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Distance Education Maintenance Proposal Options

Background Information: At the November 12, 2003 and January 7, 2004 executive council meetings, maintenance of equipment was reviewed. DFS presented a proposal related to maintenance for TVDEC south schools. The proposal could not be approved as it conflicted with the calendar/budget year. It was recommended that maintenance remain the responsibility of John Stritt. In the event that failure problems could not be solved, DFS would be called in for maintenance. Their rate for such a call was \$75 per trip and \$85 per hour based upon half hour increments. TVDEC would be billed for that amount. Current policy dictates that schools were responsible for the cost of this maintenance and would be sent a bill for the charged amount.

Note: Currently, the TVDEC annual budgeted amount for contract labor is \$7,500. For 2003-04, TVDEC contracted with ESU 10 for support services for \$2,435. Past records show that this budgeted amount was seldom used with the balance carried over to the following year.

Proposal options for maintenance: (The following are 3 options for review)

Proposal 1 - Continue the current plan where John Stritt troubleshoots as many of the problems as possible and each school is billed for any charges related to equipment repair or replacement, labor, and trip charges.

Pros -

- Most maintenance problems can be resolved with support of the director.

Cons -

- Director's time and availability is limited.
- As the system gets older, equipment will be wearing out requiring more time and maintenance.
- On some items, a school who doesn't use their system that often may decide not to make the necessary repairs ie - A Gentner sound control replacement unit cost is \$4,000.

Proposal 2 - The budgeted amount will serve as the insurance policy to pay for all labor and trip charges by an outside provider. Any equipment repair or replacement will be the responsibility of member school.

Pros -

- When the director is not available or cannot resolve the problem, an outside maintenance provider can take care of any problem in a timely fashion.
- Membership shares in the labor and trip charges. No approval is needed for doing maintenance from a school district.
- Director would still be the first line of repair limiting the number of maintenance charges.
- As the director may not be available to repair at one school and is available for a different school, this provides a sharing of the cost rather than one school having to pay these charges.

Cons -

- On some items, a school who doesn't use their system that often may decide not to make the necessary repairs ie - A Gentner sound control replacement unit cost is \$4,000.
- Maintenance account reduced with little carryover funds. Consortium dues increase.

Proposal 3 - Maintenance expense will be through the budgeted amount. An amount would be assessed for each member in support of maintenance. Any balance would be carried over into a surplus account for replacement or upgrade of equipment/software. Different levels for maintenance could be established with some or no fiscal responsibility being shared by the district.

Level I - Labor and travel expenses approved and provided by a contracted source.

Level II - Repair and/or replacement expenses on the following equipment pieces - Gentner, Video Switcher, VCR, Document Camera, Camera, TCM's, 485 BUS, Scan Convertors, TV Monitors, Computer and Monitor .

Level III - Repair and/or replacement expenses for microphones

Pros -

- All expenses shared by consortium members.
- As technology gets older, equipment failures will probably increase.
- If all three levels are covered, consortium director can initiate repair in a timely matter.
- Level III items are those that are damaged through negligence. Willful negligence could result in maintenance repair and/or replacement costs being paid by member district.

Cons -

- Increase in yearly consortium dues.
- Determining the maintenance support needed for different systems
 - IP (TVDEC south)
 - JPEG (TVDEC north)
 - Add on devices such as Sony or Polycom CODECs or BNI laptop systems.

As TVDEC director, I believe we should take a more aggressive approach to dealing with maintenance of equipment.

Proposal II would insure that maintenance would take place in a timely fashion. The sharing of the maintenance expenses would insure that a school would not be subject to paying a maintenance charge as a result of the director not being available.

As the equipment gets older, Proposal III would shift the burden of replacement of an expensive component to all members rather than a school. Even though this would require an increase in consortium dues earmarked for maintenance, it would insure that the network be maintained adequately. Unused funds could also support upgrade needs.