

## **SCHOOL UPDATE ON STATUS OF ONLINE CLASSES (PROJECT TALEEM)**

**Need assessment:** The closure of physical classes in March 2020 resulted in the need for all schools in KSA to identify alternative modes for continuity of classes. International Indian School Buraidah, opted for online classes via zoom for the students. A subsequent review of the qualitative aspects of the online classes, highlighted the need for the involvement of an experienced technology based education provider would ensure uninterrupted imparting of education, through on the job training of teaching staff at all levels, access to assessment protocols, scholastic tests and continuous practice tests for all students. During the past months, the guidance from the Ministry of Education, KSA, have also been to provide technological upgradation for students and adoption of new methods of studies and exam preparation, through the introduction of *madrasati* applications.

**Selection Process:** Having identified the need, Principals of two IISs i.e. IIS Jeddah and IIS Dammam (representing substantial portion of the student numbers in the IIS network) were tasked with preparing the RFP. Thereafter, all Principals of the IISs collectively provided their inputs and finalised an RFP to select suitable distance learning service provider(s) that could deliver a CBSE curriculum and that was capable of providing as close to textbook interactive and synchronous classes for the current academic year 2020-21. Since this was a pan – KSA exercise the Higher Board was tasked with facilitating and overseeing the process.

**April 2020:** A list of 12 potential service providers was prepared through a consultative process by the IISs. In April, 8 companies submitted their proposals of which 5 were found to be aligned to the scope of work in the RFP. A six-member Selection Committee consisting of Principals of IISRiyadh, IIS Jeddah, IIS Buraidah & IIS Jubail, along with Chairman, Managing Committee of IIS Dammam and a Higher Board Member was constituted which evaluated these proposals based on standard selection criteria that included relevant experience, mapping of the technical requirements as per the scope of work and financial bids.

**May 2020:** A shortlist of 3 companies that were evaluated and found to fit the basic requirements by the Selection Committee was identified. However, of these 1 was unable to fit the minimum requirement for technology needs (as their platform would only function on higher specs of devices and internet). This being a significant constraint for most of the students, was excluded from further evaluation.

The Higher Board attended a simulated session covering key aspects of the platforms with the shortlisted 2 service providers. In order to reduce single supplier risks and maintain a common cloud-based platform service across IISs, both the companies were in-principle accepted for negotiations on pricing and commercial terms.

**June 2020:** While these were not part of the RFP, the following mandatory pre-conditions were set at this time for the service providers:

- a) to ensure IISs have a price advantage, both service providers were to offer an exclusive commitment to provide lowest rates (in KSA) for their platforms to IISs;
- b) each school will be permitted to have the flexibility to customise certain aspects of the platform based on their need.

Once these were accepted, the negotiations for financial and commercial terms, including fees and payments, was commenced.



In order to reduce single service provider risk, **Next Learning Program (by M/s Next Education)** for Kg to V and **Online Adaptive Knowledge Services (by M/s Sunitha Infovision)** for VI to XII were approved. The **Advanced TOPPR** module which covers online coaching for competitive exams for XI & XII grade students has also been included as part of the services. This would ensure access to the students to the content, practice lessons and test papers to assist in preparation for competitive exams like JEE, NEET, CLAT etc.

**June 13, 2020:** All IISs were informed of the process followed, proposals received and terms agreed, and advised to submit their respective acceptance for signing up to the selected service providers, which the school submitted as confirmation for participation.

The respective SMCs then deliberated and approved the implementation for their respective school (at this stage 7 schools had signed up).

The SMCs that needed deliberation on certain aspects of the proposals received were given school-wise clarifications and thereafter the participating schools were advised to set up Task Forces comprising of Teachers, headed by a Task Force Leader and Task Force Coordinators for efficient implementation of the project.


**July 24-25, 2020:** The Principals, Task Forces (selected from the teaching staff to lead the implementation) & SMC members attended fully simulated interactive Q&A sessions with the service providers over 2 days to obtain clarity on the operational aspects and provide academic/administrative inputs. These sessions were attended by 100 persons on Day 1 & 150+ on Day 2.

Based on the feedback on live sessions and acceptances, the final number of students were available to proceed with further price negotiations.

**Fee considerations:** No additional fee burden for this initiative will be placed on the parents for the current academic year 2020-21, as approximately 5% of the annual tuition fees per student (which has already been collected) has been budgeted to be used for teachers' training and these learning management systems for this year. For grades XI & XII, inclusive of access to advanced coaching for competitive exams for Science & Commerce streams (at B2B rates, which are one-third of the rates for B2C for this platform). The Project is for implementation during the current academic year. The decision to continue next year will be taken by the respective SMCs of the IISs.

**Inter-school & other events:** This is also to inform that in the coming few weeks the students from the participating schools will be part of online inter-school events and Olympiads through these platforms.

The SMC did not deliberate on the key features of the project fully and opted out of participating and hence it was not considered for implementation. We look forward to continued support from all stakeholders in ensuring academic excellence.



Principal.