

Schools Out Notification System
Implementation Funding Request
Presented to lowAccess Advisory Council
March 8, 2006

Goal:

The goal of this project is to conveniently provide timely, accurate and personalized information about school closings to interested parties such as parents, school employees and the media.

Project Purpose:

The purpose of the project is to create a web-based system to accept and distribute notifications about various school closing events. The system will provide a single point of access for school administrators to initiate the notification process, and will allow anyone to subscribe to notifications on a school or district basis.

The initial user interfaces will be heavily customized for schools, allowing administrators to select from a list of reasons for closing, supply date and time parameters and other information that applies directly to school closings. However, the internal design will be flexible enough to accommodate its future use for other types of notifications such as Amber Alerts and Road Conditions.

Background:

During the winter parents, students and school employees expend a great deal of time and effort trying to determine if there is going to be school. Parents at work wonder if school will dismiss early due to pending weather, and everyone is taken by surprise when non-weather related events cause a school to dismiss early or to open late. This service will remove a great deal of the anxiety that is a result of not knowing. It is intended to provide a standard, consistent method of information delivery.

Request:

ITE continues to sponsor this project. Our original intent was to complete this project with the boundaries of the Small Project funding guidelines. However, the complexity has grown beyond that originally anticipated and so has the cost. At this time the total cost of the project will be \$75,000 of which \$25,000 has already been billed to the Small Projects fund. This request is for the Council to approved funding for the remaining \$50,000 to complete the project. That will result in us having a working system that can accommodate a moderate number of schools. Additional work would be needed as adoption grows to scale the system to accommodate the traffic levels that would result from widespread, statewide adoption.

Cost Avoidance:

Our intent continues to be to provide a free service to assist schools and the citizens of the state. The Waukee school district has been very helpful in providing feedback and advice. They currently run a similar, though much less feature-rich, service for their parents. Dr. Wilkerson, the Waukee superintendent, has indicated that they would be eager to adopt a state service in lieu of running their own local service. Individual school districts will be able to avoid the costs of implementing and maintaining a similar application. A single school district could spend annually from \$3,000 to \$5,000 just for operational and maintenance costs. And there are over 300 school districts in the state.

Interested Parties:

Parties interested in this project include school administrators, parents and guardians of school-age children, the media and day care providers.

Some of the Recipients of this Service:

School administrators, Parents and guardians of school-age children, Media/news outlets, Public Safety personnel