



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

970 Madison ▪ Oak Park ▪ Illinois ▪ 60302 ▪ ph: 708.524.3000 ▪ fax: 708.524.3019 ▪ www.op97.org

TO: Dr. Albert G. Roberts, Superintendent of Schools
FROM: Therese M. O'Neill, Asst. Supt. Finance & Operations
SUBJECT: Classroom Furniture – Phase 2
DATE: April 8, 2013

In December 2010, Lowery McDonnell conducted a walk-through of all our elementary schools to assess the age and quality of all classroom furniture (both student and teacher) by school and grade level, and prepared an analysis which became the blueprint for dollars contained in our referendum vision for furniture replacement.

With the commencement of the 2011-12 school year, the eight elementary principals and I worked to create classroom standards – one for Kindergarten, First and Second grade classrooms and the second for Third, Fourth and Fifth grade classrooms. Once that was completed, each principal took a grade level and met with the respective grade level teachers to derive their input to these standards. Then we came back together, as a group, with this grade level teacher input, and finalized these standards in order to create the bid document.

Over the summer of 2012, Beye School was completely emptied out and then fully outfitted with all brand new student/teacher furniture. It was suggested, upon reporting to the Board the completion of this project, that perhaps a survey of Beye staff be undertaken to assess success of Phase 1. A survey was conducted and provided to all teachers at Beye School and the following are the concerns raised and remedies resulting:

1. Student Storage Cabinets (two per room) are too tall for kindergarten students.
REMEDY: Teachers have option to choose three shorter cabinets in lieu of the taller ones.
Cost implication: \$2,975
2. Student desk are too difficult to move on carpeted floors.
REMEDY: Carpet glide caps were added (and will be added) to desks on carpeted floors.
3. It's difficult to clean pencil and marker stains on desks and table surfaces.
REMEDY: Identification of proper cleaning supplies occurred.
4. Some teachers did not like the shape of the new style student desk.
REMEDY: The style was selected for teaming projects; therefore, growing to accept this choice will take some time.

5. Learning carpets are too small to hold entire class of students at one time.
REMEDY: Larger learning carpets are specified for classrooms going forward.
Cost implication: \$3,264
6. Student storage cabinet doors won't stay closed unless locked.
REMEDY: Existing cabinets were retrofitted and manufacturer has corrected the doors on new cabinets.
7. Some teachers felt mobile lecterns were not needed in K, 1 and 2 classrooms.
REMEDY: After surveying the teacher it was noted that some do use them. Therefore, lecterns remain part of standard given that teachers change from year to year.
8. Book boxes on the student desks are too small and items fall out.
REMEDY: Inform teachers that book boxes are not designed to hold everything – that's why the student storage bins have been provided.

Prior to commencing Phase 2 which involved Hatch, Lincoln and Mann Schools, survey results were shared with these three respective principals, along with recommended remedies; principal Ellwanger invited his three colleagues over to Beye for a "field trip" including their entire staffs, is so desired to see in person furniture; and each principal reviewed concerns and remedies with each of his/her respective staffs and concurrence was derived by all to move forward.

Therefore, a bid document was prepared with a legal notice appearing in the Oak Leaves on _____, calling for a bid opening on March 28, 2013 and an "equal to" meeting on March 21, 2013. In the event any vendor had furniture "equal to" what was specified on the bid, an opportunity to present it was provided. Other than a representative from Lowery McDonnell, no other vendor presented for the "equal to" meeting.

Three firms requested the bid document and these were:

1. Villa Park Office Equipment
2. KI – manufacturer of Educational Furniture
3. Lowery McDonnell

On March 28, 2013, only one bid was received and that was from Lowery McDonnell. I contacted the other two firms who requested specifications and inquired why they did not respond. Below is verbatim their responses:

1. Villa Park Office Equipment ("most of the companies requested on the bid, we do not deal with so they decided not to bid").
2. KI – ("our IT department was unable to open the bid document").

The total anticipated cost of this work, prior to adjusting to a more ergonomically desired student chair (as identified by the board when presented last year), shorter student cabinets (at kindergarten) and larger learning carpet, was \$598,300 (\$161,100-Hatch; \$233,200-Lincoln; \$204,000-Mann). However, the bid received totaled \$637,557.30 or an approximate 6.56% increase over estimated budget.

The original student chair's unit price was \$28.50 vs. \$42.60 for the 14"; \$29.30 vs. \$44.00 for 16"; and \$31.10 vs. \$45.50 for the 18" or, an additional cost of \$37,245. This amount, plus the additional \$2,975 for the shorter student cabinets and \$3,264 for the longer learning carpets, totals \$43,484. The difference between the bid amount \$637,557.30 (exclusive of the \$25,000) and the original budget of \$598,300 is \$39,257.30.

Overall, the bid totals \$662,557.30 due to both the desired student chair increase and the \$25,000 allowance which covers:

1. Relocating existing classroom furniture to a central location within each of the three schools.
2. Working with school staff to determine which furniture is to be disposed of, donated or relocated to other schools in the district.
3. Executing the final furniture removal/relocation plan in an orderly fashion.

Further, the bid document reads: "The Owner will require detailed itemization and back up of all pre-approved costs incurred in the execution of this work. Daily work tickets indicating manpower levels, hours worked and prevailing wage rate are to be signed by the Owner and submitted with pay applications against the allowance. Any unused allowance will be returned to the Owner in the form of a deduct Change Order to the contract amount." When this work was done last year for Beye, the allowance was \$10,000; however, only \$4,300 was expended. With three schools being emptied out and completely replaced, the reason for the higher allowance of \$25,000 but it is hoped, as what occurred last year, that the actual expenditure will be lower than estimated.

Although only one bid was received, the experience of last year with Lowery McDonnell was exceptional and it is anticipated that the same will be true this year with Phase 2. It is recommended that award of this bid to Lowery McDonnell in the amount of \$662,000 be recommended to the Board for consideration and that this return, as an action item, at the April 23, 2013 meeting. With approval, the window of time for ordering and receipt prior to opening of school is sound.

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attachment (1)