

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Recommendation to Approve Agreement FY21-116 – Software for Vocabulary Improvement

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#### Introduction

##### Responsible: Procurement & Warehousing Services (PWS)

This request is to approve the Agreement between Thinkmap, Inc. and The School Board of Broward County, Florida (SBBC), for one (1) year starting August 1, 2020 through July 31, 2021, with the option to renew for two (2) additional one (1) year periods. The agreement provides a platform for systematic and lasting vocabulary improvement that goes beyond rote memorization to teach all the meanings and subtle nuances of words.

The spending authority being requested is \$406,250.

#### Goods/Services Description:

##### Responsible: Innovative Learning

Thinkmap, Inc. has created Vocabulary.com, a platform for systematic and lasting vocabulary improvement that goes beyond rote memorization to teach all the meanings and subtle nuances of words. Backed by research and currently used in schools, the vendor believes there is no magic bullet when it comes to building a student's vocabulary, and has developed a system that will analyze the content being taught, identifies the vocabulary necessary for comprehension, and provides differentiated instruction for each student. Vocabulary.com takes a research-based approach to teaching vocabulary and is adaptive in meeting students at their ability level. Students are exposed to multiple question types and contexts, as they believe understanding how words work in a broader linguistic framework has been shown to provide greater understanding as students encounter new words. Vocabulary.com teaches words by systematically exposing the student to a wide array of question types and activities that will help the student understand the meanings and nuances of every word the student is learning.

Students are asked questions on the essential definitions of a word while playing and interacting with Vocabulary.com words. 'Mastery' of a word occurs once the student has correctly answered questions representing all definitions of the word. Typically, a student will interact, or 'play' a word over multiple sessions or day before reaching word mastery and earning the one thousand (1,000) point bonus for mastering the word.

The amount of time it takes to 'master' a word depends on the following factors:

1. **How many meanings a word has.** Vocabulary.com presents their questions in such a way that the student masters the easiest definitions first, and then moves on to the difficult meanings later.
2. **How many questions a student gets right/wrong.** Student's independent answers to the questions for each word is dependent on the number of questions the student will receive for that question. Wrong answers = more questions.
3. **How many other words the student is learning at the same time.** Students have the ability to choose the number of words that they are learning at one (1) time. This choice is made by electing to individually learn a word or selecting to 'learn this list.'

Once a student achieves mastery of a word, Vocabulary.com periodically provides 'brush-up' questions to ensure that the student retains everything they've learned. The more often a student struggled with the word initially, the more often the student will see the brush-up questions after mastery has occurred.

Vocabulary.com partners with Secondary Learning to create playable word lists that align with the scope and sequence for middle and high school courses. The use of this product allows the teacher to seamlessly integrate highly engaging instructional activities for students during remote learning due to COVID-19 quarantine and future distance learning activities. Vocabulary.com's Learning Tool Integration allows teachers to create Canvas assignments for students to work within the Vocabulary.com platform, and for their grades to be passed back to Canvas with one (1) click into Pinnacle.

**Recommendation to Approve Agreement  
FY21-116 – Software for Vocabulary Improvement  
July 21, 2020 Board Agenda  
Page 2**

Detailed reports and averages based on the usage of this software over the past year are included further in this document; however, we have included a few highlights shown below:

- Over one hundred three thousand (103,000) students in grades 5-12 have answered ninety-four point seven (94.7) million questions and mastered four point nine (4.9) million academic vocabulary words to date.
- Margate Middle School answered more than six (6) million questions and mastered more than three hundred eight thousand (308,000) words to secure second place in the National Middle School Division of the Vocabulary.com Vocabulary Bowl for the 2019-2020 school year.
- Hollywood Hills High School answered more than four point eight (4.8) million questions and mastered more than two hundred seventy-one thousand (271,000) words to secure fourth place in the National High School Division of the 2019-2020 Vocabulary Bowl Competition.
- Hollywood Hills, Flanagan, Charles W., and Cooper City high schools ranked in the top twenty (20) high schools in the nation for the 2019-2020 Vocabulary Bowl Competition.
- Falcon Cove, Margate, Pines, Westglades, and William Dandy Middle schools ranked in the top twenty (20) middle schools in the nation for the 2019-2020 Vocabulary Bowl Competition.
- Thirteen (13) Broward County Middle Schools and fourteen (14) High Schools ranked in the of the top twenty (20) in Florida for the 2019-2020 Vocabulary Bowl Competition.

Vocabulary.com Highlights and Updates 2019-2020

As mentioned above, please find data extracted in regard to the usage of the software over the past year.

Overall Growth: Words Mastered by Week

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**Recommendation to Approve Agreement  
 FY21-116 – Software for Vocabulary Improvement  
 July 21, 2020 Board Agenda  
 Page 3**

**Top Ten (10) Schools by Number of Active Students**

School	Active Students	Questions Answered	Words Mastered
Taravella High School	2,824	2,004,644	135,248
Miramar High School	2,722	3,027,294	165,736
Piper High School	2,613	1,915,492	99,252
Hollywood Hills High School	2,506	4,867,612	270,176
Everglades High School	2,468	2,890,586	170,704
Blanche Ely High School	2,352	2,709,600	134,001
Falcon Cove Middle School	2,344	1,855,864	122,534
West Broward High School	2,327	1,714,754	134,417
Flanagan, Charles W. High School	2,299	1,770,753	116,360
Cooper City High School	2,221	2,300,622	156,013

**Top Ten (10) Vocabulary Lists**

Top Vocabulary Lists

List Title	Number of Students Working
100 Words Every Middle Schooler Should Know	4,349
The New SAT: Words to Capture Tone - List #1	3,716
The New SAT: Language of the Test - List #1	3,651
The New SAT: Multiple-Meaning Words List #1	2,910
"The Ravine," Vocabulary from the short story	2,620
Power Prefix: anti-	1,962
Power Prefix: dis-	1,941
In a Pickle: Words for When You're in Trouble	1,896
Some Helpful Poetry Terms	1,754
"Of Mice and Men" by John Steinbeck, Chapters 1–2	1,635

**Procurement Method**

**Responsible: PWS**

Pursuant to Rule 6A -1.012, 11(b), and 14, Florida Administrative Code, and Purchasing Policy 3320, Section II.H, authorizes the purchase of any type of copyrighted materials, instructional materials and computer software without competitive solicitations.

**Financial Impact**

The spending authority being requested is \$406,250, as detailed below: The funding source will come from the CARES Act.

District-wide licenses	\$408,000	(136,000 students @ \$4 per student)
Discount	- \$137,750	
<b>Total</b>	<b>= \$406,250</b>	(136,000 students @ approx. \$2.98 per student)

The total price remained consistent for this Agreement. The previous agreement 57-127E started on August 9, 2017 through July 31, 2020, with an approved spending authority of \$1,250,250 for three (3) years. The financial impact amount represents an estimated contract value; however, the amount authorized will not exceed the estimated contract award amount.