IBM Grants $500,000 in-kind to City of Dublin Education Training Board To Boost Cybersecurity Preparedness

City of Dublin ETB one of 10 recipients globally as part of the IBM Education Security Preparedness Grants program

October 25, 2022 - 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 today announced the first eight recipients of the 2022 IBM Education Security Preparedness Grants, totaling USD$5 million in in-kind services, including $500,000 to the City of Dublin Education Training Board. Each grant will sponsor IBM Service Corps volunteers to address the selected school districts' cybersecurity resiliency.

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, emphasising 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.

"Ransomware operators are increasingly setting their sights on schools and colleges, putting more pressure on these institutions to prioritise their cybersecurity. The impact of cyberattacks on schools also cascades down to students and their families, and so can have a significant impact on the wider community," said **Deborah Threadgold, IBM Ireland Country General Manager**. "IBM is proud to be able to support schools through this initiative and I'm delighted that City of Dublin ETB will be one of the recipients. The team at IBM Security here in Ireland are looking forward to partnering with City of Dublin ETB over the coming months to build cyber resilience and address any gaps in cyber security planning and preparedness."

Commenting on the partnership announcement**, Blake Hodkinson, Director of Further Education and Training at City of Dublin ETB** said, "Cyber security is of huge importance to City of Dublin ETB. In recent years, particularly after Covid-19, digital teaching, learning and data have become increasingly important to us and our learners. We have over 48,000 learners and anything that might inhibit from delivering on our primary functions is a key concern."

"The new partnership between City of Dublin ETB and IBM will help us protect our learners and staff from unwanted cyber threats impacting on the educational services we deliver. It will allow us to confidently continue to develop innovative digital learning techniques. It will also reassure learners that their data is safe with us. This partnership is a significant step forward for City of Dublin ETB and we are delighted to be chosen as the programmes first European partner."

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 sectors' 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 has personnel dedicated to cybersecurity.

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 that the City of Dublin ETB will be participating in this global programme 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 **Deirdre Kennedy, CSR Leader IBM Ireland** . "At IBM we're committed to supporting schools around the globe via our education and volunteer programs in order to help create equitable impact."

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

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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 analysed by IBM

Kano Contact:
Barry Dunning
Bdunning@kano.ie
+353 83 167 4871

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