop a reduced scope of work, at an estimated weekly rate of approximately **\$17,000**, with a total engagement cost **not to exceed \$84,000**. In sum, the full Microsoft A5 Security Suite implementation should cost no more than approximately \$100,040 per district.

Implementation Logistics

Based on the January 2023 memo referenced above, districts were organized into LOW, MODERATE, or HIGH levels of need in fall 2022. To accelerate the reduction in systemwide risk, the Chancellor's Office will pay the cost of both phases for HIGH need districts using the Microsoft-approved vendors using the pre-negotiated CollegeBuys contract up to \$100,040. Districts with HIGH need should notify the Microsoft-approved CollegeBuys vendors to schedule both phases of work and, during that time, opt for the pre-negotiated service package.

Three vendors, noted below, have already executed contracts with CollegeBuys that reflect the pricing package, and received instructions on how to invoice the Chancellor's Office directly for these services. Districts identified as having HIGH need may contract for implementation services using alternative vendors; however, they must procure services on their own and pay relevant vendor costs. Districts identified as having LOW or MODERATE need may use the Microsoft-approved vendors with CollegeBuys contracts using locally available funds, including those already distributed from AB 178 or AB 183, or any other relevant sources.

To learn more about the inclusions and limitations of the package and schedule A5 Security Suite Implementation services via the pre-negotiated CollegeBuys contract, please reach out to any of the following vendor contacts directly:

- Oxford Computing Group: Janet.Tierney@oxfordcomputergroup.com
- Forsyte: Stefanie.dunn@forsyteit.com
- Edgile: CCC@Edgile.com

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A copy of the negotiated Statement of Work is available from CollegeBuys upon request (cbcontracts@foundationccc.org). Over time, additional vendors may execute contracts based on the pre-negotiated agreement; please contact CollegeBuys for more information.

The Chancellor's Office expects districts to implement the Microsoft A5 Security Suite license by January 14, 2024. Given variation in local capacity, timelines, and basic cybersecurity controls in place, districts should expect to report on implementation progress as part of the bi-annual remediation reports and cybersecurity self-assessments, per AB 178, as relevant.

The Chancellor's Office intends to allocate one-time AB 183 funds toward this license annually through at least FY 2026-27. In addition, the Chancellor's Office is exploring options to braid one-time and ongoing funds for systemwide support of Microsoft Defender for Servers between FY 2023-24 through FY 2026-27, with use of ongoing funds for both thereafter. More details will be shared in a future memo.

For additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Gary Bird, Information Technology Specialist II, gbird@cccco.edu, Stephen Heath, lead Information Security Technical Assistance Provider: sheath@cccco.edu, or myself, vlundywagner@cccco.edu.

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