

Nashua School District

141 Ledge Street
Nashua, New Hampshire 03060
(603) 966-1000 phone
(603) 594-4350 fax

Request for Proposals

Parent Communication RFP

Sealed proposals must be submitted no later than

2:00 PM on Friday, June 5, 2009.

Proposals will be publicly opened at the Berard Masse School Administration Building located at 141 Ledge Street, Nashua, New Hampshire. The contents of all proposals will be open to inspection by interested parties, either at the time of bid opening or by appointment thereafter.

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of RFP (Request for Proposal)

The purpose of this Request for Proposal is to allow the Nashua Public School District to improve its efficiencies around attendance phone calls in particular, and to improve its overall capabilities around communication with our parents.

All RFP responses must be submitted by 2:00 pm Friday, June 5, 2009, to the Nashua Public Schools Business Office, 141 Ledge Street, Nashua, New Hampshire, 03061. These responses must be in a sealed envelope, labeled "Nashua Parent Communication RFP Response", attention to Judith Diaz.

Refer all questions about this RFP in writing to Richard A. Farrenkopf, Director of Technology, at farrenkopfr@nashua.edu.

1.2. RFP Calendar

Activity	Date
RFP Release	Tuesday May 12th 2009
RFP Responses Due	Friday June 5, 2009 before 2:00 pm
Vendor Presentations/Inquiries	May 25 th 2009 thru May 29 th
Vendor Decision Made	June 29th 2009
System ready for use	August 1 , 2009

The District will schedule vendor presentations and ask vendors additional questions, if necessary, from May 25th through May 29th for those vendors who we feel best meet our needs based on our evaluation of the RFP response.

2. Characteristics of Nashua School District

2.1. Demographics

Nashua, the second largest city in New Hampshire (over 90,000) next to Manchester, is located in south-central New Hampshire, bordering on Massachusetts. The school department currently has an enrollment of approximately 12,294 students in grades K-12. The district has a free/reduced lunch rate of 34.33%, ELL population of 7.74%, and a Special Education population of 16.91%.

Our April 20, 2009 enrollment showed a total of 5,561 Elementary Students, 2,590 Middle School Students, 4,071 High School Students, and 72 attending our Alternative School for a total of 12,294 students.

2.2. Nashua Schools

Nashua has a total of seventeen schools, including two High Schools, 3 Middle Schools, and 12 Elementary Schools. The below enrollment numbers are based on our April 20, 2009 enrollment.

Nashua Schools	Number of Students	Number of Teachers & Staff
Amherst Street Elementary School	299	73
Bicentennial Elementary School	631	84
Birch Hill Elementary School	482	75
Broad Street Elementary School	418	76
Charlotte Ave Elementary School	530	68
Dr. Crisp Elementary School	413	78
Fairgrounds Elementary School	587	89
Ledge Street Elementary School	490	100
Main Dunstable Elementary School	557	79
Mt. Pleasant Elementary School	301	59
New Searles Elementary School	399	63
Sunset Heights Elementary School	454	74
Elm Street Middle School	1159	179
Fairgrounds Middle School	757	114
Pennichuck Middle School	674	103
The Phoenix Program	72	23
Nashua High School North	1946	246
Nashua High School South	125	267
Total	12,294	1850

2.3. Current Student Information System

We currently use X2 Aspen as our main Student Information System. The central repository for data is stored in a local SQL Server 2005 database.

Several other external software packages round out our application portfolio. These include a Transportation system (EDULOG from Education Logistics), a Cafeteria System (PCS), and a Library System (Follett Destiny). We have batch functionality that keeps the data for all of these systems in synchronization with our Student Information System.

3. Requirements for System

3.1. Requirements of System

The Nashua New Hampshire School District is asking for proposals on an automated phone system to help us meet our needs of parent contact. The following questions and requirement statements cover what would be expected of a successful vendor proposal with respect to issues we are most concerned with. Please comment on all requirements with as much detail as you can, and answer all questions.

Notification System

- The Parent Communication System (also, referred to as The System) **MUST** be fully hosted, requiring no additional hardware. It **MUST** be fully web-based, meaning no client software would have to be installed on a local computer. It **MUST** require no additional phone lines or telecommunications setup.
- The System **MUST** be able to deliver messages via voice, and **SHOULD** be able to deliver messages via email, and SMS. Will your system be able to send messages in all delivery methods, one delivery method or any combination? Please describe the process of launching these messages through the web interface tool. Please describe any system level methods to activate or de-activate any of these delivery methods (as an example, would we be able to de-activate sending SMS messages).
- The System **MUST** allow for multiple phone numbers per contact and **SHOULD** allow for multiple email and SMS devices per contact.

Nashua Public Schools
Parent Communications RFP - 2009
24-April-2009

- The System **MUST** have the ability to be accessed by phone to deliver messages in the event of a local Internet or Power outage.
- The System **MUST** have the ability to have different types of users be able to call different scopes of parents. In other words, one user class can call all student contacts within the district; a school administrator could only call all student contacts within their school, etc. Describe how this is accomplished when creating a user account.
- The System **MUST** have multi-language capabilities, including at a minimum Spanish and Portuguese. These capabilities **MUST** be detailed thoroughly. At a minimum, messages need to be able to be recorded in multiple languages and sent out as one message and be delivered in the student's "home language". As an example, a no school announcement **MUST** be able to be pre-recorded in multiple languages, and then later sent as if it were one message. It would also be highly desirable for the system to be able to provide instant translation capabilities for messages that are authored in English. Specify, if this is available, can the original message be authored either verbally or typed. Vendors need to describe in detail the process of creating and delivering these messages.
- The System **MUST** have the capability to allow pre-defined groups, so that, as an example, the Transportation Director could quickly and easily contact the parents of all riders of Bus 123. The RFP response needs to detail how this would be handled for Sports Teams whose existence and membership changes over the course of the year.
- The System **SHOULD** have the capability to create a group in real time and use this list to target phone messages. For example, we want to create a group of students going on a field trip, and call all of their contacts. Again the RFP response **SHOULD** detail how this would work.
- The vendor **MUST** describe the different types of calls that it offers (eg. Emergency, informational, survey) and any capabilities it has to differentiate what types of calls are delivered to a parent.
- The System **SHOULD** have the capabilities to differentiate different types of outgoing calls, for example, the system **SHOULD** be able to differentiate between emergency calls and non-emergency calls.
- The System **MUST** have a method to allow the district and/or schools to manage opt out phone numbers when parents do not want to receive messages. Please describe this method. The system **SHOULD** have the

Nashua Public Schools
Parent Communications RFP - 2009
24-April-2009

ability to allow a parent to opt out of one type of call but opt in for another type of call. Please describe any capabilities you have in detail. (this is referred to below again under Parent Portal).

- The System **MUST** have the ability to schedule messages for a future date/time.
- The system **MUST** allow for unlimited users and provide the ability for a district administrator to manage all schools and users.
- The System **MUST** have the capability to automatically retry phone numbers that were not answered or were busy. Please describe what the system does on its own when it encounters busy signals and no answer numbers. In an emergency call, is there any functionality to keep calling numbers until they answer?

The chosen system **SHOULD** allow for one-button resend to busy and no answer numbers. Describe how this capability complements the above functionality.

- The System **MUST** be able to save recorded messages for future use.
- The System **SHOULD** be able to designate one or more contacts to receive every emergency message launched from the district. Explain how this would work.
- The vendor **MUST** describe in detail any survey capabilities it has and how this would work. Describe the robustness of this ability (for example, can multiple questions be asked, what types of answers can be given (yes/no only)).
- The System **SHOULD** support emergency calls to our staff for snow days, as an example. The System **SHOULD** allow similar phone calls to other school personnel who might be contracted to the School District (eg. Bus Drivers). Either here, or, under System Integration, describe the data elements required to make Staff phone calls, and also how bus drivers could be included in phone calls (bus driver information would not exist in our Student Information System Staff database, but would need to be imported from an external file).
- The System **SHOULD** have the ability to block automated calling on school holidays, such as Christmas, New Years, and school vacation weeks.

Nashua Public Schools
Parent Communications RFP - 2009
24-April-2009

Parent Portal

- The System **SHOULD** have a Parent Portal that offers a web-based, password protected process to allow parents control over what phone numbers, email addresses and SMS devices their messages are being delivered to. The System **SHOULD** have the ability to target a cell phone number to be called during the day, and a home phone to be called during the evening, as an example. This portal **SHOULD** work on all of the major browsers for both the PC and Apple platform. This portal **MUST** work without any local software needing to be installed by the parent on their home computer. The RFP needs to describe in detail (with screenshots) what the parent experience on this portal would be like. The RFP needs to describe how the creation of parent accounts would be handle, describing all configuration steps. The vendor **SHOULD** describe its recommend process for delivering parent accounts and passwords, based on its experience. The vendor **MUST** document how many of its customers are using their parent portal.

Would this portal be available to parents 24x7 to review their messages and make updates? Would this be available to them by both a computer web interface as well as a phone interface?

- If The System offers a Parent Portal, it **MUST** not allow parents to change their data, but instead only represent the data that resides in student information system. To be clear, The System cannot allow a parent to add or change any information about themselves using the Parent Portal. They would only be allowed to decide how, when, and what type of messages they would receive using the information stored for them. It would be desirable for The System to offer functionality to allow the parent to request a change to their demographic data with a direct communication path back to the District, but we would want this functionality to be optional.
- Parents **SHOULD** be able to retrieve or listen to past messages that have been delivered.

Reporting Capabilities

Nashua Public Schools
Parent Communications RFP - 2009
24-April-2009

- The System **MUST** provide detailed reporting of current calls, calls made and district's monthly volume.
- The System **MUST** provide district reporting capabilities that allow the district to view individual school broadcast information and compare usage from school to school.
- The System **MUST** maintain a history of recipients and detailed results for daily Attendance calls.
- The System **SHOULD** track the results of a phone call with respect to how many live answers, phone machine answers, out of service answers, etc. Can we track how many people hung up on the call before it completed? Can we track how long a person listed to the call before hang-up? Would we be able to view usage statistics by user, school, and district? Can reports be run to show bad phone numbers, etc?

System Integration

- The System **MUST** seamlessly accept data imports from X2 and build contact lists automatically for the district and each school. Please describe this process in detail, giving file layouts of all data files required from X2. This would include any file required for demographic information, files for attendance information, files required for group creation, and files required to report lunch balance information (mentioned below). Demographic information could include, but not be limited to, student name, telephone contact information, email addresses, school, grade level, bus information, sports team affiliation, etc.

What demographic information would be able to be used to target a phone call? In other words, would we be able to target phone calls to all current eighth graders to alert them of an informational night for incoming freshmen?

Is there a limit to the number phone numbers your system can store for one contact?

The vendor **MUST** describe in detail the data elements you would recommend for us as a minimum. Please also describe the process and any fees associated with us wanting additional data elements passed at a later timeframe.

Nashua Public Schools
Parent Communications RFP - 2009
24-April-2009

- The System **MUST** be able to automate and accept data transfers from X2. Please provide all options you would offer to accommodate this with as much detail as possible. For example, can you come 'grab' our files? Could we send them to you? Please describe these options in detail and explain your preference and why.
- The System **MUST** be able to automate daily attendance calling.
- The vendor **MUST** be able to accommodate attendance feeds coming from the Nashua School District at different times. Currently we have two different times for our Elementary Schools (early and late schools), a different time for our Middle Schools, and then another different time for our two High Schools.
- The vendor **MUST** provide some mechanism to inform us if an attendance file is not provided for the date in question. Does your required attendance file contain a date, so that an old file is not mistaken for a current file? Can you provide us with an automated email alerting us to a problem with attendance? Can this be sent to more than one person?
- The System **SHOULD** have a simple process to delay attendance reporting for an individual school. For example, if one of our High Schools wishes to delay attendance reporting from our Student Information System by ½ hour because of local issues, and thus in turn delay phone calls going home by ½ hour, how would this be accomplished.
- The vendor **MUST** describe its capabilities to offer attendance calls in as personal a way as possible. How would the system handle a household with more than one child, where not all are absent? Does the system have the ability to say the name of the student and date within the message. Will attendance phone calls go home in a language based on their 'home' language?
- The vendor **MUST** state how the setup of these feeds would be handled and any setup costs associated with automating the data transfer process.
- The system **MUST** allow us to create automated feeds from our Cafeteria System to make contact with parents about their children's lunch balances.
- The system **MUST** be able to handle additional feeds if necessary (eg. Library Book fees).

Technology and Security

- The vendor **MUST** describe its technology infrastructure with details around its technical capabilities and failover capabilities. This **SHOULD** include the capacity of The System to send out phone calls (number of voice messages per hour) and how much of its total capacity it typically runs at, along with its historical peak capacities. The vendor **MUST** have established SLAs with telecommunications providers to guarantee delivery.

The vendor **MUST** describe and detail any certifications around the security of its Data Centers with respect to both privacy and emergency capabilities. The vendor **MUST** be redundant and utilize geo-dispersed facilities to deliver messages. Describe in detail the infrastructure behind your product with respect to any backup facilities you have in multiple parts of the country, especially in the event of a local disaster. Describe your business continuity plan.

Please describe how your system handles local congestion at the Telco level.

- The vendor **MUST** estimate the approximate time it should take, on average, to call all contacts for the Nashua School District in an emergency situation. Assume 13,000 children, each with 2 contacts.
- How many calls were sent by you on behalf of K-12 schools in the past 12 months? What is the highest volume of voice messages delivered for your K-12 customers within a 24 hour period and what percentage of your capacity did that consume.

Can you provide any independent verification of your capacities?

- Please describe how you handle the privacy and security of data transferred from our system to your system. How is this data kept secure and who would have access to it? Do you make this data available to any other parties?
- Do you warrant that all employees with access to student data have undergone thorough background checks?

Customer Support and Training

- The vendor **MUST** provide onsite training for all users within the district and individual schools.

Nashua Public Schools
Parent Communications RFP - 2009
24-April-2009

- The vendor **MUST** have an account manager assigned to Nashua School District.
- The vendor **MUST** have technical support available 24/7/365 for designated users and technical support available Monday through Friday 7 am to 4 pm for all users. This number **SHOULD** be toll free.
- The vendor **SHOULD** have emergency support available 24/7/365 with emergency operator support in the event messages cannot be created and launched by the individual school or district. This number **SHOULD** be toll free.
- The vendor **MUST** have and demonstrate a training and implementation plan for Nashua.
- The vendor **MUST** offer, at a minimum, yearly refresher training if requested.

Vendor Experience

- The vendor **MUST** have proven experience in servicing the K-12 educational sector.
- The vendor **MUST** have legal permission to do business in the state of New Hampshire.
- The vendor **MUST** have active contracts with a minimum of 20 other school districts with the same or greater student population as the Nashua School District.
- The vendor **MUST** provide at a minimum 5 references of comparable Districts. The vendor **MUST** detail comparable clients they have in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.
- The vendor **MUST** provide at a minimum 5 references of comparable District using their Parent Portal. These contacts can be the same as the above contacts, please specify.

Costs

- The vendor **MUST** describe its cost structure in detail. Is your cost a yearly subscription cost based solely on the number of students? When is this number determined? Is the initial setup, initial training, and ongoing training included in this cost? Do we have unlimited usage of your system,

Nashua Public Schools
Parent Communications RFP - 2009
24-April-2009

with the ability to make unlimited calls? Are there any limits to yearly training and any limits to requested onsite training. Are there any restrictions around long distance phone calls (parent works in Boston, MA, e.g.)? Is there a specified contractual timeframe required in your proposal or are we free to cancel at any point in time?

Other Information Requested

- Does your system announce the name of the student and specific attendance information in a real human voice or is this done through text to speech resulting in a computer sounding voice?
- Please describe your experience in the K-12 market, and other markets you might be involved in. Within the K-12 market, please provide a sense of where your customers are within the United States? How many total customers do you have? What percentage of these are in New England? What percentage of these are in the North East, etc.
- Where is your company headquartered? What other regional offices exist throughout the country?
- Please provide any research you have which validates the benefits experienced by your customer base who are actively using your system.
- Would teachers have access to use the system to make contact with the parents of their class (homework notifications, etc)? If so, how is this implemented?
- Please describe the ability of your system to combine phone calls made in one day to a parent. We would want morning attendance calls to go out immediately, but if in addition to this, our Superintendent was making an outreach phone call to all parents, on the same day that the Athletic Director, Principal, and Teacher made phone calls, what would be the impact to the parent at home. Would they receive 5 separate calls, or would the system support them receiving one immediate attendance call, and then one additional call with the additional 4 messages. Please describe how this would work.
- Does your system provide English, Spanish, and Portuguese reminder messages without any set-up or pre-recording?
- How does your system handle phone calls made to an automated attendant? In other words, if a parent requires a phone number and extension to be reached, can this be handled?