



## *Educational Technology Service*

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### Meeting Minutes – Steering Committee February 10, 1999 Rochester Thruway Marriott

**Attendees:** S.Uebbing, J.McCabe, C. Manasari, R.Fashano, B.Smith, J. Marinelli, T. Phillips, and C.Sorenson

**Absent:** J. Backer

### Financial Services Software

#### One software package -

Camille Sorenson led a discussion on the potential of EduTech supporting a single Financial and Student Application Software package. The purpose of the dialog was to get Steering Committee opinion on the single package alternative as an indication of how the other districts may feel about the option.

Current State was described as – EduTech offers two Financial and two Student packages for districts. Financial districts include 30 on CP and 5 on Win2000; Student districts include 35 on Schoolmaster, 5 on SASI. Advantages of a single package include, reduced costs, increased concentrated support efforts for other packages; disadvantages include the fact that districts are left with only one choice (or cross contract).

Discussion items included –

- C. Manasari voiced an opinion that he would always prefer a choice
- Perhaps we should look at other models, such as having a company support the second package
- What would we tell the 5 districts on the packages we choose not to support (i.e. Victor may be quite happy with SASI)
- Do we have a list of what the other BOCES support (for the cross contract option)
- If alternatives can be provided, the option would be considered
- Camille closed the discussion by indicating that she would research the items discussed before deciding the next steps

#### Search for second finance software package

The search committee, after reviewing a number of systems, delivered a recommendation of the Financial software packages CompuSense and Finance Manager. Camille discussed the organizational difficulties being experienced by the company that sells Finance Manager and the fact that a number of Regional Information Centers in the state are seriously concerned about the continued viability of the company. Camille recommended to the Steering Committee that CompuSense be the package selected. The Committee agreed the

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approval of CompuSense. However, CompuSense must understand that a condition of purchase must be their commitment to support New York State reporting.

### **EduTech Staff Development as a Coser Requirement**

T. Phillips began the discussion of the agenda item by questioning why it was a requirement to participate in training/staff development, requiring payment of the associated charge, if the district chose not to participate. J. McCabe distributed a copy of the 6360 Coser illustrating that it was a requirement of the Coser that districts participate in that service and the associated fee.

The pricing discussion continued -

- This really points us back to per call pricing
- An analysis of per call pricing is needed
- We need to revisit the whole concept of billing, districts don't understand the billing process
- We need a policy recommendation including the assumptions that drive pricing
- The motion was raised by S.Uebbing to have EduTech develop by a special summer meeting an analysis of per call pricing as compared to existing billing (or additional options). T. Phillips seconded the motion.
- S. Uebbing will set up the logistics of the meeting scheduled for July 26

**LAKENet Content Filter (Bess)**: Chris Manasari updated the Committee on the Bess content filter issue and summarized a WFL Librarians meeting that he attended (as did C. Sorenson, J.McCabe, and J. Ginsberg).

The meeting was a successful meeting discussing and resolving a number of issues -

- With an Internet hookup in the meeting J. Ginsberg illustrated how a number of the paid Library services previously blocked by Bess, were excluded from the filter allowing all approved, paid research services to be accessed. EduTech and the librarians discussed that a procedure be developed to allow Bess access to future services.
- J. Ginsberg then illustrated Internet search processes to allow schools access to information required by their students.

### **Erate Update**

Camille Sorenson provided an update of the Erate process to date. For the filing year 98 - 99, at this point about \$1 million of the total \$6.5 million has been approved for funding. We have received notice of funding on district voice phone bills and LAKENet data line charges. Additional funding waves are anticipated through the end of February. For the filing year 99 – 00, EduTech will again, be filing on behalf of districts. Our last date to submit applications is April 6.

Issues raised –

- The methodology needs to be developed to appropriate the Erate money associated with LAKENet
- The logistics also needs to include the transfer of funds from WFL to GV BOCES
- A communications process should be set up, either a listserve or DocuShare to share information

### **Action Plan to Improve Customer Service**

Camille Sorenson reviewed an outline of a plan for improved Customer Service, for the information of the Steering Committee.

As a result of the Customer Survey, a Sutherland Group review of the Help Desk operation, and a Strategic Planning process, EduTech has outlined a plan aimed at improving Customer Service to our districts.

Some of the items included are –

- Continue Year 2000 compliance efforts
- Review / Streamline / Automate the SAA process
- Develop a plan to improve First Level support
- Examine the installation and problem resolution process
- Create / enhance the utilization of LAKENet
- Maximize vendor relationships
- Develop a Human Resources plan

Items discussed were –

- Improved communications is an important component in improved customer service
- EduTech staff needs orientation on school environment
- Provide the Committee a copy of the formal plan when developed
- A systemic way to provide feedback is needed
- The plan is a good first step and on the right track

### **Online Courses**

Jack McCabe updated the Committee on the status of the online courses. The courses are up and running and available for the staff development.

**Title III** – Jack McCabe updated the Committee on the status of the Title III project. Application for moneys to be awarded next year includes participation of 37 districts, up from the 12 prior participants.

**EduTech end of Year surplus** – a discussion took place regarding the policy of EduTech end of year surplus. Jack McCabe indicated that at the end of the year, EduTech follows the same process as districts by using excess moneys, making wise business decisions to leverage buying discounts and prepaying items to allow for unforeseen events in the next year. After all business decisions are made, EduTech refunds 100% of the surplus to component districts.