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**Seema Ramji**, Chief Academic Officer

**The School District of Pittsburgh  
(Pittsburgh, PA)**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

**LITERACY INTERVENTION FOR GRADES 3–8**

**Issuance Date: December 1, 2016**

**Submission Date: December 14, 2016 at Noon**

### **Introduction**

Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) requires a software- or web-based intervention to address students' literacy needs. Over the past several years, the state standards and assessments in the area of ELA/R have shifted to become more rigorous, with a focus on complex text and evidence-based writing. The Board seeks to purchase a literacy intervention for grades 3–8 to help students reach these goals.

This work is expected to begin in January 2017.

### **Scope of Work**

- Provide a software- or web-based literacy intervention tool that offers students practice with standards-aligned text-based reading and writing tasks
- Include texts at a variety of reading levels to meet students' needs
- Provide automated reports on student and teacher usage and growth at the school and district level
- Provide initial and ongoing on-site training for teachers, including, but not limited to, the following areas:
  - Program introduction/overview
  - Analyzing program data to inform instruction
  - Using the program as part of a blended learning model
  - Alignment of intervention tools to the PA Core Standards and state assessment

### **Background**

Pittsburgh Public Schools serves approximately 5800 students in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade in 34 schools with approximately 539 teachers. There are approximately 5,066 students in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade in 18 schools with approximately 400 teachers.

### **Timetable/Response Submittal**

The Chief Academic Office is requesting proposals from experienced and qualified companies. Selection will be made based upon the proposals submitted. A timetable for the selection process is provided below:

- December 1, 2016: Release of RFP
- December 14, 2016: Receipt of Proposals
- December 16, 2016: Recommendation for Selection
- December 21, 2016: Legislative Approval by Board

**Upon the release of this RFP and during the conclusion of the selection process, there shall be no communication between any prospective respondents, their lobbyist(s) or agent(s) and any employee of PPS or its elected Board of Directors, except as provided for in the RFP. Any violation of this provision by any prospective firm and/or its agent shall be grounds for immediate disqualification.**

All proposals shall be submitted to PPS as follows:

Kendra Wester  
Executive Director, K-12 Literacy  
**School District of Pittsburgh**  
341 South Bellefield Avenue, Room 215  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
Tel: (412) 529-3747  
Fax: (412) 325-4319  
Email: [kwester1@pghboe.net](mailto:kwester1@pghboe.net)

Proposals can be submitted in electronic format, faxed or mailed to the Mrs. Wester by Noon on December 14, 2016.

Proposals, including any/all attachments, cover letter, tabs, and completed responses to the technology addendum should not exceed twenty-five (25) pages in length on 8 ½" X 11" paper, single spaced using a minimum font size of 10 pt.

Proposals should be submitted following the instructions detailed below. PPS reserves the right to select a proposal in its entirety or some portion(s) thereof. Furthermore, PPS reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive irregularities.

Any questions regarding this RFP should be addressed to Mrs. Wester.

Responses should address the following questions or requests for information:

**I. Letter of Transmittal**

Each proposal should be accompanied by a letter of transmittal which summarizes key points of the proposal and which is signed by an authorized officer.

**II. Experience and Qualifications**

Provide brief biographies for the partners and employees who will be supporting PPS' account, including any relevant experience for each. Please include only those individuals who will work on PPS' account and specify their role in the project.

Please describe relevant experience with board member governance training including previous work with other school districts. Please provide three references.

**III. Company Information/Equal Employment Opportunity**

- A. Describe your company's equal employment opportunity policies and programs.
- B. Has your company or any of its employees, or anyone acting on its behalf, ever been convicted of any crime or offense arising directly or indirectly from the conduct of your company's business or have any of your company's officers, directors or persons exercising substantial policy discretion ever been convicted of any crime or offense, i.e., financial misconduct, fraud or child abuse? If so, please describe any such convictions and surrounding circumstances in detail.

- C. Has your company, or any of its employees, or anyone acting on its behalf, been indicted or otherwise charged in connection with any criminal matter rising directly or indirectly from the conduct of your company’s business which is still pending or have any of your company’s officers, directors or persons exercising substantial policy discretion been indicted or otherwise charged in connection with any criminal matter, i.e., financial misconduct, fraud or child abuse which is still pending? If so, please describe any such indictments and surrounding circumstances in detail.

**IV. Project Work Plan**

Submit a detailed work plan for performed services, including a timeline for completion of specific work products. Address all components detailed in the scope of work. Answers to all questions in the addendum section should be included.

**V. Fee Proposal**

Please provide a fee structure that your company would propose to provide a literacy intervention for grades 3-8 given the scope of services provided in your detailed work plan. Proposals must include the overall cost of all work, as well as hourly or daily rates, and must include cost estimates for travel and time associated with conference calls with PPS staff. Please provide three cost proposals:

- Proposal 1: Grades 3–5
- Proposal 2: Grades 6–8
- Proposal 3: Grades 3-8

**Evaluation Criteria and Selection Process**

The contract will be awarded to the qualified proposer whose proposal is most advantageous to PPS, based on the evaluation criteria specified below. Thus, while the points in the evaluation criteria indicate their relative importance, the total scores will not necessarily be determinative of the award. Rather, the overall scores will guide PPS in making an intelligent award decision based on the evaluation criteria.

PPS reserves the right to request an interview from those companies determined to be in a competitive range and shall use the information derived from these interviews, if any, in its evaluation.

PPS anticipates selecting one consultant using the following criteria:

<b>Component</b>	<b>Points</b>
Variety of text genres and reading levels	25
Connection between reading and writing	25
Background and experience in working with urban school districts	20
Ability to provide regular professional development	15
Cost-effectiveness of proposal	15

The intervention will be selected by December 21, 2016.

## Addendum

### Product Information

1. Software product name.
2. Complete Product Description.
3. What is the current release version and how long has this product been on the market? If you are presenting multiple products to meet our business requirements, please specify for each product.
4. How many customer sites are currently using the current version of the product, particularly with a client of our size? How many are in Pennsylvania?
5. What is your product licensing structure?

### Technical Specifications

1. Is your application locally or vendor hosted?
2. Do you support single sign-on using our Active Directory?
3. Is this a web based application, or would need to be installed on premises?
4. What browsers are compatible with this product?
5. If locally hosted and installed on premises, recommended/Required hardware and operating system platforms for deployment.
6. If locally hosted, recommended/Required Relational Database Management System for deployment.
7. If locally hosted, do you recommend a dedicated server to support your applications?
8. If vendor hosted, what is the application up-time based upon the SLA?
9. How frequent are system back-ups created?
10. How does your software work with software and hardware based security applications?
11. Describe the application software architecture (desktop, client/server, web, etc.). Are there any special network requirements (LAN, WAN, etc.)?
12. What is the amount of memory required by the workstation and/or server?
13. What is the minimum processing speed?
14. What telecommunication connectivity speeds are needed for ideal operation of your product?
15. Are you aware of any incompatibilities that your product might have with any specific hardware or software? Provide details.
16. If there comes a time where we no longer continue our relationship with your company, how would we access and retrieve our data?

### Data Exchange

1. How is data imported to the system? Ex. School lists, student rosters, student demographics, etc.  
*We prefer sending and receiving csv files or direct connection to the database if PPS is hosting.*
2. How is data exported from the system to be loaded to our Data Warehouse and Student Information System? Ex. Lunch status information for each student  
*We prefer sending and receiving csv files or direct connection to the database if PPS is hosting.*
3. What is the frequency of data exchange?

4. Can the data exchange be automated?

*We prefer to send and receive files via an sftp site – we set up a schedule that runs data files nightly and pushes to the sftp. We also create a job that looks for and pulls down to PPS new files from the vendor nightly.*

5. Do you have data import specifications that we can review? Data export specifications?

**Training and Support**

1. Describe the recommended start-up training program, schedule, materials provided, number and length of courses, etc.
2. Where are your support services located?
3. What are the hours of operation and response times of support services? Do you have a service-level-agreement (SLA)?
4. Does support include product updates as well as bug fixes?
5. How are software and/or database updates transmitted to customers (for locally hosted applications)?
6. What is your Helpdesk escalation procedure?

**Cost**

1. What is the entire cost of implementation? You may attach a separate budget sheet if you prefer.
  - a. One time cost?
  - b. Ongoing yearly cost?
  - c. Customization rate?
  - d. Reports development costs?
  - e. Is there additional cost for training?
  - f. Is there additional cost for support?
  - g. What is the cost associated with integrating other third party providers?
2. If your solution is a cloud-based service, is there a service-level-agreement and uptime guarantee? If not, do you provide any discount to the customers?
3. Do you provide any contractual flexibility and price discount if either party decides to terminate?