

Business Operations
Ofelia San Pedro, Deputy Superintendent

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO A
CONTRACT WITH NTI CONNECT-ED TO DELIVER MESSAGES
TO PARENTS AND STAFF OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC
SCHOOLS FOR A PERIOD OF THREE YEARS**

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

NTI Connect-ED™ is an outbound communication solution, created and designed specifically for K-12 Institutions. It is used by over 4,500 school systems throughout the country including Pinellas, Volusia, Pasco, and Monroe counties in Florida. The system requires no additional hardware, software or additional phone lines. It provides an **unlimited** and user friendly method for sending information to parents regarding: student attendance, notices, PTA/PTSA events, community activities, as well as emergency information. It gives school officials the ability to record, schedule, send and track voice messages either to the whole district, to parents or staff from individual schools or even to the parents of children on a field trip who might be returning late. With this tool:

- School and District administrators can notify and update parents and staff within minutes of an emergency situation from any phone and distribute messages to all students in the district in **under four hours**.
- Flyers, direct mailings, and complicated outdated auto-dialer systems will be replaced with a user friendly personalized voice-messaging system.
- School staff can simultaneously notify all parents of absent children, via pre-recorded messages.
- Connect-ED continues to call the numbers provided by students and staff until a person answers the call or the message is delivered to an answering machine.
- School staff and District administrators can view reports to show usage and success rates via the internet.

Messages can be sent through NTI Connect-ED™ using the phone or the Internet. Connect-ED allows customers to break down message deliveries into different subgroups. For example a district can send messages to employees only, while school administrators can send messages to their parents and employees. There is also a *911 Dial-in Messaging* feature that allows authorized users to record, verify and execute an "all call" or emergency team message from any telephone. The Connect-Ed system can also send out mass e-mails.

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After Hurricane Wilma, NTI Connect-ED provided emergency contact messages to parents, at no charge to the District, to demonstrate the effectiveness of their services. The system contacted parents to provide information on school closings and the school re-opening date.

The school district has tried other phone notification systems. But more calls can be made faster with this newer technology. The reporting facility for this system is also more robust. One benefit of the system is that it encourages regular updating of the school's contact lists. Every time a call fails, a computer-generated report lets the school know that an updated number is needed.

Existing systems found in some schools in the district require specialized computers and have been shown to be complicated to operate. Specialized training and customer support is required to update and maintain these outdated systems.

Pursuant to Board rule 6Gx13-3C-1.10—purchase approval, the School Board is authorized to purchase under contracts awarded by other city or county governmental agencies, other school boards, community colleges, etc, as authorized by the Florida Department of Education Rule 6A-1.012(5). The cost of this service for unlimited messages is \$2.60 per student with a initial set up and training cost of \$30,000. The cost of this service will be \$930,800 per year for three years. The appropriation of \$495,400 for the 2005-06 Budget year is included in the General Fund; Program number 9793, Function number 6110, Object 5310, Location 9028. This contract will replace all the existing agreements that the District is using for outbound communications.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, enter into a contract with NTI Connect-ED to deliver messages to parents and staff of Miami-Dade County Public Schools for a period of three years at a cost of \$2.60 per student, or \$930,800 annually.