



Executive Summary Finance Committee Meeting

DATE: July 23, 2020

TOPIC: Newsela Essentials Renewal for the 2020-21 School Year

PREPARED BY: David Russo

Recommended for:

- Action
- Discussion
- Information

Purpose/Background:

The Board approves all contracts.

Newsela is a website that provides a range of articles on current events or relevant topics in English/language arts, science, math, and social studies. Articles are presented in five different reading levels; which students can select to best meet their needs. Vocabulary is adjusted to allow the information to be more accessible to students. Articles contain information that is high interest, which can supplement students' understanding for a topic.

This past year (2019-2020) the District added a subscription to Newsela Pro, which allows teachers to track performance on reading assignments, create custom instructions and activities, annotate articles for students, and access professional development. Additionally, this subscription level afforded access to teacher resources for all current events articles and student activities to build comprehension and engagement. The product has been rebranded as Newsela Essentials, but retains the same level of functionality.

Students at Rutledge Hall and Lincoln Hall read over 13,500 articles on the platform in 2019-2020. This request includes addition of the subscription for Todd Hall.

District Legal Counsel reviewed the Customer Agreement and suggested that the District go back to the vendor requesting an automatic subscription renewal clause be eliminated from the Terms. Newsela was willing to take this clause out of the Terms.

Additionally, the vendor was requested to eliminate clauses related to arbitration, change the state law governing the Agreement to Illinois, and the venue of any potential litigation to the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois. Newsela agreed to each of the requests. These were the same changes made to the Customer Agreement in 2019-2020.

Fiscal Impact:

The cost of Newsela Essentials for a one-year subscription for Todd Hall, Rutledge Hall, and Lincoln Hall is \$8,990. The subscription cost for 2019-2020 was \$8,200. The cost will be offset by Title I Grant dollars.

Recommendation:

It is the Administrative recommendation that the Finance Committee concurs to recommend to the Board of Education to approve this Customer Agreement from Newsela for Newsela Essentials in the amount of \$8,990 from August 5, 2020 to August 4, 2021.