

NOTICE OF SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT

Date: September 17, 2007

Vendor/Contractor: Skillstutor

Contract Amount: \$76,000/Two Year Contract

Description of Services: Web-based tutoring for middle school students in SOL subjects.

Sole Source Determination: Product review by instructional staff has determined that this is the only known product on the market that meets our requirements.

Date of Award: TBD

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VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A H E A D O F T H E C U R V E

*Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Office of Secondary Instructional Services*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kevin Beardsley, Director
Purchasing Services

FROM: Christine W. Caskey, Assistant Superintendent
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Joe Burnsworth, Director
Office of Secondary Instructional Services

SUBJECT: SKILLSTUTOR

DATE: September 11, 2007

During the 2006-2007 school year, Sharon Gray, coordinator for alternative education, purchased a Web-based tutoring program called SkillsTutor for the Center of Effective Learning (CEL). After nine weeks of use by students, parents, and teachers, the staff at CEL was so impressed with the program that they began to share information with other teachers around the city. In January, a committee of teachers from Corporate Landing Middle School (CLMS) reviewed the program and recommended it for purchase as a way to extend tutoring opportunities to all students at the school. The initial one-year contract included training for all staff members and unlimited access to 14 tutoring modules, which included content in all core content areas except social studies. Shortly thereafter, teachers from Brandon and Larkspur middle schools visited CLMS to see the program in action. As a result, they too purchased the program for implementation during the 2007-2008 school year. In the interim, other middle schools have expressed interest in the program. A brief overview of the program is provided below.

SkillsTutor provides K-12 basic skills supplemental instructional software in the following content areas: Math, Language Arts, Reading Comprehension, Reading Vocabulary, Writing, Science, Information Skills and Workforce Readiness. Each module in our program provides pre and post tests, with over 1600 self-paced, self-directed lessons, that support what is being taught in the classroom and are aligned to the Virginia Standards of Learning. SkillsTutor is delivered and accessed through a pure web-based environment and can therefore be accessed anywhere there is an internet connection. SkillsTutor can be used for multiple school improvement needs from Elementary, Middle, High School and Adult Basic Education. SkillsTutor can be used in the class room for whole class instruction, in the lab for test prep, remediation and enrichment, at home for supplemental

homework instruction as well as for after-school and summer-school programs. The program currently has 21 detailed accountability reports to help drive individual student and entire building progress. All lessons are written in Flash and include audio support throughout. In addition to easy access and not installing anything on your servers, we offer free product upgrades, support and training throughout the life of your subscription.

I have searched for and reviewed other products and none have the same instructional components. SkillsTutor is the only product I can find that contains both pre- and post-tests that are aligned with the Virginia Standards of Learning and that provides extensive data to teachers. It is the only Web-based program I have found that has activities in math, reading, writing, and science for grades K-12. The other products I have reviewed include Tutor.com and Net Prep. I have provided information on each of them below.

- Net Prep provides remediation activities in English and mathematics for grades 2–8 only. It is only available for use during pre-scheduled four-hour windows.
- Tutor.com is an online tutorial that connects the student with a tutor through a chat format. The students can ask questions about any subject and can also provide copies of reports or research papers to the tutor for feedback. There are no pre- or post-assessments and no feedback is provided to assist in instruction. Tutor.com must be purchased by individuals at a rate of \$35 for 60 minutes of one-on-one instruction. At this time, minutes cannot be purchased by schools or a school division.

Based on this review, I would like to move forward with the purchase of the SkillsTutor program so that staff members in our middle schools can be trained and start using it as soon as possible. The contract has been priced based on the number of years for which we enter into an agreement. As you might imagine, the more years involved in the agreement, the cheaper the cost. A one-year contract would cost \$47,000 total for implementation at 13 comprehensive middle schools; two years would cost \$76,000 and three years would run \$90,000. Due to available funding, I recommend a two-year agreement.

I will be happy to provide any additional information you may need regarding this request. If you have any questions, please contact Joe Burnsworth at 263-1429, or email jburnswo@vbschools.com.

Thank you.

Approved for sale since
/ Kevin Beardsley
9/17/07