

THE IDEA OF A PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AGREEMENT

Who, What and How (Excerpts from Educational Studies)

What should a school district procurement officer ask when he or she sits down with a sales representative from a vendor of digital education products? Who else should be at the table? How do districts and providers become partners in instruction rather than adversaries in negotiation? These are increasingly critical questions as public school districts in the U.S. are under more pressure than ever to buy digital services, hardware and products.

Public debate about increasing technology use in schools has focused on implementation challenges--the technology doesn't work, or adults and students don't know how to use it. But the backstory to the digital surge deserves equal and careful scrutiny. Digital education is nested in a broader trend where public schools and governance structures have come under increasing pressure to contract out core functions. In schools, this means teaching, learning, and assessment.

The ultimate goal for districts is to buy the best product and service for their students. This means buying high-quality programs and hardware accessible to all students that won't waste scarce resources--money and the time of teachers and administrators--or use student data for purposes other than instruction and assessment.

To this end, districts and vendors must consider four questions in any formal or informal contract for Technology and digital learning:

*** What (or who) drives the digital curriculum and the hardware it runs on?

*** What (or who) drives digital instruction and how is it delivered?

*** What (or who) drives assessment and access to data?

*** What can vendors and districts do to ensure that commercial or political interests don't trump student interests?



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The Professional Services Agreement answers all of the above questions.

WHAT: These are increasingly critical questions as public-school districts in the U.S. are under more pressure than ever to buy digital services, hardware and products.

WHO: Important is the Relationship, Preparation, and Mentoring between School Districts and Digital/Hardware Vendors to Ensure that Purchased Products Meet the needs of Students, Teachers and the District. This is the Role of TNT.

HOW: The commitment to a Five-Year Contract, Quarterly Visits by qualified teaching Professionals, will 1. build confidence to use the technology, and 2. time enough that the district will not be jumping to “the Next Best Things”. This long-term relationship builds Loyalty, Trust and most important, Results.



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