

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. 067-JJ10 – INSTANT MESSAGING
AND PARENT NOTIFICATION SYSTEM**

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY & GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

**LINK TO DISTRICT
STRATEGIC PLAN: EVALUATE AND REDESIGN INTERNAL BUSINESS
OPERATIONS**

At the Board meeting of December 14, 2005, the School Board awarded The NTI Connect-ED a contract at \$2.60 per enrolled student, to deliver messages to students and staff of Miami-Dade County Public Schools. At its meeting of November 21, 2006, the School Board rejected the recommendation to extend the contract and directed staff to issue a Request For Proposals. Request For Proposals No. 034-GG04 was issued and a recommendation of award to The NTI Group, Inc. (Connect-ED) was approved by the School Board at the meeting of April 18, 2007, at a cost of \$2.60 per enrolled student. Subsequent to the award, the termination for convenience provision of the contract was invoked, to solicit more favorable pricing to the District, by issuance of a new Request For Proposals.

Request For Proposals No. 067-JJ10 – INSTANT MESSAGING AND PARENT NOTIFICATION SYSTEM, is to establish a contract 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. Eleven proposers responded to this advertised solicitation.

A meeting of the Selection Committee was held on February 25, 2009. Eleven proposals were presented for consideration: Alert Now; American Messaging; Blackboard Connect, Inc. (Connect-ED®); Global Connect, Inc.; Iberon, LLC; Inktel Direct Corporation; Parlant Technology (Parent Link); Premiere Global Services; Reliance Communications, Inc. (School Messenger); SWN Communications, Inc.; and USA Mobility Wireless, Inc. These proposers were ranked based on the criteria set forth in the Request For Proposals.

Based on these rankings, two firms, Blackboard Connect (Connect-ED®) at \$2.00 per enrolled student and Parlant Technology (Parent Link) at \$2.10 per enrolled student, were selected for oral presentations, which were held on February 27, 2009. The Committee recommended Blackboard Connect, Inc. (Connect-ED®), the highest rated proposal.

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.

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.

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 \$700,000 per year, based upon student enrollment. The proposed cost is \$2.00 per enrolled student; administrators, faculty and staff are included at no incremental cost. The District licensing includes up to 525 schools and administrative offices. The proposed fee reflects a 44% discount from standard pricing per enrolled student (\$3.60 per student), and a 23% discount from the current contract with The NTI Group (Connect-ED) of \$2.60, per enrolled student. Upon further negotiations by Procurement Management, Blackboard Connect, Inc. has offered an additional \$50,000 rebate for the first annual term of the contract period.

Fund Source
0100 - General

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, **AUTHORIZE** the Superintendent of Schools to negotiate and 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. 067-JJ10 – 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, 2009, through April 17, 2012, 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 @ \$2.00 per enrolled student.

2. Authorize Procurement Management Services to purchase services at an estimated amount of \$650,000 for Year 1 (reflects a \$50,000 rebate), and Years 2 and 3 at \$700,000 annually, in a total amount not to exceed \$2,050,000.

RHH/ae