Office of Superintendent of Schools
Board Meeting of April 9, 2014

April 8, 2014

Financial Services
Richard H. Hinds, Chief Financial Officer

SUBJECT: **REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACTUAL SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, AND BLACKBOARD CONNECT, INC., PURSUANT TO REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS NO. 030-PP10 – INSTANT MESSAGING AND PARENT NOTIFICATION SYSTEM**

COMMITTEE: **INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: **FINANCIAL EFFICIENCY/STABILITY**

Request For Proposals No. 030-PP10 – INSTANT MESSAGING AND PARENT NOTIFICATION SYSTEM, is to deliver messages regarding attendance, emergencies and school notices, to parents, students and employees of Miami-Dade County Public Schools. This is a term proposal. Three (3) proposers responded to this advertised solicitation.

The term of the proposal shall be for an initial three (3) year period and may, by mutual agreement between The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, and the awardee, be extended for an additional two (2) year period and, if needed, ninety (90) days beyond the expiration date of the current extension period.

A meeting of the Selection Committee was held on February 25, 2014, to evaluate the proposals received in response to the solicitation. Three (3) proposals were presented for consideration: Blackboard Connect, Inc. (Connect-ED®); Parlant Technology (Parent Link); and Reliance Communications, Inc. (School Messenger). All three firms were invited to participate in oral presentations, which were held on March 13, 2014.

The proposals were ranked based on the criteria set forth in the Request For Proposals. Based on these rankings, the Committee recommended Blackboard Connect, Inc. (Connect-ED®), the highest rated proposal.

REVISED

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In the proposal, Blackboard Connect, Inc., presented the Connect-ED® service, an outbound instant messaging and parent notification system, built exclusively for the K-12 market with state-of-the-art technology that requires no hardware, no software, and no additional lines to operate. The system provides an unlimited and user-friendly method for sending information to parents regarding student attendance, PTA/PTSA events, and emergency information, using voice, e-mail, SMS text, and social media.

The Connect-ED® system is a self-service, web-based system, enabling school and District administrators to access the web, create messages, select the target audience, choose the language and send the message, 24/7. 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; school staff can simultaneously notify all parents of absent children, via pre-recorded messages. In addition, School Police and School Operations will also be able to alert parents and the public.

Blackboard Connect, Inc. also is providing TipTxt, an additional feature, at no cost to the District. TipTxt provides a two-way communication service, that will allow the District to provide an easy-to-use tipline for students, parents and staff, to report safety issues, including bullying, abusive behavior, crime and mental health issues.

Reports will be electronic and by location, allowing principals to review daily attendance calls online, for usage, number of missed calls, trends, etc. 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 system can also send out mass e-mails.

The District will receive the backing of Client Care Specialists, who will assist the District with new user training, refresher training, new data transfers or updates, technical support, and proactive usage analysis, via a toll-free support line, throughout the life of the contract.

In order to minimize the training requirements for the school sites, as well as technology implementation costs, a multi-year contract was structured. This is an initial three-year contract, with options to extend for an additional two-year period, estimated to cost approximately $426,000 per year, based upon student enrollment. The proposed cost is $1.42 per enrolled student; administrators, faculty and staff are included at no incremental cost. The pricing structure includes a customizable mobile application. The District licensing includes up to 525 schools and administrative offices. The proposed cost reflects a reduction in pricing from the current contract at $1.80 per enrolled student, per year.

A representative from the Office of Management and Compliance Audits participated in the committee meeting and the appropriate cabinet member has reviewed and concurs with the item.

Strategies were employed to increase M/WBE and SBE/MBE participation, however, none are being recommended for award. REVISED

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, **AUTHORIZE** the Superintendent of Schools to enter into a contractual services agreement between The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, and Blackboard Connect, Inc., pursuant to Request For Proposals No. 030-PP10 – INSTANT MESSAGING AND PARENT NOTIFICATION SYSTEM, to deliver messages regarding attendance, emergencies and school notices, to parents, students and employees of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, effective April 18, 2014, through April 17, 2017, including extensions thereto, as follows:

1. BLACKBOARD CONNECT, INC.
   15301 VENTURA BOULEVARD
   BUILDING B, SUITE 300
   SHERMAN OAKS, CA 91403
   THOMAS MOTTER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

   Highest Rated Proposal

   Messaging cost @ $1.42 per enrolled student.

2. Authorize Procurement Management Services to purchase up to the estimated amount of $1,278,000, for the initial contract period and an amount not to exceed $852,000 for the additional two (2) year extension period. Board authorization of this recommendation does not mean the amount shown will be expended.

RHH/mh