

# CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

159 THORNDIKE STREET, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02141

15-168



134

August 11, 2015

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

CONTRACT AWARD: Professional Development

RECOMMENDATION: That the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for Professional Development; funds to be provided from the General Fund. Procurement procedures for this contract have complied with Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

<u>Contractor</u>	<u>Period of Contract</u>	<u>Amount</u>
ReThink 19 W 21 Street, Suite 403 New York, NY 10010	9/1/15 – 6/30/16	\$31,450.00

DESCRIPTION: This contract is for ReThink Autism program to support students with disabilities in various classroom settings. The goal is to increase student's access to the least restrictive environment.

SUPPORTING DATA: RULES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE: Chapter III, Section 12..."motions calling for the appropriation or expenditure of money shall require the affirmative vote of four members."

BUDGET REFERENCES:

ACCOUNT: 53107 Professional Development  
FUND: 15000 General Fund  
ORG: 852660 Office of Student Services/Professional Development  
PROJ:

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey M. Young, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

rethink  
Focused Lessons and Instructional Approaches

**Background:**

The Office of Student Services conducted a very small pilot of the rethink program during from 2011-2014 school years with four pre-school Special Start classes, three ASD classes and two sub-separate programs ranging from PK-grade 6. The response from teachers and Para-professionals for use was strong in six of the nine pilot classrooms.

As a result of the pilot, the department has decided to extend the implementation fully over the next two years in the Pre-School Special Start program, the K-12 Structured Academics program, the K-8 Basic and Functional Academics programs and use with the Behavior Specialist for consultation for students with and without disabilities who have needs in the area of social-emotional learning at these schools.

**Implementation:**

The first phase of implementation will occur at the programs described above at the following schools: Baldwin and Morse Elementary, Putnam Ave Upper, and Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School. This phase will include fifteen of the thirty-five sub-separate and Special Start Classrooms. The second phase of implementation will include the remaining twenty classrooms at nine schools.

**Rationale of Needs:**

One of the primary objectives related to Program Enhancement for the department as outlined in the strategic plan is to improve current OSS Sub-separate programs. Part of improving the program is providing research and evidence based instructional materials and strategies to meet the needs of the students enrolled. Currently, our teachers and Para-professionals develop or purchase supplemental materials for their students. Our teachers are very skilled at what they do but we also need both horizontal and vertical alignment to provide better continuity of services delivered. Therefore, providing a resource that all teachers in the programs are able to use provides resources for the teachers that enhances the work they are already engaging and providing more opportunities for greater collaboration between the teachers to share strategies and teaching approaches for their students.

**Description:**

rethink formerly known as rethink Autism is a research and evidenced-based program model for supporting students with disabilities in various classrooms settings in providing specially designed approaches to teaching and learning. The goal of the use of the program model is to increase student's access to the least restrictive environment. There are six platforms that teachers, specialist and parents can utilize with students. The platforms are for individualized assessments, comprehensive curriculum, training modules, behavior tracking, automated data tracking and the IEP builder. The curriculum platform consists of over 1500 video based exercises which covers twelve subject areas: pre-academic, academic, social/emotional, daily living, motor, play/leisure, expressive

language, receptive language, study skills, social communication, group participation and peer interaction. A step-by-step video accompanies each lesson in the curriculum using real teachers and real students. The videos are intended as models of strategies to teachers, Para-professionals and parents so to create a more consistent support in working with students. A more detailed description of each portion of the platforms are available upon request.