



Education Services and Facilities Subsector¹ Government Coordinating Council

Charter

Article I – Official Designation

The official designation of this Council is the “Education Services and Facilities Subsector Government Coordinating Council,” hereinafter referred to as the “ESFS GCC” or the “Council.”

Article II – Mission and Purpose

The Council enables Federal agencies, state education agencies, education service agencies, local education agencies, and K-12 public and tribal schools to synergize strategies and leverage collective resources, expertise, and experience to prevent, mitigate, and counter cybersecurity risks to the daily operations of more than 13,300² school districts across the country. Specifically, many vulnerabilities in today’s school district systems, assets, services, and processes³—coupled with millions of student and educator personal data—contribute to the education subsector’s designation as “target rich, cyber poor.”⁴

The ESFS GCC provides for governmental entities with authorities and responsibilities over K-12 education critical infrastructure and their partners to coordinate and collaborate within and across levels of government and other critical infrastructure sectors, as described in [the National Security Memo 22 \(NSM-22\)](#) on “Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience.” The ESFS GCC is led by the subsector risk management agency (SRMA) designate, the U.S. Department of Education’s (ED) Office of

¹ Previously identified as the Education Facilities Sector. Updated to Education Services and Facilities Sector to align to the parallel change made by the Government Services and Facilities Sector lead (formerly Government Facilities Sector), as reflected in the National Security Memo 22 released April 30, 2024.

² We are using the most recent information on the number of “regular school districts” in the [Number of public school districts and public and private elementary and secondary schools: Selected school years, 1869-70 through 2021-22](#)

³ National Security Memo-22 states: “Critical infrastructure comprises the physical and virtual assets and systems so vital to the Nation that their incapacity or destruction would have a debilitating impact on national security, national economic security, or national public health or safety. It is diverse and complex, and includes distributed networks, varied organizational structures, operating models, interdependent systems, and governance constructs.”

⁴ Cybersecurity Infrastructure and Security Agency, Cybersecurity for K-12 Education. <https://www.cisa.gov/K12Cybersecurity>, accessed 06/11/24.

Safe and Supportive Schools (OSSS), in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) in coordination with the Cybersecurity Infrastructure and Security Agency (CISA), and composed of representatives from across the state, local, tribal and territory K-12 education community and its stakeholders.

Article III – Objectives and Scope of Activity

The ESFS GCC helps to coordinate cybersecurity strategies, activities, and communications across governmental entities within the K-12 education community and assists with reaching out across the national partnership structure, as defined in the NSM-22 and other policy documents, in coordination with and in support of government and non-government subsector stakeholders. The scope of activity of the ESFS GCC includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Coordinate and collaborate with government and non-government K-12 education partners and stakeholders to plan, implement, and execute the Nation’s critical cybersecurity infrastructure and resilience mission.
- Participate in planning efforts related to and the responsibilities laid out in NSM-22, including risk mitigation plans and the revision of a Subsector-Specific Plan (SSP).
- Promote interagency information-sharing, and awareness via strategic communications coordination at the subsector level through partnership with the Department of Homeland Security and other supporting agencies across various levels of government.
- Help identify and support the information sharing capabilities, education, and outreach mechanisms that are most appropriate for state, local, tribal, territorial (SLTT), and regional K-12 education entities.
- Promote understanding and potential adoption of cybersecurity resilience, best practices, and use of innovative methods across the subsector.
- Coordinate with government and non-government subsector stakeholders to set joint priorities, implementation strategies, and identify common risk management goals.

Article IV – Membership

Member Representatives

ESFS GCC membership is composed of state education agencies, education service agencies, local education agencies, and K-12 public schools that own, operate, or administer K-12 data, cyber assets, systems, services, and processes or have responsibility for supporting security and resilience of those data, assets, systems, services, and processes.

- Membership resides with the agency or organization rather than the individual representatives.
- Each member agency or organization shall have up to three primary representatives
- One representative constitutes one vote.
- Representative tenure will be determined by the sponsoring organization.
- Subject to Critical Infrastructure Partnership Advisory Council (CIPAC) ethics training administered by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and ethics review by ED.

- GCC members who wish to access sensitive data and/or participate in sensitive discussions (e.g., threat information sharing) may be subject to additional requirements.

Members:

ESFS GCC membership shall include the following Voting Members:

- Chief State School Officers
- State Education Agency Chief Information Officer (CIOs)/Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs)
- Local Educational Agency Superintendents
- K-12 School Principals
- Regional Service Agency Executive Directors
- Local Educational Agency School Board Members
- Tribal School Technology Directors
- Tribal Nation Representatives
- State Education Agency Technology Directors
- District Technology Directors/Chief Technology Officers/CIOs/CISOs
- School Technology Directors
- Special Education Directors and Administrators

Chair: ED SRMA (OESE Deputy Assistant Secretary)

Ex officio Members:

The ESFS GCC shall include a Non-Voting Membership of federal agency partners that provide cybersecurity resources and support or have equities in K-12, to include CISA.

ESFS GCC membership may be expanded to include other government agencies and organizations, public institutions of higher education, as well as other sector and cross-sector GCCs as additional non-voting members to provide relevant institutional knowledge, technical expertise, and administrative support, as determined by the membership of the ESFS GCC.

Member Alternate Representatives

Each voting and non-voting agency and organization of the ESFS GCC may appoint one alternate representative to represent each designated member at ESFS GCC activities. An alternate member representative casts the voting member's vote in the absence of the corresponding primary representative.

Article V – Governance, ESFS GCC Leadership

Governance

Any official decisions by ESFS GCC members will be made through a consultative and collaborative process, encourage the exchange of information and points of view, and strive for consensus. When a

consensus cannot be achieved the ESFS GCC will move to a vote. The ESFS GCC recognizes that each member represents an education entity or organization with inherent legal authorities and parameters within which it must operate.

ESFS GCC Chair

The OESE Deputy Assistant Secretary for management and operations planning, with oversight responsibilities for the ESFS SRMA, shall serve as the GCC Chair.

Duties of ESFS GCC Chair

The ESFS GCC Chair shall have responsibility over the following areas:

- Finalize GCC Charter
- Coordinate agenda development.
- Monitor and facilitate closure of issues and initiatives.
- Provide administrative and meeting support, including logistics and meeting minutes.
- Issue communications.
- Manage membership and records; and
- Maintain ESFS GCC governance documents.

When the ESFS GCC conducts a meeting with non-government partners under the auspices of the Critical Infrastructure Partnership Advisory Council (CIPAC), the Chair shall coordinate with the CIPAC Executive Secretariat/Designated Federal Officer to ensure compliance with CIPAC requirements.

Article VI – Meetings

Frequency of Meetings

The full membership of the ESFS GCC will meet not fewer than two times each calendar year, either in person or virtually, as determined in consultation with ESFS ExCom. Full ESFS GCC meetings will be scheduled with every attempt to provide ample notice to members.

ESFS GCC members will make official decisions through a consultative process, encouraging the exchange of information and points of view, and will strive for consensus (e.g., joint strategic priorities, voluntary risk management standards, etc.)

Quorum

A duly constituted meeting of the ESFS GCC shall require a quorum of more than half the number of voting members.

- Members must be personally present or notify the ESFS GCC ExCom of their intention to participate and vote by remote means in advance of a properly noticed meeting at which a vote is taken. If a member is unable to attend, either in person or by remote means, they may designate a proxy from the list of alternates provided by the appropriate membership association. The ESFS SRMA must receive proxies in writing five (5) business days prior to the meeting.
- The vote of a majority of the votes entitled to be cast by the voting members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be necessary for the adoption of any matter voted upon by the members.

Principles of Participation

All ESFS GCC members shall work towards the same goals and purpose of improving the security, preparedness, and resilience of Education Facilities Infrastructure. Discussion and deliberation processes must recognize and capitalize on each member's strengths, skills, and perspective. Results of ESFS GCC discussions and deliberations must constitute a coherent voice made up of each member's contributions.

Article VII – Recordkeeping

The procedures for the handling, storage and disposition of ESFS GCC records and other documentation are in accordance with DHS Federal Records Management policy, as well as directives and guidelines for the Education Services and Facilities SRMA. ESFS will adhere to delivery of CIPAC related records to the CIPAC Executive Secretariate/Designated Federal Officer for CIPAC record keeping purposes.

Article VIII – Communications

The Chair will ensure a communication mechanism exists for sharing information among ESFS GCC members.

Article IX – Working Groups

The ESFS GCC shall form working groups, established by the GCC Chair, as needed.

- Working groups shall be established when substantial investigation, research, or other tasks are required, which cannot be practicably achieved at regular ESFS GCC sessions.
- All products of the working groups are meant to advise ESFS GCC members on various issues and processes.
- Through its primary or alternate representatives, each member entity or organization may designate multiple individuals to serve on working groups.

- Working groups may be made up of any combination of ESFS GCC member representatives and external participants serving as subject matter experts.
- The ESFS GCC will appoint a chairperson for each working group.
- There will be an agenda and read-ahead materials for each meeting or teleconference. The outcomes of each meeting will be documented in writing and communicated as appropriate.
- Working group meetings may be held depending on need.
- Meetings may be scheduled remotely or in conjunction with national or regional meetings that maximize the participation of working group members.
- Reports and recommendations from working groups will be presented at full ESFS GCC meetings for member approval, as appropriate.

When the working group conducts a meeting with non-government partners under the auspices of CIPAC, the Chair/ESFS ExCom shall coordinate with the CIPAC Executive Secretariat/Designated Federal Officer to ensure compliance with CIPAC requirements.

Article X – Amendments

The ESFS GCC may at any time amend this Charter by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members. The amended Charter shall be forwarded in a timely manner to the CIPAC Executive Secretariat for posting on the CIPAC public website.

Article XI – Duration

This Charter shall be in effect for two (2) years from the date of signing. If amended, the Charter shall be in effect from remainder of the initial two-year period after the amendment is approved.

Article XII – Approval

The ESFS GCC Chair finalized this charter on **June 25, 2024**.

MARK
WASHINGTON



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Mark Washington
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education