NCDPI Business Modernization Project- 2nd Time Around

The objective is to modernize the financial and human resource computer software systems currently in place at the District and State levels. This project was initiated in 2019, but it was postponed by the COVID Pandemic. In 2024, the project was restarted and will require Montgomery County Schools to adopt a new budgeting software system by July 1st of 2026.


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Why the Need to Modernize?

- Many school districts and DPI are using financial and human resource (HR) software programs that were developed in the 1990s, the equivalent of still using the old rotary style phone.
- These programs do not provide many of the advantages that new technology offers.

Advantages Offered by a Modern System

- Cloud based – information stored off-site, user can work from any location, using any connected device.
- Integrated finance and HR systems that talk to one another.
- Reduces the need for paper.
- Allows customized reporting options.
- Provides dashboard options catered to the unique needs of the individual's job function.
- Enables information to be more easily transferred between the districts and DPI.

Which Vendors Offer a Modern School Finance Accounting System?

- During the 1st attempt, the state selected two vendors that were new to NC Public School Finance:
- **Tyler Technologies** – Target market is state and local governmental agencies, including many municipalities in NC. They serve 13,900 school districts across the US.
- **CherryRoad/Oracle** – Provides database software and technology systems to clients around the world. Founded in 1977, their systems can be tailored to fit any business or governmental application. They have over 1000 K-12 clients.
- Before MCS made their selection, the COVID Pandemic halted the selection process.

Additional Providers Are Now Available

- The COVID delay enabled two providers that have worked with NC Public Schools since the 1990s, **Lync** and **SunPac**, to develop and offer financial software programs that meet the criteria of a modern system.
- **Lync** developed their own web-based program that many of their district users adopted.
- **SunPac**, the current provider for Montgomery County Schools, merged with a school-based accounting software provider named **Sylogist**, providing SunPac with a web-based alternative for its users. Sylogist was founded by a retired schoolteacher in the 1990s that now serves 90% of the districts in Oklahoma. Her children now manage the company.

Which Vendor is Best for Montgomery County Schools?

- Our district staff has attended presentations by all four vendors.
- Tyler and CherryRoad both had issues in adjusting to the complexities of NC Public School Finance. The few districts who selected these programs probably regret their choice. Gaston County struggled for a year to provide an accurate payroll, leaving their staff very dissatisfied.
- The Lync option works, but the company has recently been sold and there have been user complaints about customer service and a lack of response to fix problems.
- Sylogist has combined key staff members from SunPac with an experienced Sylogist staff that offers a web-based accounting software currently used by 90% of the school districts in Oklahoma. They have developed a reputation for a commitment to client service and satisfaction and want to offer their solution to other states.

There are two price components: The **Annual Subscription Fee** and a **One Time Implementation Fee**

- Our current system with Sunpac has an annual fee of $28,000.
- Sylogist's annual fee is approximately $25,000.
- Lync's annual fee is approximately $25,000.
- Tyler Technology's annual fee…….$7/student = $28,777.
- CherryRoad/Oracle's annual fee…….$9/student = $36,990.
- Price is frozen for 5 years.
- The new program we select will enable the district to eliminate several complementary add on budget software programs, saving an additional $25,000 per year.

The Cost of Implementing the New Program

- Implementation for Tyler and CherryRoad is estimated at $104,000.
- Implementation was expected to last 12 months.
- Sylogist and Lync implementation cost is about $50,000.00
- Because of their familiarity of NC Public school finance, implementation for Sylogist and Lync is only 4 to 6 months.

Reasons Sylogist is the Recommended Option for Montgomery County Schools

- Asheboro City Schools went live with Sylogist in July. The Finance Officer has been pleased with the decision. We plan to visit them in the next few months for a live demonstration.
- Currently there are 37 districts using the old SunPac system. Most have committed to adopting Sylogist. Several districts that initially chose one of the other vendors, are also switching to Sylogist.
- Our two trusted primary contacts at SunPac will be involved in our transition.
- They recognize the uniqueness of public-school finance in NC and are making their system fit us instead of making us fit their system.
- If approved, Montgomery County Schools would go live in January 2026.