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**Surf Internet and ChoiceLight Partner to Connect South Bend Schools with High-Speed Fiber Network**

*Project to deliver reliable internet access to 33 district sites, supporting over 15,000 students*

**SOUTH BEND, Ind.** (January 28, 2025) — [Surf Internet](#)<sup>®</sup>, in collaboration with ChoiceLight, Inc., has been selected to provide high-speed internet connectivity to the South Bend Community School Corporation (SBCSC), one of Indiana’s largest school districts serving over 15,000 students. This initiative will connect 33 district sites, including schools and administrative buildings, to a dedicated high-speed fiber network. Each site will receive a 10 Gbps connection, with Surf supplying 20 Gbps of dedicated internet service districtwide. The upgraded connectivity will support essential district applications such as security systems, phone services, student information software, and remote learning tools.

The project is funded primarily through the federal USAC E-Rate program, which assists schools and libraries with telecommunication costs and is allocated based on the percentage of students receiving free or reduced-price lunches. Surf, Indiana’s third largest Category 1 E-Rate provider, will serve as the primary internet provider for the project, ensuring reliable, high-speed connectivity across the district. ChoiceLight, as a key partner, will leverage its existing regional dark fiber network and support the construction needed to connect additional sites.

ChoiceLight’s network is already connected to 14 of the district’s buildings, forming a strong foundation for the project. To achieve full coverage, new fiber construction will be required at nearly 60 percent of the sites to extend connectivity to the remaining locations. Work is expected to begin soon, with service scheduled to launch in time for the 2025/2026 school year.

“South Bend Schools’ ability to deliver modern educational experiences depends on robust, reliable connectivity,” said Michael Hutter, E-Rate Business Development Director at Surf. “By partnering with ChoiceLight, we’re ensuring the district has the infrastructure it needs to meet today’s demands and prepare for future advancements in technology.”

“Surf was a natural choice for this contract,” said Patrick Stalvey, Chief Technology Officer for SBCSC. “They have a strong track record of supporting communities like ours, excellent customer service, and rapid response times. This project will help ensure that our administrators and students have the speed and bandwidth they need to succeed.”

In addition to meeting the immediate needs of the school district, this initiative establishes infrastructure that could support future residential fiber expansions in St. Joseph County. Specific neighborhoods for expansion will be evaluated based on proximity to district sites and community needs.

“This project is a testament to what can happen when community-minded partners bring their cutting-edge resources to the table,” said Regina Emberton, Chief Executive Officer of ChoiceLight, Inc. We are excited to increase the availability and improve the accessibility of quality internet connectivity through this partnership.”



### **About Surf Internet**

Surf Internet is an innovative fiber-optic internet company that serves as the essential gateway to connectivity across the Great Lakes region of Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan. The company is building a bridge to the wide-open future by delivering high-speed, reliable internet to homes and businesses in underserved, rural communities. Surf's 250-plus-person team is local, giving them an edge when it comes to customer care and advocacy for the region. Headquartered in Elkhart, Ind., Surf also has offices in La Porte, Ind., Byron Center and Fowlerville, Mich., and Coal City, Naperville, and Rock Falls, Ill. Learn more at <https://surfinternet.com>.

### **About ChoiceLight, Inc.**

ChoiceLight is a local nonprofit organization providing telecommunications infrastructure in the form of dark fiber-optic cable. Spanning more than 500 miles, the underground network offers reliable, high-speed connectivity for businesses across the South Bend-Elkhart region, who can choose their internet services provider and customized telecommunication services. Learn more at [www.choicelight.org](http://www.choicelight.org).

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Surf Internet construction vehicles on-site at Monroe Elementary School, one of the South Bend Community School Corporation buildings set to benefit from the federally subsidized E-Rate project bringing high-speed fiber connectivity to the district.