



Date: March 11, 2021

To: Superintendent Oquist & LPS Board of Education

From: Anthony Abbate, Director of Personnel & District Services  
Alison Smith, Director of Finance

Re: **Benefits Administration System**

As part of an ongoing effort to streamline our processes and gain efficiencies, we have been engaged in a study of competing benefits administration (ben admin) programs with the goal of selecting a product that both meets the needs of our district and is priced within a range that would be agreeable to the Board of Education. We enlisted the help of our insurance broker, Gallagher Benefit Services, to analyze available ben admin technology.

The purpose of the system is to dramatically streamline the enrollment and administration of employee benefits. The employee benefit enrollment process is currently done by paper and the work of our Benefit Specialists involves a huge amount of manual data entry, namely transferring items from hand-written forms to electronic fields on various websites. This can be quite inefficient due to the sheer volume of information that must be gathered and manually entered for our nearly 2,000 staff members. We believe it is time to update our processes with a more technologically driven approach.

The expectation is that implementation of a ben admin program will give our Benefits Specialists the modern tools they need to best ensure the timely and correct enrollment/cancelation of benefits across our employee groups, thereby saving a great deal of time and minimizing complications that sometimes lead to losses for the District.

Gallagher Benefit Services identified three possible options that would meet the needs the District is seeking to address. The three products researched were: Benefitfirst, Benefitsolver, and Web Benefit Design. Considering a comparison of features and costs, and weighing those considerations against our District's needs, the clear choice moving forward for our eventual recommendation is Benefitfirst. The annual cost for Benefitfirst is approximately \$100,000 per year. This company provides private, cloud-based management of employees' entire benefit cycle. Staff members are empowered by a user-friendly signup portal for their benefits, which will be customized for our District, and have access to many informative videos and tutorials to assist with understanding benefits and enrolling properly. Among a wide range of features, the Benefitfirst program offers the following highlights:

- A robust online enrollment system
- Management of ongoing eligibility data
- Creation of/support for payroll deduction/reconciliation files

- ACA administration
- COBRA administration
- Communication and enrollment material services
- A mobile app for staff use
- Routine audits/reports, accuracy checking
- Billing management/support

We would like to discuss this topic at the March 15, 2021 Finance Committee meeting. Please include this item on the agenda.