



NEBRASKA

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PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM RATIONALE

TO: Matthew L. Blomstedt, Ph.D.
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Melody Hobson

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM: Authorize the Commissioner to negotiate and enter into a contract up to the amount of \$48,155 for classroom assessment software, software services and training, in addition to the purchase of hardware for up to the amount of \$6,000

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Branagh Information Group has created software to be used on portable devices that will automate scoring and note taking for observers to use when in classrooms assessing program quality using the Environment Rating Scales. The NDE Office of Early Childhood would like to pilot the use of this software to judge its effectiveness and determine if automation of all observations is warranted.

At this time, observers are paid to observe a classroom, take notes, and ask questions regarding items not observed. They then must score each item by hand, calculate the sub-scores and total score, and write up detailed reports for coaches and education specialists to use. The software automatically scores items based on indicators checked. Provides easily accessed reminders and scoring rules for observers, and provides consolidated information to assist with streamlined report writing.

Piloting this software should provide information for the Office of Early Childhood to determine the following questions:

1. Is the software easy to use?
2. Will the software improve the accuracy of the observation scores?
3. Will the software improve the reliability and ease of use the reports for coaching, technical assistance and rating?
4. Will the software reduce the amount of time (and therefore cost) necessary for completing an observation?

ESTIMATED COST: The contract with Branagh Information Group, Inc. will be for up to \$48,155.

In addition to this contract, the pilot will require the purchase of hardware for up to the amount of \$6,000.