

IBM to Grant \$5 Million In-Kind for Schools to Boost Cybersecurity, Together with Enhanced Skilling on AI

- With cyberattacks on the rise across schools, IBM Education Security Preparedness Grants have already benefited more than 350,000 students globally

- Now in its third year, grants are expanding to offer students and teachers access to cyber and AI skills through IBM SkillsBuild



ARMONK, N.Y., May 23, 2023 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- In response to the growing threat of ransomware attacks against schools around the world, IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) today announced it will provide in-kind grants valued at \$5 million to help address cybersecurity resiliency in schools. Since its creation in 2021, the IBM Education Security Preparedness Grants program has expanded globally, and this year will also include enhanced offerings from [IBM SkillsBuild](#) on topics including AI and cybersecurity.

Ransomware is unfolding faster than ever, with attackers managing to cut down the time required to deploy ransomware attacks from over two months to just under four days between 2019 and 2021, according to [IBM's X-Force Threat Intelligence Index 2023](#). In fact, the share of cybersecurity incidents observed in the education sector more than doubled in 2022 compared to the year prior, experiencing the largest increase year over year than any other industry.

"Time and time again attackers go after the education sector, yet many of these institutions remain constrained in their security resources," said Andy Piazza, Global Head of Threat Intelligence, IBM Security X-Force. "To date, this program has helped more than 350,000 students across schools in the US and abroad, with IBM Service Corps helping them recover from ransomware attacks, strengthen their security posture against future attacks, and prevent further disruption."

Applications for schools are now open globally. Grants valued at \$500,000 each (\$5 million in total) will be awarded to six school districts in the US with an additional four around the world. Volunteers, through IBM Service Corps, will use their professional skills to help schools establish programs to address cybersecurity resiliency. Each selected school will receive:

- incident response plans and ransomware playbooks,
- programs to help address the need for updating operating systems,
- strategic communication plans to use in response to cyber incidents, and
- training and digital credentials through IBM SkillsBuild on topics including AI and cybersecurity, and additional benefits such as enhanced access to IBM mentors, teacher training and toolkits, and customized learning pathways.

"The global skills gap across cybersecurity and AI is a growing challenge that demands immediate attention," said Justina Nixon-Saintil, IBM Chief Impact Officer. "To address this challenge, IBM awards Education Security Preparedness Grants to drive impact with schools worldwide. This year, we're excited to expand the program to bring the benefits of IBM SkillsBuild training on topics like AI and cybersecurity for students and teachers."

Since its inception in 2021, IBM has received hundreds of applications for this [award-winning](#) program from school districts seeking to strengthen their security postures in response to the growing threats in the education space. Past recipients of the IBM Education Security Preparedness Grants, a list of which can be found [here](#), have encouraged other schools to apply.

"With IBM's assistance, we improved our cybersecurity incident response plan and used it to better prepare us for handling incidents in the future," said Robert Losinski, Manager of Information Security at Denver Public Schools. "Attackers are targeting schools because many do not have mature security frameworks to effectively defend against ransomware and other cybercrime. Getting professional assistance in expanding your cybersecurity program will really help you identify the most critical areas to protect."

K-12 public schools and educational institutions/organizations that are interested in applying for IBM's education cybersecurity grant can apply via IBM.com here: <https://www.ibm.com/impact/initiatives/security>. The application deadline is July 24, 2023.

For more information about IBM's cybersecurity grants for schools, visit: <https://www.ibm.com/impact/initiatives/security>. For more information about IBM Security X-Force's services and capabilities, visit: <https://www.ibm.com/security/xforce>

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