

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**RFP 25-04 Power To Learn -- Prequalification Evaluation**  
**September 9, 2004**

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**Attendees:** Beverly Addison, John Graham, Gail May, Alisa Morningstar, Linda Morrell, Donna Oliver, Cheryl Rowley, Charles Sprayberry, Jill Vestal

**Minutes:**

- General discussion regarding the Board Laptop Forum following the Board meeting on 9/23/04 from 8:00 – 10:00 p.m.
- Discussion regarding evaluation stages. Donna stated that after this committee evaluates the RFP responses and identifies a competitive range, evaluation will be turned over to another committee (i.e. Dr. Beers, outside business consultants). Donna was asked to clarify with Dr. Beers whether this phase has been discussed with Financial Services Leadership.
- There was general discussion regarding Apple. Concern was voiced with respect to the impact on the District of switching to a new operating system. Specifics included:
  - Would it be possible for the committee to conclude that a switch to Apple would be too risky for the District to undertake? Donna replied that documentation of concerns is part of the committee's responsibility during the course of evaluation of the RFP.
  - Alisa stated that ideally, at the end of the next evaluation round for this RFP; the committee should determine two to three vendor proposals that the current committee would be comfortable with as a solution to District needs. This committee's charge is to evaluate a laptop solution based on the RFP specifications.
  - Donna stated that Apple will be asked to propose how they would bridge a change of platform within CCSD. Can Apple show instances where they've converted a primary PC District to Apple?
  - Donna suggested that we ask Roanoke why they chose Dell over Apple and also ask other districts what software or compatibility issues they may have encountered as a result of switching to an Apple platform.
  - Beverly asked if we could go to the CCSD current Apple schools and ask how they manage the compatibility issues. Cheryl stated that

since only 5-10% of CCSD schools are Apple, more information could probably be gleaned by looking outside the District.

- Donna stated that since the entire middle and high school environment would be Apple if Apple were the awarded vendor, compatibility issues should be less when all schools have the same platform.
- The concern was raised that if the award is to Apple and if the PC's currently used in middle and high schools are moved down to the elementary school level, would elementary teachers get Apples as part of this RFP? Possibly...
- Donna stated that any software and compatibility issues must be addressed and documented but these concerns are not a primary issue during this prequalification stage.
- Linda asked if a request for a Best and Final Offer would be issued. Alisa answered yes.
- Linda asked if certain labs within the District would be eliminated as a result of implementation of this RFP.
  - Donna responded that all such questions and concerns should be documented to be addressed at a later date.
  - Further discussion on these labs included:
    - Impact Analysis concerning Cad Labs, Media Centers and all other programs/departments affected by this initiative will be conducted.
    - Platform issue (i.e., Apple or PC) – should be separate from an impact evaluation.
    - Will savings realized as a result of discontinuing labs be considered in TCO? Impact of labs on TCO
    - RFP award recommendation's impact on labs, etc. will come after the evaluation of the RFP responses.
- Alisa urged the group to move on from this discussion and document areas of concern to be tackled more in later phases of the RFP evaluation.
- Alisa -- Apple's proposal states that the company is Gartner equivalent.
  - Alisa requested that Jim Dudenhoefer provide documentation. Jim provided a document from 2000 which does not actually state whether Apple is or is not equivalent to Tier 1, Tier 2, etc. There is no concrete

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proof of Apple's rating. However, based on the document supplied by Apple, Gateway meets the Gartner criteria in the RFP requirements.

- o The more recent Gartner information provided by Gateway recommends the vendor "as a prospective supplier for medium quantity U.S. only deployments" but does not define a "medium quantity deployment". Gateway did not provide the required number of references meeting the RFP minimum requirements. They been given a chance to provide more appropriate references by 3:00, 9/10/04. If references of a suitable scope are provided, Gateway's proposal will undergo detailed evaluation equal to the other four vendors at this stage. Otherwise, they will not be further considered as a pre-qualified vendor.
  - Beverly asked if the Gartner rating is always requested, Alisa responded that yes it was for computer RFPs.

**Evaluation and discussion of the Apple proposal follows:**

- Charles – Of 73 local employees, 50 are in Apple's retail store. With regard to Project Management, Apple appears to have the people in place, but not much detail was provided on their plan or ongoing support, etc.
- Questions were raised regarding "Panther" – what is Panther? Donna asked if Panther was the operating system currently used at CCSD Apple sites. Donna suggested that Apple be asked to provide information regarding operating system compatibility with Java, GroupWise and other current CCSD programs. Linda followed-up on Panther during the meeting. CCSD's Apple sites are currently using Panther with no reported problems.
- Charles – Apple's proposal provides the minimum information required. No detail on subcontractors. Not clear if subcontractors will be used for installation, imaging, etc.
- Linda asked if vendors were required to give an installation plan at this stage. Alisa – Vendors were not asked to submit an actual plan. Vendors will be asked to elaborate on which subcontractors would be used for CCSD and in what capacity.
- Charles – Vendors may not be able to tell us exactly who/what company will be used until we contract with them.
- John asked if we could go back to vendors who progress to the next stage of evaluation and ask for more information on subcontractors to be used for CCSD? Alisa – yes.

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- Gail asked if vendors would be asked to provide a plan for subcontractor coordination.
- Charles noted that Apple's ISO certifications are different from other vendors.
- Alisa asked the group if there were any other concerns or issues at this time regarding Apple's RFP response.
- Linda asked if vendors should be asked to provide more specific information with regard to litigation. The consensus was that CCSD attorneys would research these issues at a later date.
- John asked what skills were needed to support Apple environment. Does CCSD have employee base to support the hardware? Charles stated that the vendor will be required to provide total support.
- It was decided that the rating scale on the evaluation forms would be removed as it was never published and the committee would continue with pass/fail evaluation for this phase.
- Donna asked that Alisa have Financial Services look at BellTech Logics' financial statements. Alisa stated that we should find out how BellTech will be used for CCSD before we research them further.
- Gail asked when clarification would be sought for various issues. Alisa explained that she would like to have questions/areas of clarification to provide to each vendor when they are notified that they pre-qualify.
- Linda felt the Apple evaluation component (University of Georgia) was weak in terms of background and experience presented compared to the other responses. Beverly disagreed and felt that UGA was a positive – it is in state and has excellent Technology and Research & Development departments.

**Evaluation and discussion of the Dell proposal follows:**

- Charles led review of Dell evaluation.
- Dell stated they could not provide K-12 revenue broken out from total revenue.
- No student achievement or customer satisfaction data was provided. Charles stated that the information was asked for and Dell should be asked again to submit the information.
- Co-nect reference was used by Dell mostly in Clayton County. Will request more information in the next phase.

- What is the list on page 21 of Dell's response? A list of past experience, things to offer CCSD, pick and choose, etc.? Alisa – most likely a list of past experience.
- Group asked for clarification on Charles' comment of "an industry standard machine" on #13 of the Dell evaluation form. Charles explained that the information submitted is for the machine/product as it works in today's environment (the current industry standard). No information was provided regarding the future of wireless technology.
- Alisa – Plans for future wireless technology will be requested for the next phase of evaluation.
- In reviewing Dell's subcontractor information, Alisa asked if there were any school districts referenced in the southeast for BMC. Do they have any local experience or local employees? The response was no.
- John / Donna stated that clarification of roles and responsibilities of subcontractors is needed from all respondents.
- Linda stated that Belmont Hills currently uses Co-nect.
- Charles – Would like for Dell to provide more information on what ISPs can do for local school districts.
- Alisa – Litigation wording on all evaluation forms will be changed to read "vendor's opinion".
- Donna asked the group if there were any further comments regarding Dell.
  - Linda said the response was strong.
  - Alisa noted that Dell had more large scale deployments than the other vendors.
  - Donna said there was no evidence of a commitment to one-to-one computer initiatives.
  - Charles said that Dell should have offered consultation options, etc. during its recent and past work with CCSD.
  - Cheryl stated the proposal was very business oriented and lacked a sense of commitment to education. Donna agreed. Linda stated that CCSD has not encouraged or been receptive to any such relationship with Dell in the past. Dell previously presented education expertise and CCSD was not interested at the time. Charles disagreed; felt Dell reps should have been more proactive and informative with regard to what they could do for CCSD over the years.

- Linda stated that all proposals were lacking in detail.
- John asked if individual vendor meetings would be held during the course of the RFP evaluation. Alisa – yes.
- Dr. Beers will be asked to update the committee on direction and focus.

**Evaluation and discussion of the HP proposal follows:**

- Charles asked if HP uses subcontractors for deployment. Alisa – yes.
- Beverly stated that HP's proposal seemed heavily focused on old technology.
- Beverly asked how Classroom Connect and Connected University would be used. Roles not clear in HP proposal will require clarification in next round.
- The examples cited by HP are much older than the references provided. Why?
- John felt the proposal was very "canned" and lacked personalization. Alisa agreed – vague, glossy.
- Alisa – All vendors will be asked if a Project Manager will be dedicated and on-site with CCSD.
- Alisa – HP did not provide valid resumes – will follow-up, ask to provide.
- Alisa – Logical Choice listed Duluth location – is that considered local? The group consensus was that Cobb County is considered local.
- Linda voiced concerns regarding David Thornburg's face-to-face training.
- Beverly asked for clarification on the relationship between HP and Classroom Connect. Cheryl stated that the HP proposal was lacking a plan.
- Donna reiterated that this is the qualification phase only - presentation of a plan was not required at this stage.
- Alisa – request clarification regarding Oliver Thompson's role, cited as trainer but experience appears to be more Proj. Mgmt.
- Cheryl stated that HP references were weak in general.
- There was general discussion regarding insurance. Alisa stated that CCSD does not want to be "in the middle" of the insurance situation. If CCSD does not self insure, we do not want to manage the insurance portion of the initiative. Donna agreed and stated that we don't know at this time if CCSD will self insure or contract with an outside agency for insurance.

- John asked how the ISP portion of the project will be handled – partner w/ CCSD, etc.? Charles – not sure at this time.
- General discussion took place regarding ISTE and possible conflict of interest with HP or other vendors that contribute money to the organization. Alisa will follow-up.
- Donna asked if the HP proposal provided documentation on an agency to provide evaluation research. ISTE & Thornburg were sites in the response. Donna stated that more information was needed from HP on plans to use ISTE and Thornburg.
- Alisa asked if there were further comments or discussion regarding the HP proposal submission. No further discussion regarding HP.

**Evaluation and discussion of the IBM proposal follows:**

- Linda was impressed by the “dashboard” comprehensive support screen proposed by IBM for teachers.
- Beverly commented that IBM is the most visionary in the market and was a leader in the early history of educational partnership.
- Linda stated that the Learning Alignment Model described is very close to what CCSD needs for teachers.
- Donna asked if IBM was offering the Learning Alignment Model to CCSD or stating this for qualification purposes only? Gail read from IBM’s proposal that IBM is proposing this model for CCSD.
- Donna stated that we already have a suite of products and asked if IBM was proposing a suite. Gail – yes.
- IBM’s proposal was not very strong in the area of professional development; seemed very qualified to provide Project Management. Also, strong in the area of ongoing support.
- Gail felt that references were weak and not for instructional purposes.
- Gail – The IBM Access Connection feature is a huge plus.
- Beverly asked if anyone in the group had any information on FutureKids, a subcontractor listed by IBM. No one in the group had knowledge regarding FutureKids. Gail felt that FutureKids seemed one dimensional and that an integration component was missing based on the information provided.

- Linda stated that the proposal was not clear as to the role of subcontractors. Need further explanation.
- The entire group stated that the IBM proposal needed more tabs and better organization.
- Donna asked if it is permissible to ask all vendors not to include information that doesn't apply to services or products requested in the RFP. Alisa explained that RFP guidelines do not allow us to make this stipulation as the additional information could be considered "value added".
- Alisa – Importance of tabbing, organization, cross referencing, etc. will be restated and stressed for future phases of this project.
- John asked if IBM made in presentations to RFP committee prior to RFP development and release - No.
- Gail commented that Metis, subcontractor listed by IBM, has strong experience. Scope and number of students is not large, but research model is strong.
- Gail felt that IBM presented strong overall qualifications.
- Linda expressed concern that the Support Team Leader had no Novell certifications. Alisa reminded the group that this is the team lead only – not the entire team. Linda requested that they be asked about Novell knowledge.
- Beverly expressed concern regarding CCSD's past experience with IBM. Alisa stated that IBM will be asked what assurances they can provide to CCSD that what happened in 1998 won't happen again and will be "put on notice" with regard to CCSD concerns. John asked if there was a financial loss to the District. Alisa will research.
- Cheryl stated that IBM has done more recent and satisfactory work for CCSD in the form of consulting approximately 3 years ago.

**General discussion as follows:**

- Following group review and discussion of all four proposals, Alisa asked if the group was in agreement to move forward to the next phase of this RFP with the current four vendors.
- All were in agreement with the exception of Beverly who expressed strong reservations with regard to IBM.
- John pointed out various past issues with each of the other vendors as well.

- Donna concluded that the committee would move forward with consideration of the four vendors evaluated thus far.
- Alisa asked for volunteers to read and analyze the Gateway response if necessary – if they supply references of appropriate scope as requested. If Gateway does not comply with submission of suitable references, the committee will not move forward with analysis of their proposal. If Gateway is evaluated further – John will do the analysis. John, Donna, Charles and Alisa all volunteered to read the response.
- Alisa will divide and distribute the references to be checked to the committee members. Beverly, Linda, Gail and Donna will be primarily responsible for checking curriculum related references. Alisa, Charles, and John will focus primarily on technical references and Cheryl will do a mixture of the two categories. Alisa will first email a “heads up” notice to all references to let them know that a representative from CCSD will be calling. Reference checks are to begin next week and are to be completed by Wednesday, September 22, 2004. Charles asked if the document / questionnaire will be emailed? Alisa – no, will email general subject matters to be discussed.

#### **Inventory discussion:**

- Donna explained that Dr. Beers requested that participating vendors be asked to propose an on line inventory system for the District. If vendors are unable to propose a workable solution, CCSD Property Control will handle inventory.
- Donna asked if vendor request should include equipment such as bar code scanners, etc. and commented that a final inventory system may not be in place before the teacher roll-out begins.
- Linda asked why the District’s Remedy system could not be used.
- Charles stated that we need to define what we want and then determine if Remedy can meet the needs.
- Donna stated that Titan and the awarded vendor of this RFP will be responsible for separate equipment and work.
- Linda recommended that the group look at help options from an end-user perspective.
- Donna asked if the next phase of the RFP should request vendors to provide a tracking / inventory plan.
- Donna suggested the possibility of sending SchoolMax info to vendors.
- Alisa cautioned the use of confidential data.

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- Linda stated that SchoolMax data can be used, need to check with lawyers.
- Charles stated that the two issues that must be addressed with regard to inventory are (1) Global ownership of asset management within the District and (2) What information do we need and how will we use it?
- Donna asked what the next step should be.
- Alisa suggested that vendors be asked to present what they can offer in the area of asset management.
- The group reviewed information to be included in an inventory / tracking system.
- A question was raised regarding special needs issues – i.e., if a child needs a special monitor or keyboard. Donna will research.
- Charles and Gail asked about the tracking and purchasing of other items such as mice, etc. Does CCSD issue and inventory? Does student buy?
- Donna asked the best way to request inventory system information to vendors.
- Alisa suggested possibly issuing an addendum at the pre-bid conference expanding on the current section of the RFP in which inventory is briefly addressed.
- Donna – do we want barcodes?
- Charles – equipment must be barcoded.
- Next meeting of the entire group is currently scheduled for 9/21 at 3:00. Donna and Alisa will schedule future meetings.