



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Scott P. Johnson

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: October 26, 2009

Approved

Date 10/30/09

COUNCIL DISTRICT: City-Wide

**SUBJECT: FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE AGREEMENT FOR LIVE ONLINE
HOMEWORK HELP SERVICES WITH TUTOR.COM**

RECOMMENDATION

Adoption of a resolution authorizing the Director of Finance to:

1. Execute the first amendment to the existing Live Online Homework Help Services Agreement ("Agreement") with Tutor.com to extend the term for an additional year from December 1, 2009 to November 30, 2010, and increase the total compensation by \$131,250 to a revised not to exceed amount of \$256,250; and
2. Execute five additional one-year options to renew the Agreement subject to the appropriation of funds.

OUTCOME

Continue to provide a web based homework tool for in-library and remote access with a live tutor in real-time assisting K-12 students with homework during the after school hours in multiple languages (English, Spanish, Vietnamese) and subjects.

BACKGROUND

In 2002, the Library piloted the use of a Live Homework Help Online Program ("Program") hosted by Tutor.com in select library branches. The Program allows students to connect with tutors online to review homework, ask questions, and discuss concepts, using features such as controlled chat, shared web browsing, and an interactive white board.

In September 2005, the Program was made available at all of the City's library branches, including remote access, in which students access the Program through a link on each



participating library's website. In June 2006, the California State Library awarded the City grant funds from the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) to continue with after-school homework assistance to student in grades K-12. Grant funding for this program expired in June 2008. It is now funded through annual appropriations in the Library's Budget.

On November 18, 2008, staff reported to City Council on the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the purchase of Live Online Homework Help Services and recommended a resolution authorizing the Director of Finance to execute a one year agreement with Tutor.com in the amount of \$125,000 with six additional one-year options to renew the Agreement subject to the appropriation of funds. City Council authorized the Director of Finance to execute a one-year agreement with Tutor.com. City Council further directed staff to look into the options available for using Curriki, a free software service, and report back to Council before exercising any additional options.

The usage of this Program has increased steadily since the 2002 introduction. During the last fiscal year, students logged over 14,000 online sessions with tutors through the Library's website connection to the Program. An analysis of the sessions by grade level and subject are summarized in tables below:

Grade Level	Number of Sessions	% of Total Sessions
Kindergarten & Elementary	653	4%
Middle School	3,343	23%
High School	8,379	56%
College	2,289	16%
Adult Education	138	1%
Total	14,802	100%

Subject	Number of Sessions	% of Total Sessions
Math (Basic, Algebra, Calculus, Geometry, Trigonometry)	8,152	55%
English and English Essay	2,999	20%
Science	2,855	20%
Social Science	796	5%
Total	14,802	100%

In addition, student feedback has been very positive. Below are several quotes from students that have used the system:

Your tutor, JOYCE V. was nothing short of phenomenal! She accomplished teaching basic geometry to someone who has never worked on it before, in a matter of 20 minutes (over the computer no less!). She is a value to tutor.com and appreciated by your students. I look forward to the ability to work with someone like her in the future. Thanks!

This tutor had a great attitude, and was very patient, also allowed for freedom of thought, didn't follow a narrow linear pattern (since one problem can be explained many ways).

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highly recommended. wish there was a way to find the same tutor again everytime I logged on. :) 5 stars.

Gracias por tener este programa porque sino creo que sino no hubiera sabido como poder resolver los problemas y me gusta porque esta en espanol tambien. [Thank you for having this program because without it I would not know how to solve the problems and I like it because it's in Spanish too]

This is a great service. I'm glad that this service is being offered to help people with what may seem as a mind boggling question and in the end be simplified and made clear.

Since the existing Agreement will expire in December 1, 2009, Staff is proposing to amend the Agreement to continue providing online tutor services to the public.

ANALYSIS

After researching Curriki as directed by Council, Library staff does not believe that it is a viable alternative to Tutor.com. The purpose of the Program currently offered by the Library is live homework help for students with online access to certified tutors in multiple languages. Curriki does not offer homework assistance. It is a website that supports the development and distribution of educational materials primarily to teachers. The evaluation results are summarized in the table below:

Evaluation Criteria	Curriki	Tutor.com
Audience	Teachers	Students (Kindergarten through College, Adult Learners)
Languages Supported	English	English, Spanish, Vietnamese
Live Chat	No	Yes
Interactive White Board	No	Yes
Variety of Subjects	All	All
Hours Available	24/7	2pm-12am English & Spanish, 3pm-7pm Vietnamese
Homework Assistance	No	Yes

Library staff also expanded research efforts to determine whether there are similar live tutoring services provided for free, including research on library best practices. One website offered a free trial after entering a credit card number, many others offered access to tutorials rather than homework assistance or live tutoring, many did not offer assistance to all grade levels or all subject matters, and none were found to offer assistance in any other language besides English. In general, the few "free" sites available are merely web portals of resources for research on homework topics rather than one-on-one online tutoring sites. Essentially, Library staff found no comparable tutoring services for free, let alone which meet all the requirements of the RFP including screening of employees to ensure the safety of children.

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Further, it is important to reiterate that the Agreement with Tutor.com was the result of a competitive RFP evaluation and selection process having been deemed as the most advantageous proposal. To ensure utmost safety of students, the Agreement requires Tutor.com perform background checks on all of its employees and all its contracted tutors.

For the reasons mentioned above, staff recommends amending the existing Agreement with Tutor.com to extend the term and continue providing web based live homework tutoring for K-12 students during the after school hours in multiple subjects and languages (English, Spanish, Vietnamese).

Green Vision: The purchase of this Online Live Homework Service does not directly affect the City's Green Vision Goals. However, the online delivery of tutoring services does have a positive impact to the environment by reducing carbon emissions associated with traditional travel by either student or tutor to and from tutoring sites, thereby indirectly contributing to improved air quality and slowing climate change which is consistent with the City's long term sustainability goals.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

This memorandum will not require any further follow-up from staff.

POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Not applicable.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST



Criterion 1: Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to \$1 million or greater; **(Required: Website Posting)**



Criterion 2: Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**



Criterion 3: Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate newspapers)**

While this item does not meet any of the criteria above, this memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the November 17, 2009 Council Agenda.



COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the Library Department, the City Manager’s Budget Office, and the City Attorney’s Office.

FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT

This action is consistent with the following General Budget Principles “We must focus on protecting our vital core city services for both the short- and long-term” and “We must continue to streamline, innovate, and simplify our operations so that we can deliver services at a higher quality level, with better flexibility, at a lower cost” and the Strategic Initiative “Make San Jose a Tech-Savvy City; lead the way in using technology to improve daily life.”

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

The total cost of the project is \$993,876 for a total of seven years. The table below identifies the annual costs for the initial contract period and the five optional contract periods of the seven year contract.

<u>Online Homework Help Services</u>	<u>Annual Cost</u>
Year 1 (2008-2009)	\$125,000
Year 2 (2009-2010)	\$131,250
Option 1 (2010-2011)	\$131,250
Option 2 (2011-2012)	\$144,375
Option 3 (2012-2013)	\$144,375
Option 4 (2013-2014)	\$158,813
Option 5 (2014-2015)	\$158,813
Grand Total	\$993,876

BUDGET REFERENCE

The table below identifies the fund and appropriations proposed to fund the agreement recommended as part of this memorandum.

Fund #	Appn #	Appn. Name	Total Appn	Amt. of Agreement (2009-2010)	2009-2010 Adopted Capital Budget (Page)	Last Budget Action (Date, Ord. No.)
418	4083	Automation Projects and System Maintenance	\$1,000,000	\$131,250	V-256	06/23/08, Ord. No. 28593



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CEQA

Not a project.


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Director, Finance

For questions please contact Mark Giovannetti, Purchasing Officer at (408) 535-7052.

