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159 THORNDIKE STREET, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02141

August 11, 2015

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

CONTRACT AWARD: Assessment Management System Software Implementation & Maintenance

RECOMMENDATION: That the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for software; 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.

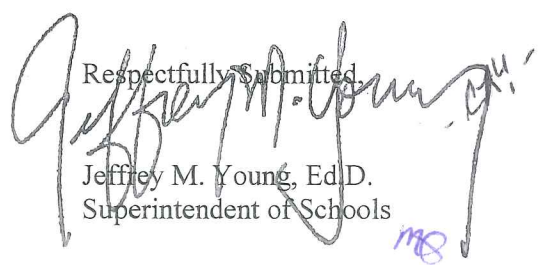
<u>Contractor</u>	<u>Period of Contract</u>	<u>Amount</u>
SchoolCity, Inc.	8/12/15 – 6/30/16	\$18,500.00
2900 Lakeside Drive, Suite 270	7/01/16 – 6/30/17	\$32,500.00
Santa Clara, CA 95054	7/01/17 – 6/30/18	\$32,500.00
		\$83,500.00

DESCRIPTION: This contract is for software implementation and maintenance for a district-wide Assessment Management System. A broader description of the project is attached.

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:	55804	Computer Software
FUND:	15000	General Fund
ORG:	869815	Elem. Ed./Curr. & Instr.; Eval and Testing

Respectfully Submitted,

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

Contract Description

The Need for Assessment Management

In September of 2014 the Cambridge Public Schools received its Level 3 District Review Report from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The report provided the following recommendation for the use of assessments in CPS:

Recommendation 6: The district should establish and communicate consistent expectations regarding the analysis and use of assessments for curricular and instructional improvement by ensuring communication and providing the support needed to continually build staff capacity to use data.

The basis for this recommendation comes from the DESE District Self Assessment Tool, which was developed from “research on effective school and district leadership that calls for the aligning of the district’s systems in service of student achievement” (DESE Self Assessment Tool, p. 1). Standard III in the District Assessment tool calls for district and school leadership to use student assessment results, local benchmarks, and other pertinent data to improve student achievement and inform all aspects of its decision-making including policy development and implementation, instructional programs, assessment practices, procedures, and supervision” (DESE Self Assessment Tool, p. 10). In order words, a cohesive “assessment system” is necessary for accelerated student growth, and to ensure equity of outcomes for all students.

The CPS Department of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Professional Development did an analysis of district assessments in the Fall of 2014, and determined that there was both a greater need for balance of the types of assessments within CPS, as well as an alignment of assessment, instruction, and the use of data to provide appropriate and targeted instruction to students.

According to the Self Assessment Tool:

Systems of student assessment are evidenced by:

- a. **Balanced formative and benchmark systems of assessment** that guide instruction
- b. **Remedial and enrichment initiatives** that are based on results of balanced system of student assessments
- c. **Assessments administered** 4 – 8 times per academic year to benchmark students’ progress toward achievement goals and guide planning and instruction at the school and grade levels

Data collection and dissemination is demonstrated by:

- a. **A purposeful, formalized range** of methods to assess and communicate student growth
- b. **District assessment policies and practices** that ensure regular collection and distribution of data
- c. **Organized, user-friendly data and reports** made available to all staff in a timely manner to measure progress, **accompanied by training and support needed to use this data** to improve performance
- d. **Dissemination and discussion of internal reports and external review findings** to staff and local stakeholders as appropriate

SchoolCity's Product

In order to support the work described above, an invitation for bid was put out in April of 2015 to identify an Assessment Management System that would provide a comprehensive resource to teachers and administrators to improve teaching and learning across the district. SchoolCity was the lowest qualified bidder, offering its STARS Suite.

STARS is a learning management system that provides a comprehensive assessment and instructional solution to support teachers in identifying and targeting student needs, as well as individualizing instruction based on assessment data. The system enables teachers to both develop new items and utilize test items from standards-based test banks to assess student learning in an ongoing way. Formative, Summative and Benchmark assessments can be managed and delivered online at the district, school and classroom levels. Performance-based and technology enhanced test items, such as audio and video items, constructed response, and drag and drop items are available with tools such as calculators, protractors and an equation editor. Test results are available immediately upon test completion and provide a comprehensive array of views and aggregation facilities for analyses at the classroom, grade, school, and district levels. In addition, the STARS product provides a comprehensive suite of instructional resources that enable teachers to find and use instructional resources matched to the area of deficit identified in the formative assessment, or, to provide enrichment and extension to those students who have met the assessed standard.

The Assessment Management System software will be used by faculty to develop, administer, score, analyze and report student learning outcomes. In conjunction with the previously acquired Aspen Instructional Management System (IMS), the district will have a powerful suite of curriculum development, planning, management and delivery tools to support academic excellence for all students and operational effectiveness for faculty.

Total Project Cost

This contract recommendation for SchoolCity is for the implementation and maintenance of the STARS suite software. SchoolCity will also provide extensive professional development (described below) at a cost of \$14,000, contracted separately. In addition, CPS will be purchasing an item bank from a separate vendor (Key Data) for approximately \$6,500. Additional PD or item banks may be purchased in future years.

Professional Development

The School City STARS suite will be introduced in 2015-16 to Upper School Math and Science Teachers for pilot implementation, and extend to ELA and Elementary Teachers in the 2016-17 school year. Professional development is slated per the schedule below.

August 27: Full Day Training STARS Suite – District Trainers

August 28: Full Day Training Assessment Literacy and Development using STARS – District Trainers

September 2: Upper School Teacher Training: STARS and Assessment Development.

September 11: All District Coaches (Data Analysis and Providing Personalized Instruction and Intervention using STARS)