

INQUIRY REPORT

Amplify Science Donor

An inquiry was conducted into the anonymous donor that was credited with enabling the district to obtain Amplify Science for schools who applied for a waiver of instructional materials. The inquiry involved an interview with MaryMargaret Welch, a search of district emails, and questioning of Steven Zavari, senior vice president and general manager, science curriculum, at Amplify who provided a sworn affidavit. The emails referenced and sworn affidavit are attached.

On May 10, 2017, MaryMargaret Welch presented at ASU GSV, a conference billed as the “world’s leading education and workforce innovation summit.” The conference is attended by investors, educators, foundations, and the like. At the conference, Ms. Welch presented a seminar in which she discussed the broadening achievement gap due to the lack of technology tools for students of color. Following the presentation, she met someone named Brad who indicated that he was a connection for possible grant funding. Ms. Welch also met Steven Zavari of Amplify who agreed to connect with Brad to see if funding could be pulled together to assist with Seattle Public Schools need for aligned materials by getting Amplify Science into the wavier schools.

Exhibit 1: May 10, 2017 email to Ms. Welch from Mr. Zavari

On May 23, 2017, Ms. Welch followed up with Steven Zavari asking if he had heard anything from Dave about his potential grant funding. She indicates that all of the waivers had been approved by the Superintendent (Larry Nyland), but her funds to purchase licenses and materials is “super limited”.

Exhibit 2: May 23, 2017 email to Mr. Zavari from Ms. Welch

On May 31, 2017, Ms. Welch follows up with Mr. Zavari and asks if there is any update. She indicates she needs to let her teachers know by June 2nd because they have a meeting scheduled one June 6th to plan for the implementation of the instructional materials.

Mr. Zavari responds and says they are actively working on it, bur doubtful they will reach a resolution by Friday. He says that their main funder, “who wishes to remain anonymous”, reached out to a Seattle-based philanthropist with a proposal to split the grant funding. He indicates that he is sorry it is taking longer than they had hoped.

Exhibit 3: May 31, 2017 email to Mr. Zavari from Ms. Welch & May 31, 2017 email to Ms. Welch from Mr. Zavari

On June 2, 2017, Mr. Zavari emails Ms. Welch and indicates they are pushing for a commitment from their funder, but none had been secured yet.

Exhibit 4: June 2, 2017 email to Ms. Welch from Mr. Zavari

On June 5, 2017, Ms. Welch contacts Mr. Zavari and indicates that she has computers and thinks she can figure out the equipment, but can't afford the licenses. She indicates she needs to know about the funding right away because she is meeting with her teachers and school is nearly over for the year.

Mr. Zavari responds and indicates it is doubtful they will hear back from the Seattle-based philanthropist that day, but asks if they can build the kits in-house and cover the professional development. At this point, it appears that the licenses are the only hurdle if the other elements are covered.

Exhibit 5: June 5, 2017 email to Mr. Zavari from Ms. Welch; June 6, 2017 email to Ms. Welch from Mr. Zavari

Ms. Welch responds to Mr. Zavari's June 5 email and confirms that funding for the licenses would keep the initiative alive. She indicates all other necessary elements to implement Amplify Science in the waiver schools are covered. This email does not question about a donor.

Exhibit 6: June 6, 2017 email to Mr. Zavari from Ms. Welch

Following this, all communications moved forward with planning for implementation of Amplify Science in the district's waiver schools. The donor was never discussed again. It appears that the need for the donor was eliminated by the district securing the other elements of the curriculum implementation. The evidence suggests that the company tried to recruit a donor and was not successful. The evidence also shows that the district was on a tight timeline to meet their goal. In the end, it appears that the rush to implement for the coming school year, the rapidly evolving needs of the district, and the dialogue with the company all played a role in the assumption made by Ms. Welch that a donor provided funding for the licenses. The assumption was not correct, but explainable by the rapid communication between the parties and the multitasking Ms. Welch was doing to get all elements pulled together by the end of the school year.

See affidavit of Steven Zavari

Prepared by:

Ronald D. Boy
Acting Chief Legal Counsel

Attachments:

Exhibits 1-6
Sworn Affidavit of Steven Zavari

EXHIBIT 1

Welch, MaryMargaret

From: Steven Zavari <szavari@amplify.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 10, 2017 12:25 PM
To: Welch, Mary M
Subject: Thank you!

Dear Mary-Margaret,

I wanted to thank you again for presenting today.

Your presentation was passionate, intelligent, and very compelling. I was really impressed!

I give you my word that I will follow-up with Brad, the gentleman you met after the presentation, to ask if he can help you execute your vision.

I'll be in touch soon!

Best regards,
Steven

EXHIBIT 2

From: Steven Zavari <szavari@amplify.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 23, 2017 4:07 PM
To: Welch, Mary M <mmwelch@seattleschools.org>
Subject: Re: Update?

Hi MaryMargaret,

I wanted to let you know I'm actively working on getting a decision on this. I understand that timing is critical.

Hopefully, we'll have more info soon.

I'll definitely keep you posted.

Best,
Steven

Sent from my iPhone

On May 23, 2017, at 2:06 PM, Welch, Mary M <mmwelch@seattleschools.org> wrote:

Hi Steven,

I am wondering if you have heard anything from Dave about their potential grant so Seattle School's Middle School Science program have licenses? I spoke with him last Thursday and he seemed super positive. I was away this weekend but hoped to hear back by yesterday. Sent him a text but have not heard back. I don't want to be a pest, but I am really up against a hard deadline to let our schools and principals know if they will be able to in the AmplifyScience pilot for next school year.

I received final approval for the waiver all the way up to the superintendent, I have a promise of computers, and I have PD funds scheduled. BUT my funds to purchase subscriptions and materials is super limited. I have 15 schools eager to jump in and with your help they could all launch. With our very unfortunate district budget deficit of 50 million, I will likely have only enough funds to purchase subscriptions and materials for only 4 schools next year without outside support. Our tech department needs to know very soon the scope of the pilot in order to budget accordingly; I will have to give up the approved mini-grant for the computers and they will release those funds if I am unable to give them an answer soon. Additionally, with only 4 schools participating, we would be limiting our ability to provide a robust AmplifyScience PD as my PD funding will be split between 4 AmplifyScience Schools and 16 traditional kit schools. We had hoped to partner with AmplifyScience on building 3D assessment but that too will need to be put on the back burner.

We WANT to partner with you but we will need financial help to do so. I think we are a good candidate for this support and remain hopeful that this will be a possibility.

Thank you for your support and hopeful partnership,
MaryMargaret

Mary-Margaret Welch
Science Program Manager
Seattle Public Schools

EXHIBIT 3

Welch, MaryMargaret

From: Steven Zavari <szavari@amplify.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2017 10:11 AM
To: Welch, Mary M
Subject: Re: Update?

Hi MaryMargaret,

We're actively working on it, but I'm doubtful that we're going to get to a resolution by Friday. At this time, our main funder, who wishes to remain anonymous, has reached out to a Seattle-based philanthropist with a proposal to split the grant funding. Hopefully, we'll get a commitment from the Seattle-based philanthropist in the near future.

I'm really sorry this is taking longer than all of us had hoped for.

By Friday, do you need the actual funds, or would a commitment that you will receive the funds suffice? I want to push for resolution, but want to know what is absolutely necessary to prevent this from falling apart.

Best,
Steven

On Wed, May 31, 2017 at 9:58 AM, Welch, Mary M <mmwelch@seattleschools.org> wrote:

Steven,

Wonder if there is any update? I am afraid I am now upon my deadline. I really need to let my teachers know by Friday 6/2, as I am meeting with a team of teachers the evening of Tuesday 6/6 to plan for the implementation. I need to be honest with folks about who is in and who is out. That is determined by any resources that might be available from the Emerson Collective. IF they don't think that Seattle Schools are worthy of their support, I need to know now and reduce my field study schools, change my PD structure for next year, and prepare my science materials resource center for a different scenario. This will also influence my curriculum decision for the 4 new elementary science coming on board next year.

I have tried to remain hopeful, but at this moment I need to be honest with my colleagues. Any word at all that you might have would be important. Friday morning is my communication time.

Thank you,

MaryMargaret

Mary-Margaret Welch

Science Program Manager

EXHIBIT 4

Welch, MaryMargaret

From: Steven Zavari <szavari@amplify.com>
Sent: Friday, June 2, 2017 2:13 PM
To: Welch, Mary M
Subject: Re: Update?

Hi MaryMargaret,

I wanted to let you know that we haven't forgotten about this, and the importance of getting a commitment by today.

We definitely are pushing for a commitment, but given the time i'm not hopeful we'll hear back today. Any chance there is still time if we can get word by early next week?

Best,
Steven

On Wed, May 31, 2017 at 1:18 PM, Welch, Mary M <mmwelch@seattleschools.org> wrote:

Thanks for your prompt reply Steven. Indeed a commitment of funds would suffice. I too don't want to push in a way that would have this opportunity fall apart.

I appreciate all of your advocacy and understanding of the workings within a large district.

With garded optimism,

MaryMargaret

Mary-Margaret Welch

Science Program Manager

Seattle Public Schools

From: Steven Zavari [<mailto:szavari@amplify.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2017 10:11 AM
To: Welch, Mary M <mmwelch@seattleschools.org>
Subject: Re: Update?

EXHIBIT 5

Welch, MaryMargaret

From: Steven Zavari <szavari@amplify.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 6, 2017 5:17 AM
To: Welch, Mary M
Cc: David Stevenson
Subject: Re: Advice

Hi MaryMargaret,

Since it's doubtful that we'll hear from the Seattle-based philanthropist today, I want to better understand the minimum amount of funds that are necessary to keep this alive.

If we were able to secure funds for the licenses, will this keep the initiative alive? For instance, will you have enough budget to build the kits in-house? Also, would the PD grant that you have cover training from LHS? I just want to make sure I understand if funds for licenses will be enough to make this happen.

Also, if there are 16 teachers that volunteered to participate, is it safe to assume each teacher will have no more than 30 students (total of 3,200 students)? My notes have 9,000 students would participate in this pilot, but this seems high for 16 teachers.

Thanks,
even

On Mon, Jun 5, 2017 at 11:27 PM, Welch, Mary M <mmwelch@seattleschools.org> wrote:

Hi Steven,

Here again. Tuesday evening, tomorrow night, I am scheduled to host 16 teachers from the schools who applied to do AmplifyScience next year. The purpose of our meeting is to help select the correct sequence of units for implementation over the next 3 years. I am in a quandary. I have computers for all of the schools. I probably can figure out most of the equipment but honestly, I can't also afford the subscriptions too.

If I offer the program to 1/3 of the schools who applied, I will forgo the laptop carts, (likely not available next year) and squelch the enthusiasm of my teachers. The PD plan is in place with a robust roll out to continue for the next 10 months of next year. This is the last year of our grant and funds for PD will not be available 2018-2019. As you see everything is in place to roll out AmplifyScience next year except the total funding.

What would you do? Tell 2/3 of the teachers it is a no-go? Call off the meeting (although school is nearly over for the year). I know you don't have a crystal ball but I am pretty much out of time. Your thoughts?

Thanks,

EXHIBIT 6

Welch, MaryMargaret

From: Welch, Mary M
Sent: Tuesday, June 6, 2017 7:56 AM
To: Steven Zavari
Cc: David Stevenson
Subject: Re: Advice

Thanks for your quick reply Steven, Thanks for asking these clarifying questions.

IF we had funds for the license it would indeed keep the initiative alive. Let me see if I can break this down into components as there are many moving pieces.

1. Kit Supplies: I am about 50K short for supplies but can split between this and next fiscal year so those funds are not urgent at this moment but I will need to secure that amount before the end of the 2017-18 school year.
2. Computers: We are all set with laptop carts for all of the teachers who have applied. This comes from our tech department who is super excited about this possibility with AmplifyScience.
3. Training: Yes we can cover all of the training. The middle school grant allows me to hire trainers for content so I can house that training in that line item of the grant budget.
4. Licenses: This is my shortfall. I cannot find funds to piece this one together and I am restricted in budget allocations and not allowed to put funds toward licenses. Licenses seem to be a new notion for Seattle and they don't see it as materials nor as books. I am trying to educate them but this is a sticking point at the moment.
5. Number of students: Yes 9,000. The 16 teachers are building reps. They each represent their colleagues of 2-9 in their buildings.

Hope this helps. Give me a call if I can help answer any of this 206 355 8126. Bottom line, if we had a license commitment, I think I can move forward. It would still be a shortfall in supplies but it would at least launch the work this summer.

THANKS!
MaryMargaret

MaryMargaret Welch
MaryMargaret Welch
Science Program Manager

From: Steven Zavari <szavari@amplify.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 6, 2017 5:17:05 AM
To: Welch, Mary M
Cc: David Stevenson
Subject: Re: Advice

Hi MaryMargaret,

AFFIDAVIT

This letter is in response to requests from the Board of Directors to Amplify Education, Inc. ("Amplify"), received on May 17, 2019.

Amplify provides the following responses to the questions:

1. Please identify the anonymous donor who provided the funding for Amplify Science to be used in SPS waiver schools in the 2017-2018 school year.

There was no anonymous donor, or any other philanthropic support for Amplify Science implementations in SPS waiver schools in the 2017-2018 school year or any other school years.

Amplify and SPS staff discussed the possibility of seeking philanthropic support for school implementations in school year 2017/18, when a number of schools were interested in implementing new science materials to transition to NGSS. However, instead, Amplify and SPS decided to share the costs of these implementations. Thus SPS paid for professional development and some sample kits to serve as models for hands-on kits SPS built from its own inventory of materials. SPS used its own facilities to print student workbook materials.

As part of this arrangement, Amplify provided digital licenses at no cost to the district for the 2017/18 school year. SPS staff may have believed that a philanthropic grant funded these licenses, not realizing that the cost was in fact incurred by Amplify. However, once the print materials and kits were covered by SPS, no philanthropic support was necessary, and therefore no donations were solicited or received by Amplify or SPS staff at any time.

2. What is the value of the Amplify Science product received by the district over the last three school years? Please identify the annual amounts and whether it was donated or purchased.

Purchases:

According to Amplify's invoice records, SPS purchased Amplify Science in the following amounts in calendar years 2016-2019:

Calendar Year (Jan. to Dec.)	Total Amount Invoiced
2016	\$21,566.77
2017	\$309,459.61
2018	\$112,732.07
2019	\$0.00
Total	\$443,758.45

These purchases were for a combination of teacher professional development, licenses, and kits with physical materials.

As noted above, some of the purchases (including those in 2017) were for sample kits SPS purchased to serve as models for hands-on kits to be built from SPS' inventory of materials. In addition, purchases of Amplify Science product were made for new schools in the district and some of the SPS waiver schools.

Attached are invoice records for these purchases.

Provided at no cost:

As noted above, for the school year 2017-18, Amplify provided digital licenses at no cost to the district for the 2017/18 school year. Based on price quote submitted to SPS by Amplify in April 2017, Amplify offered a sales price of \$12/license for these digital licenses, with a total of \$108,000 (see Price Quote #170424-89451, which corresponds to Invoice #63918 attached). Invoice #63918 reflects the digital licenses that Amplify provided at no cost, and SPS reduced the amount of Professional Development in comparison to its corresponding Price Quote.

3. Please indicate whether the district is owing Amplify any monetary amount for past product or services received. Has any amount been added to the future potential purchase to compensate you for past product or services?

No, the district does not owe Amplify any monetary amounts for past products or services received. As part of its RFP submission, Amplify provided its current pricing for the Amplify Science program. Such pricing is consistent with pricing Amplify currently offers its customers across the country. No amount has been added to Amplify's pricing proposal for the future potential purchase to compensate Amplify for past products or services provided to SPS.

[Signature page follows]

STATE OF New Jersey)
) SS
COUNTY OF Hudson)

Steven Zavari
PRINT FULL NAME

Steven Zavari
SIGNATURE

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 23rd day of May, 2019.

Lora A May
Notary Public

Notary Seal

LORA A MAY
Commission # 50042208
Notary Public, State of New Jersey
My Commission Expires
July 19, 2021