

IBM Grants a Total of \$5 Million in-kind to Bolster Schools' Cybersecurity Preparedness

Grant recipients selected in Ireland, United Arab Emirates, and in California, Indiana, Michigan, New York, New Hampshire, and Virginia



ARMONK, N.Y., Oct. 24, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- As schools become more dependent on technology, ransomware attacks against schools are increasing. To help schools worldwide proactively prepare for and respond to cyberattacks, IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) today announced the first eight recipients of the 2022 IBM Education Security Preparedness Grants, totaling \$5 million in in-kind services. Each grant will sponsor IBM Service Corps volunteers to address the selected school districts' cybersecurity resiliency.

As the FBI, DHS CISA, and MS-ISCA [anticipate](#) an increase in cyberattacks against schools during the 2022/2023 academic year, schools are bracing for potential attacks and the significant costs that follow. With cybercriminals continuing to view schools as compelling targets, IBM's [2022 Cost of a Data Breach Report*](#) revealed that the cost of a data breach averages \$3.86 million for education institutions. While the report found that 49% of data breaches the industry experienced were caused by a malicious attack, nearly 30% occurred due to human error, emphasizing the need for proper cybersecurity training and education in schools.

The IBM Education Security Preparedness Grants program, now in its [second year](#), received more than 120 applications from schools across the U.S. and will award six school districts with grants. This year the program is also expanding overseas with grant recipients in Ireland and UAE being announced today, and with recipients in Costa Rica and Brazil to be announced at a later date.

The 2022 IBM Education Security Preparedness Grant recipients are:

- City of Dublin Educational Training Board – Ireland
- Mohamed Bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence – UAE
- Cupertino Union School District – Sunnyvale, CA
- Rossville Cons. School District – Rossville, IN

- East China School District – East China, MI
- Newburgh Enlarged City School District – Newburgh, NY
- Goffstown School District – Goffstown, NH
- Prince William County Public Schools – Manassas, VA

"Ransomware operators are increasingly setting their sights on schools, putting more pressure on these institutions to prioritize their cybersecurity. Cyberattacks on schools do not only impact the schools themselves, as the aftermath cascades down to students and their families, creating a very palpable effect on their communities," said Charles Henderson, Global Managing Partner, and Head of IBM Security X-Force. "We're proud to be able to support schools through this initiative, now in its second year, by helping to address critical gaps in security resources and planning and preparedness."

The grant applications that IBM received shed light on the schools' levels of cybersecurity awareness, preparedness, and training, confirming that there is always a growing need for improved security education and skills across industries and around the world.

Key findings from applications included:

- **Targets of Cyberattacks** – One in four applicants has experienced a cybersecurity breach or ransomware attack, indicating that cybercriminals are taking advantage of the sector's security constraints.
- **Absence of Readiness** – The majority of school districts say they do not have a cybersecurity plan in place and have not received any cybersecurity training, increasing the security risk posed by human error.
- **Lack of Resources** – Just 20% of districts have personnel dedicated to cybersecurity.

Now in its second year, this program has already benefited schools across the country. Barrett Puschus, Director of Information Technology at Brevard Public Schools, and one of the six recipients of the 2021 Education Security Preparedness grant, said "Before this grant, we were completely lacking in confidence in our cybersecurity. The IBM team came in and showed us how to create a cybersecurity strategy and plan for emergencies based on our needs. We feel optimistic about our cybersecurity posture today thanks to IBM's help. The IBM team was populated with top-tier experts and our team benefited greatly from all their knowledge and experience. If you have data and systems worth protecting, as all schools do, this program is extremely worthwhile."

IBM Service Corps volunteers are expected to be working with the schools to help them proactively prepare for and respond to cyber threats. Depending on each school's needs, the engagements may include the creation of incident response plans, ransomware playbooks, updating technology, cybersecurity training for school communities, and more.

"We're excited to be launching this program for the second year in a row as part of IBM's Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives to help schools strengthen their security postures in response to the growing threats in the education space," said Patrice Key-Rhone, Global Director of Employee Giving & Volunteerism at IBM. "At IBM we're committed to supporting schools around the globe via our education and volunteer programs in order to help create equitable impact."

About IBM Security

IBM Security offers one of the most advanced and integrated portfolios of enterprise security products and services. The portfolio, supported by world-renowned IBM Security X-Force® research, enables organizations to effectively manage risk and defend against emerging threats. IBM operates one of the world's broadest security research, development, and delivery organizations, monitors 150 billion+ security events per day in more than 130 countries, and has been granted more than

10,000 security patents worldwide. For more information, please check www.ibm.com/security, follow @IBMSecurity on Twitter, or visit the [IBM Security Intelligence blog](#).

IBM Corporate Social Responsibility

IBM's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives enable IBM's technology and talent to address society's challenges at scale. Pro bono consulting initiatives such as IBM Service Corps, which demonstrate the power of technology when combined with humanity, enable employees to assist communities with economic development, education, safety, sustainability, and more. To learn more about IBM's CSR and companywide Good Tech initiatives, please visit IBM.com/impact.

IBM Service Corps deploys teams of IBM volunteers worldwide who perform multi-week pro bono consulting engagements to help the prosperity and well-being of communities, helping them apply technology and related know-how involving projects that touch education, environmental sustainability, and public health and safety. Since 2008, IBM Service Corps has engaged over 4,000 employees in teams to undertake 456 projects in 54 countries.

* [Cost of a Data Breach Report 2022](#), conducted by Ponemon Institute, sponsored and analyzed by IBM

Contact:

Estefania Sanchez

estefania.sanchez@ibm.com

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