NEWS RELEASE

econtext Provides a Comprehensive Service for New Online Application System of Hiroshima Prefectural Board of Education
Supporting Application Digitization for National, Public, and Private Schools Across Japan

ECONTEXT, INC. (HQ: Tokyo; Representative Director and President: Keizo Odori; econtext), a payment service provider and subsidiary of Digital Garage, Inc. (TSE first section: 4819; HQ: Tokyo; Representative Director, President Executive Officer and Group CEO: Kaoru Hayashi; DG), is collaborating with Atsystem Co., Ltd. (HQ: Miyagi; President: Michiyo Sasoh; Atsystem), which offers online application systems, to provide econtext Gateway to the Hiroshima Prefectural Board of Education. This comprehensive payment service is being provided for the online application website of prefectural integrated junior high and high schools starting November 1.

■Outline

The Hiroshima Prefectural Board of Education has established the prefectural Hiroshima Junior and Senior High School, a prefectural school that offer integrated junior high and high school education*1. It will also open Miyoshi Junior High School in Northern Hiroshima, and Hiroshima Global Academy on Osakikami Island in the Seto Inland Sea, in April 2019.

To select students for these integrated schools from out-of-prefecture and oversea, the Hiroshima Prefectural Board of Education started taking applications via a new online application website on November 1, 2018. This website utilizes Atsystem's online application system Ckip (Campus Kip) together with econtext Gateway, econtext's comprehensive payment service. This is the first time for a Japanese prefectural board of education to accept online applications (Source: Research by econtext).

With Ckip, everything can be done online from application registration to exam fee payment, results notification, and matriculation fee payment. Prospective students do not have to submit paper applications or use bank deposit forms, meaning applications can be submitted at any time or place. This also cuts application form data entry and communication costs for schools, drastically reducing the burden of various tasks related to application and admission. This service is available in Japanese and English.

econtext is providing econtext Gateway via Ckip for collecting new student selection fees (exam fees) via credit card, convenience store payment, or the Pay-easy payment service. In the past, new student selection fees was limited to bank deposit, and these payments were burdensome to both students and schools. The Hiroshima Prefectural Board of Education decided to implement econtext Gateway because of its functionality in terms of payment convenience and easy management methods, as well as high evaluations of its past usage in many school application websites including local governments and universities.

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■econtext Gateway comprehensive payment service

The econtext Gateway service supports multiple payment methods needed for web services in one bundle, including credit card, convenience store, bank, electronic money, telecommunications carrier, and point payments. It is unique because business operators take advantage of a special payment selection menu developed by econtext, allowing them to implement the payment service while cutting down on the cost and number of steps required for system development. Companies that utilize the service may also immediately implement other payment methods under the original contract, without upgrading to a new system.

■Background

In light of Japan's falling birthrate, private universities and other schools are more frequently using online applications to appeal to more prospective Japanese and international students. Among the 780 national, public, and private universities and junior colleges, approximately 60% (471 schools) take online applications[2]. A total of 6,456 national, public, and private high schools[3] conduct entrance examinations, but it is predicted that university trends will lead more to use online applications with the goal of attracting prospective students and reducing the application burden on both test takers and schools.

■Future developments

econtext has provided payment solutions, focused on online university application websites, in the past. Starting with this payment solution for the Hiroshima Prefectural Board of Education, it will provide payment solutions to other prefectural boards of education as well as private junior high and high schools. econtext will also work with various types of partners offering IT solutions to schools to help increase the user friendliness of fee payment related to various educational institutions.

*1: Integrated junior high and high school education: A type of combined junior high and high school education, in which junior high and high schools are linked together, and students do not have to apply to enter high school.

*2: Source: Research by econtext in October 2018

*3: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's *2018 Basic School Survey (Bulletin)*
   http://www.mext.go.jp/component/b_menu/other/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2018/08/02/1407449_1.pdf

【About econtext】 https://www.econtext.jp/
A payment provider that handles online payment initiatives within the Digital Garage Group. Through the efforts of econtext and VeriTrans, another company beneath the DG umbrella, the DG group has become one of Japan's largest online payment providers and is now expanding into a global online payment platform covering not only Japan, but overseas markets as well, with a particular focus on Asia. Econtext has also been a pioneer in the use of convenience store kiosks for realistic payment settlement, operating the wire transfer service CASH POST and other efforts in the field of financial transfers.