Project Charter
Student Information System Software and Implementation Services Selection Project

Prepared By: Leon County Schools, Project Management Office

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1. Executive Summary

   A. Purpose

   The purpose of this document is to provide information to District decision makers regarding the need for a project to select and implement a system to replace the Leon County School’s Student Information System (SIS). The executive summary provides historical information on SIS, describes why a replacement is needed, and defines the high-level need, objectives and scope for a possible replacement project. The sections following the executive summary outline proposed project governance, project management strategies and controls that LCS can use in the course of a phased selection and replacement project.

   B. Vision

   Provide a transparent, accountable and representative process to evaluate and select a new student information system for Leon County Schools, that takes into account the future business and technical needs of the district, student, faculty and staff.

2. Strategic Business Drivers

   The forces urging us forward are particularly strong at this time. These are the primary business drivers:

   - Changing K-12 education environment
   - Loss of vendor support
     - Declining use at peer districts
     - Dated technology
     - Staffing concerns
   - Opportunities presented by new technology
   - User support for change

   These business drivers push us forward from a risk and compliance standpoint, and/or pull us forward from an opportunity standpoint. Student Information Systems play key roles in fulfilling our mission and in meeting the strategic initiatives of the District.

   **Changing K-12 education environment**

   The business environment and fundamental needs of K-12 education have changed in the last ten years, and the ability of the current SIS to adapt to these changes has decreased over time.

   **Loss of vendor support**

   In June 2014 the district was notified that several critical components of the SIS would be phased out in 2016. An unsupported system will be more costly (perhaps prohibitively so) for LCS to maintain, and puts the district at risk of a system failure. This loss of vendor support creates several related business drivers:
Declining use at peer districts
Of the 10 original users of the SIS, 6 will have moved to new systems by 2016, and the remainder will like move in the next few years. As the number of user district shrinks, LCS loses both vendor leverage, and a qualified pool of potential new hires with experience with this product and its technical components.

Dated technology
The current version of SIS is based on dated technology that is no longer mainstream, and that will not be significantly improved moving forward. This limits LCS’s ability to upgrade functions, interface with other applications and perform system maintenance.

Staffing concerns
The combination of loss of vendor support, loss of peer users and aging technology presents LCS with a staffing risk, since the pool of individuals with experience with this application is shrinking. This is further complicated by loss of (7) critical IT district personnel to retirement in the next 2 years.

Opportunities presented by new technology
In the nearly ten years since the current SIS was implemented, both the functionality and technology of “off the shelf” software systems have dramatically improved. Moving to a new application will provide for a much more intuitive, easier to use system, easier and broader access to information, and greater flexibility to meet centralized and decentralized needs, and LCS’s evolving needs. Also, today’s students, parents and teachers expect nearly continuous and real-time access to information systems. The current SIS doesn’t allow this, and its core design and technology will never truly allow this.

User support for change
During the introduction of a new gradebook, student, teacher and parent portal in 2013 there was significant support for replacing the current SIS system. Feedback indicated a desire to move to a system that was easier to use, and more flexible. This confluence of user and community support should not be wasted.
3. Project Approach

The project timeline is aggressive. Aggressive timelines require rapid decision-making and the project will work in this fashion. Structures are set up to support knowledgeable and empowered decision-making. Proven methodologies will be employed.

Based on LCS’s experience and best practices, there is a set of critical success factors that will guide us in planning and executing the overall project.

- Formal project management
- Inclusive project governance
- Adopt best practices
- Transparent project decision making
- Open and effective communication
- Balance of scope and needs
- Moratorium on new projects

**Formal project management**
LCS will implement and execute formal project management processes to ensure the success of this project. These will be based on project management best practices and lessons learned from previous implementation projects at LCS, and will be adapted to the specific needs and structure of this project.

**Inclusive project governance**
LCS will establish a project governance structure that involves teachers and staff; and system administration; and executives, functional and technical system users appropriately. This structure, those appointed to it, and their associated responsibilities will be made publicly available on the project website.

**Adopt best practices**
LCS will adopt “best business practices” that have been built into the functionality of the SIS and related products through the purchase of a highly configurable system. If any modification of the base is needed, it will be held to an absolute minimum. Modifications occur only after requests undergo a defined review process and, when deemed to be necessary, are approved by the Project Steering Committee in the context of their instructional mission criticality, pertinent legal and regulatory requirements, and cost effectiveness.

**Transparent project decision making**
LCS will establish a decision-making process that is transparent, clearly documented and that takes into account the different kinds of decisions (strategic, tactical, and operational) and the scope of effect (system configuration, school, district-wide, etc.) these decisions may have. Decisions will be made by the appropriate groups or individuals.

**Open and effective communication**
The project will include full, open and collaborative communication to all district and other affected stakeholders.
**Balance of scope and needs**
LCS will make every effort to achieve the best balance between a technology replacement project, and one including business processes improvement. In the functional vs. technical balance, functional weighs more than technical—functional processes and needs are the core.

**Moratorium on new projects**
Systems initiatives, improvements, new projects, existing systems or enhancements that represent significant investments by the District and that compete for the same set of resources related to the student information system, including “bolt-ons” to the SIS software and database and/or independent initiatives in departments, schools, or programs across the District, are not developed during the SIS planning and implementation timeline without approval of the Project Steering Committee through a defined process and format.
4. Project Structure

A. Organizational Chart

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Project Management Office
March 17, 2015
Version 4.0

Version 4.0
March 17, 2015

Roles and Responsibilities

- Review decisions made by the Project Steering Committee
- Communicate plans, status, and decisions regarding SIS vendor selection process to the School Board.
- Provide overall leadership and direction in LCS’s SIS software evaluation and implementation services selection project
- Provide input into the development of the RFI documents and give final approval prior to their release
- Provide guidance on questions raised by the Project Team
- Review and score RFI responses using predetermined vendor evaluation criteria
- Review the Project Team’s recommendation for software vendor finalists to invite to the district for scripted demos and presentations
- Make final decision on software vendor finalists to invite to the district
- Participate in vendor scripted demos
- Score results of scripted demos and presentations
- Review the Project Team’s preferred SIS software services provider recommendation and summary analysis
- Make final decision on LCS’s preferred SIS software services provider
- Communicate all decisions with the Project Sponsors

- Take an enterprise view of the District’s SIS software implementation selection process
- Provide input in defining the scope of LCS’s SIS implementation
- Define business scenarios for vendor scripted demos
- Develop and finalize functional and technical requirements
- Complete RFI edit / review assignments
- Review and provide feedback on the draft RFI(s)
- Review and score RFI responses using predetermined vendor evaluation criteria
- Recommend to the Steering Committee software vendor finalists to invite to the district for scripted demos and presentations
- Participate in vendor scripted demos and presentations
- Score results of scripted demos and presentations
- Review all data collected, prepare a summary analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the SIS finalists, and recommend preferred SIS software implementation services providers to the Steering Committee
- Participate in vendor scripted demos and presentations
- Score results of scripted demos and implementer presentations
- Assess the financial strength and stability of vendors that respond to the RFI
- Review and analyze vendor project cost data from vendor RFI responses
- Summarize vendor cost data and present to the Project Advisory Team and Steering Committee
- Communicate all decisions with the Project Advisory Team

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B. Roles and Responsibilities

Project Steering Committee

Co-chaired by the Divisional Directors for Elementary and Secondary Schools. Consists of Executive level administrators representing all aspects of the district that are significantly involved and/or affected by the project. Primary oversight body for the project. Also responsible for providing support when necessary and for championing of the project.

Co-Chairs:

Randy Pridgion, Divisional Director, Secondary Schools
Peggy Youngblood, Divisional Director, Elementary Schools

Members:
Barbara Wills, Assistant Superintendent, Professional and Community Services,
Scotty Crowe, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Learning
Alan Cox, Divisional Director, Exceptional Student Education & Coordinated School Health
Kathleen L. Rodgers, Divisional Director, Intervention, Equity and Support Services
Bev Owens, Administrator, Staffing Services
Merrill Wimberley, Chief Financial Officer, Budget
Bill Nimmons, Director, T&IS

**Project Advisory Committee**
Co-chaired by Principals. This is the central management team for the project. It is empowered to make almost all necessary decisions. When necessary it will refer important and difficult decisions to the Project Steering Committee. Consists of school based and district level staff primarily involved in the operational use of the SIS on a representative basis. Responsible for ensuring that the project and the various stakeholders stay connected by representing concerns from one to another.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Assistant Principals</th>
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<tr>
<td>Allen Burch, Lincoln High</td>
<td>Lisa Urban, Conley Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joe Burgess, Chiles High</td>
<td>Ava Williams, Hartsfield Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda Wagner, Killearn Lakes Elem</td>
<td>Vivian Cooley, Rickards High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Small, Springwood Elementary</td>
<td>Mike Holmes, Cobb Middle</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tim Girard, Raa Middle</td>
<td>Tammy Barr, Swift Creek Middle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cari Molinaro, Godby High</td>
<td>Kim Kennett, Roberts Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betsy Penn, Sullivan Elementary</td>
<td>Tameka Reilly, Pineview Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa Akinsola, Ruediger Elementary</td>
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**District Staff**
Dr. Michelle Gayle, Divisional Director, Teaching & Learning
Gillian Gregory, Director, Assessment
Jamie Holleman, School Choice
Susan Bentley, ESE
Kim Scott, Guidance Counselor
Darren Wallace, AP, Intervention Services
Brian Boyd, Applications Director, Technology & Information Services
Art Odeneal, Supervisor, Technology & Information Services
Core Functional Team
Provides functional and technical expertise in both the current SIS and application areas. Consists of Technical & Information Services staff and other school and district based Subject Matter Experts in the Student Information System.

- Transfers knowledge to project advisory team.
- Provides functional and technical guidance to the project advisory team.
- Assists with the creation of project deliverables such as Site Surveys and Functional and Technical requirements
- Evaluate RFI responses

Project Management Office
Consists of the Project Director, Project Managers and Business Analysts. Primary responsibilities include facilitation, consulting, and project management support. Other duties include

- Construct RFI for SIS software implementation services and submit for review
- Analyze and summarize all data collected to help make decisions and recommendations
- Review RFI responses for minimum qualifications and communicate results to the Steering Committee and Project Advisory Team
- Coordinate with Purchasing to provide input during RFI development and vendor negotiations

Members:

- Johnny Nash, Project Director
- Lara Bunowske, Project Manager
- Business Analyst

Vendor Demo Evaluation Team
Team consists of various interested stakeholders in the district. Responsibilities include participation in vendor scripted demos and presentations and the scoring of scripted demos and implementer presentations.

Vendor Viability & Cost Analysis Team
Chaired by the CFO. Assess the financial strength and viability of vendors that respond to the RFI, Review and analyze vendor project cost data (from vendor RFI responses; Summarize vendor cost data and present to the Project Advisory Team and Project Steering Committee.
### 5. Project Management Strategies

There are several steps involved in a SIS software and implementation services selection strategy, summarized below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Selection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish governance framework</td>
<td>Evaluate vendor responses and perform gap analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct market analysis</td>
<td>Site Visits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop detailed functional, technical, budgetary and other requirements</td>
<td>Onsite scripted demos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop scoring model</td>
<td>Select SIS and Implementation Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Request for Information (RFI)</td>
<td>Contract signed by board</td>
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<td>Perform district readiness assessment</td>
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#### A. Planning

**Establish Governance Framework**
The first task is identification of executive level project sponsorship. Once establish these individual(s) are tasked with convening a Project Steering Committee containing leadership from the various affected stakeholders. In conjunction with an established PMO the Project Steering Committee will define and appoint advisory groups to assist in the selection process.

**Conduct Market Analysis**
Conduct market gap analysis of leading student information systems in use in the State of Florida. The Project Management Office will perform a high level gap analysis between the district functional requirements and the major student information systems in use in the State. A report will be provided to the Project Steering Committee to assist in the selection of vendors invited to participate in the RFI.

**Detailed Requirements**
The PMO and the Project Advisory Team will examine the business processes, perform a full needs assessment and develop requirements for the district. The “as-is” and “to-be” work flow of business functions will be documented as well as requirements.

**Develop Scoring Model**
Scoring will be based on how well a given SIS software maps to all of LCS’s needs. The first step in creating a scoring model is to develop detailed requirements. Many of these requirements have already been identified and documented in the previous step. However these need to be brought together into one list, reviewed and refined. Also, the requirements will be divided into different major categories. This helps to identify which individuals
should be involved in refining requirements and evaluating responses, and also to establish the “weight” each requirement might have in the overall score.
The graph below contains sample categories LCS might use. These include:

1. **Total Cost of Ownership**: What will it cost LCS to purchase the licenses, hardware and resources needed to implement and maintain a system over a period of years?

2. **Vendor Vision**: How well does the vendor’s vision for the future strategic direction of their company and this product map to LCS’s future vision of needs in this area?

3. **Vendor Support**: What support does the vendor provide in terms of regular updates, response to customization requests and the larger user community? How well is vendor support perceived by other users?

4. **Vendor Sustainability**: Assessment of vendor with respect to their:
   - Financial strength.
   - Vendor’s business model.
   - Capacity to supply the appropriate products and services.
   - Capabilities – what it can and cannot do or provide.
   - Turnover and profit levels.
   - Reputation.
   - Payment terms.
   - Ability to implement a solution if services are being purchased.
   - Availability of experienced staff.

5. **Technical Architecture**: Is the application based on technology that is robust, proven, flexible and likely to be mainstream for at least the next 10 to 20 years? How many current users of this technology exist?

6. **Functionality**: Is the system configurable, flexible, and usable? How easy is it to integrate with other systems? How easy is it to extend system functionality without significant vendor input? How easily will LCS be able to tailor the individual user experience with regard to usability, reporting, interfacing, documentation and training?

This is a sample graph:
**Issue Request for Information (RFI)**
There are several possible vendor response approaches LCS can take. In order to maximize LCS’s confidence in the accuracy of estimated project costs (financial and other), and the ability of a candidate vendor’s system to meet LCS’s needs while limiting LCS’s financial exposure. To this end we will employ a blended vendor selection strategy that quantifies the ability of the vendor’s solution to meet LCS current and anticipated future requirements, assesses the long term viability of the underlying technology and elicits feedback from existing customers.

The PMO will prepare and issue a “limited response” RFI to select vendors. The response will be limited to a predetermined length as determined by the Project Steering Committee. The goal is to formally narrow the field to only those vendors whose products can support a district of the size and complexity of LCS.

**B. Selection**

**Evaluate RFI Responses**
The Project Advisory Committee reviews and scores all responses. Identify possible vendor system weaknesses through discussion with other districts, vendor user groups and implementation or consulting partners. Develop scripted demonstration or Use Case examples for critical application functions or areas; those that are potentially weak in the candidate systems; and those where LCS is known to have unique or heavily customized processes.

**Site Visits**
Project Advisory Team will select and visit customer sites to elicit feedback on the SIS systems under consideration.

**Onsite Scripted Demos**
Vendors will be invited to perform onsite scripted demonstrations and/or Use Cases, as previously defined by LCS staff. The Project Advisory Committee and the Vendor Demo team reviews and scores the vendor demos.

**Select SIS Software and Implementation Services**
The Project Advisory Team will collect and evaluate all data generated and consider input from the various teams and committees. The Project Advisory Team will submit a final report to the Project Steering Committee.

The Project Steering Committee will consider the report and input from the various committees. Apply the data to the scoring model and make a recommendation for purchase.
6. Project Communication Strategy

A. Benefits

The rumor mill is often one of the strongest and potentially most destructive forces in the District. Lack of correct understanding about a project may produce resistance to the change effort. If this resistance is strong enough within the District, the project risks failure. Typically, employees prefer to receive news of an impending change through their normal communication channels.

Ideally, messages should precede the change as far in advance as possible in order to provide the stakeholders with enough time to understand what is happening and why. The Communication Strategy and Plan will be designed to provide the right information, at the right time, to the right audience.

The expected benefits of a planned, targeted Communications Program include:

- Increased credibility of the change process by involving stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the SIS Software and Implementation Services Selection project
- Reduced impact of rumors and negative perceptions as accurate and consistent information is assembled and distributed on a proactive basis
- Increased satisfaction through the management of stakeholder expectations
- Increased understanding of the goals and objectives of the project

B. Purpose

The purpose of the Communication Strategy is to define the overall approach that will be used in conducting the communication activities for the SIS Software and Implementation Services Selection. Its primary goal is to provide timely, accurate, essential project related information to all stakeholders. A secondary goal is to aid the Project Team and LCS Leadership in managing Stakeholder expectations.

The Communication Strategy has four components:

- Communication Principles
- Audience Definition
- Communication Roadmap
- Communication Media Definition

The Communications plan addresses the following stakeholders:

- District Leadership
- Project Committees
- School Based Leadership (Principals, APAs, APC’s)
- School Based Staff (Teachers, Registrars, Counselors)
- District Staff (Curriculum, Assessment, ESE, Intervention)
- Parents
- Students
- External Stakeholders (DAC, Union, etc...)
C. Communications Plan

Under the direction of the Project Steering Committee the PMO will create a communication plan that will direct the actual preparation and delivery of the communication materials. It defines the specific communications to be prepared and delivered, the timing for each communication, and who the communication messenger is.

The elements of the Communication Plan will identify:

- **WHO** Spokesperson and influencers
- **SAYS WHAT** Key messages
- **TO WHOM** Target audiences
- **HOW** Channels or communication media
- **WHEN** Timing and frequency

D. Communications Principles

Communication principles help to ensure consistency and effectiveness in the communication process. At the beginning of the communications planning process, communication principles will be set out so that there are clear directives that the entire Communications Team have agreed upon and that Management has approved.
7. Preliminary Project Timeline

At this early stage of the project the timeline is very high level, and summarizes major phases. This timeline will be updated as upcoming project decision points are successfully passed, and project details and timing are better understood.

The timeframes below are estimates from the start of formal project initiation and assume a March 2015 start time. Specific dates will be established upon approval of the project charter and may be revised with input from the project team.

A. Planning Phase

- Establish Governance Framework: March 2015, 2 weeks
- Conduct Market Gap Analysis: March 2015, 2 weeks
- Develop Functional and Technical Requirements: March – April 2015
- Develop Scoring Model: March – April 2015, 4 weeks
- Issue Request for Information (RFI): May 2015, 3 weeks
- Perform District Readiness Assessment: March 2015 – April 2015

B. Selection Phase

- Evaluate RFI Responses: June 2015, 2 weeks
- Site Visits: June 2015, 3 weeks
- Onsite Demos: July 2015, 2 weeks
- Select SIS and Implementation Services: July 2015 – August 2015
- Contract executed by Board: August 2015

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<td>Market Analysis</td>
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<td>Scoring Model</td>
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<td>Detailed Functional Requirements</td>
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<td>Issue RFI</td>
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<td>Evaluate RFI Responses</td>
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<td>Onsite Demos</td>
<td>July 2015</td>
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<td>Select SIS</td>
<td>July 2015</td>
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<td>Contract signed</td>
<td>August 2015</td>
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## 8. Project Charter Acceptance

The following signatures indicate approval to proceed with the above-described action for this project. This charter will be reviewed, communicated, and revised by the PMO if the scope, goals and objectives or project authorization change.

**Project Steering Committee**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Randy Pridgeon, Divisional Director, Secondary Schools</td>
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<td>Alan Cox, Divisional Director, Exceptional Student Education &amp; Coordinated School Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathleen L. Rodgers, Ph.D. – Divisional Director, Intervention, Equity and Support Services</td>
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<td>Bev Owens, Administrator, Staffing Services</td>
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<td>Merrill Wimberley, Chief Financial Officer, Budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bill Nimmons, Director, T&amp;IS</td>
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**cc:** Jackie Pons, Superintendent, Office of the Superintendent  
Marvin Henderson, Deputy Superintendent, Office of the Deputy Superintendent  
June Kail, Director, Purchasing  
Chris Petley, Communications  
Brian Boyd, Director, Applications-T&IS  
Art Odeneal, Supervisor, User Support Services-T&IS