



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

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

**K-12 Direct Instruction Intervention
and/or Digital Intervention for
English Language Arts**

Issuance Date:

Submission Date:

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit one or more established providers of digital interventions for English Language Arts (ELA) to provide Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) with evidence-based, researched, and reviewed direct intervention instruction and/or digital interventions in English Language Arts that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, adopted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education Standards (the “State Standards”) from Grade K through Grade 12 for ELA. This RFP seeks curriculum providers (“Respondents” or “Offerors”) who share a vision for ensuring that all students have access to the highest quality online interventions aligned to PA State Standards, research-based, and evidence-based practices, to ultimately increase student achievement and ensure success in literacy with alignment to the 5 pillars of literacy: **phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, meeting** the needs of all students, including those who receive the following services: English Language Development, Specialized Learning, and Gifted. Literacy interventions will be deployed in alignment with multi-tiered system of supports, a is a standards-aligned, comprehensive framework for enhancing academic outcomes for ALL students.

Adopted K-12 literacy intervention resources will be implemented during the 2024-25 school year.

2. Background

The Pittsburgh Public School District is the largest of 43 school districts in Allegheny County and the second largest in Pennsylvania. The district serves approximately 20,000 students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12, with approximately 1000 literacy teachers (including self-contained, departmentalized, ELL and teachers of students with exceptionalities). Pittsburgh Public Schools has a vision that all students will graduate high school, college, career, and life ready; prepared to complete a two-or four-year college degree or workforce certification.

Grade Code	0K	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	Total
Total	1,665	1,681	1,575	1,365	1,432	1,459	1,418	1,506	1,421	1,629	1,593	1,466	1,401	19,503

3. Scope of Services

The requirements outlined in this RFP, although extensive, is not exhaustive and is intended to provide interested Respondents with sufficient basic information to submit proposals meeting minimum requirements but is not intended to limit a proposal’s content or exclude any relevant or essential information. Proposals should address the entire scope of services requested. In this RFP, literacy interventions are defined as materials that progressively differentiate instruction to meet the needs of each individual student and adaptable to meet the needs of students with exceptionalities and English Language Learners.

Proposals must comply with the following selection requirements as written in PPS Board Policy 106, Adoption of Instructional Materials:

- *The primary criteria for the selection of instructional materials are to address the needs of students as described in the Content Standards at each grade level. All instructional materials and supplementary materials shall reflect in both narrative and illustration a diverse American society and shall provide equal representation of African American and other cultural and ethnic groups. Adopted instructional materials should avoid stereotyped images based on race and gender. Instructional materials should reflect gender and ethnic minorities participating in leadership roles in all aspects of society. The instructional materials that are ultimately selected in each subject area must be challenging and stretch students to meet high standards.*

4. Digital Intervention Requirements

General Requirements:

- Include evidenced-based and tiered interventions for students not meeting the learning standards or achieving below grade level, supplemental to the core curricula.
- Alignment to Pennsylvania Core Standards: The intervention must be aligned to the current Pennsylvania Core Standards (PA Core) for ELA across grades K-12.
- The intervention is research-based and supports student growth in phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.
- The program supports emergent and early readers with gaps in their core reading knowledge.
- The intervention provides diagnostic assessment, placement assessment for accurate program placement.
- Include resources that support the teaching and learning of students needing enrichment and acceleration.
- Include culturally relevant materials and culturally responsive teaching and instructional practices that are inclusive of a variety of cultures and ethnicities and are free from bias in the portrayal of ethnic groups, gender, age, cultures, religion, and people with exceptionalities.
- The intervention provides opportunities for progress monitoring, student review and practice, and virtual instruction.
- The intervention provides acceleration and remediation lessons/materials when necessary.
- The intervention is aligned to the science of reading and structured literacy.
- The intervention provides explicit reading instruction.
- The program is user-friendly and can provide students with additional support, addressing learning loss because of the 2020 pandemic.

Usability:

- The intervention is engaging and interactive for students while age-appropriate regardless of content.
- If the intervention is digital, it includes a text-to-speech tool, which includes the reading of texts and online tool capabilities (highlighter, magnifier, color contrast, virtual manipulatives, etc.).
- The intervention can be self-paced and easy for students to utilize independently.
- Allow for flexibility in meeting the needs of a wide range of students and include accommodations for special populations, including English Language Learners, students with disabilities, including students who are visually impaired and/or deaf or hard of hearing, those with print disabilities, and students with significant cognitive disabilities, and students identified as gifted and talented.
- The intervention engages students through gamification and interactive activities.
- The intervention interface is age-appropriate regardless of content.
- Students will have access in school and at home.
- The intervention provides additional reading resources for teachers and students: texts, activities, etc.
- Materials provide teacher guidance with useful annotations and suggestions for how to enact the student materials and ancillary materials to support students' literacy development.
- The intervention includes printable resources for teachers, parents, and students.

Data and Reporting:

- The intervention must have a methodology for frequently identifying or diagnosing students' unfinished learning in literacy and directing students to literacy content that addresses their specific needs.
- The intervention must include the capability to provide individual student- and classroom-level reports/dashboards for the teacher to monitor product usage, growth, and achievement.
- Data reports must contain detailed performance and progress information in both written and graphical form to facilitate the use of the scores for instructional planning and decision-making.
- Allow for exporting of test results to upload into the district Data Management System.
- Provide the district with the ability to disaggregate data for underserved student groups efficiently.
- Include reports that provide parents/guardians and others with necessary information about the progress of the learner so that they may provide support at home or outside the school setting.
 - The intervention provides access to student-facing, teacher-facing, and parent/guardian facing data reports in multiple languages.

Culturally Relevant Materials:

- The materials include multiple perspectives and provide exposure to the larger world.
- Authors of the texts represent diverse cultural backgrounds.
- The texts represent a variety of cultures congruent with district demographics and include topics that reflect a variety of student identities and experiences.
- The materials create a bridge between students' home and school lives, while still meeting the expectations of the district and state curricular requirements.
- The materials utilize the backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences of the students to inform the teacher's lessons and methodology.
- Instructional materials should include an emphasis on the five student-focused pursuits outlined in the Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy: identity, skill development, intellectualism, criticality, and joy.
- The program avoids stereotypical characterizations and images of prejudice and stereotypes in narrative and illustrative forms.

Support, Training, and Professional Development:

- The proposal shall describe the initial training and professional development necessary to begin implementation of the proposed intervention.
- The proposal shall allow respondent representative(s), in a timely manner, to work on a regular basis with district/school personnel to answer all questions regarding production or financial matters pertaining to the individual services required.
- Define the training required to administer assessments.
- Describe the cost and how often research shows that refresher training is required.
- Outline the training provided for the use of the results for individual students.

5. Platform and Solution Requirements

- Is your digital intervention compatible with Clever?
- Does your digital intervention provide real-time data reporting in a dashboard with progress reports at the standard and skill level?
- Is your digital intervention aligned to PA Core Standards and Eligible Content?
- Does your digital intervention have the ability to create learning paths that specifically meet the needs of individual students?
- Does your digital intervention have the ability to assess specific skills from the curriculum as they are taught?

6. Product Information

- Software product name
- Complete Product Description
- Current release version and length this product has been on the market. If you are presenting multiple products to meet our business requirements, please specify for each product.
- Total customer sites that are currently using the current version of the product, particularly with a client of our size. Please indicate if any of them are in Pennsylvania.
- Product licensing structure

7. Technical Specifications

- i. Is this a web-based application or would the product need to be installed on premises?
- ii. What browsers are compatible with this product?
- iii. If locally hosted and installed on premises, what are the recommended/required hardware and operating system platforms for deployment.
- iv. If locally hosted, what are the recommended/required Relational Database Management System for deployment.
- v. If locally hosted, do you recommend a dedicated server to support your application?
- vi. How much bandwidth is required for connectivity?
- vii. Is external access required?
- viii. What ports does the application/website use?
- ix. What are the URLs?
- x. Is the website HTTPS?
- xi. How frequently are system back-ups created?
- xii. What Operating System does the application use?
- xiii. What database does the application use?
- xiv. Do we need to purchase end user devices?
- xv. What is the authentication method?
- xvi. How are logins managed?
- xvii. What, if any, 3rd party vendors or stakeholders involved and what is the expiration?
- xviii. Are SSLs involved and what is the expiration?
- xix. Do we need to be aware of any legal or regulatory constraints?
- xx. Is there inherent risk, weakness, or data threats?
- xxi. Data protection – sharing data social medial policy.
- xxii. Data privacy – what are the rules for personally identifiable information, protected health information, and other private data?
- xxiii. Encryption rules?
- xxiv. Do you support Clever as a single sign-on using our Active Directory (Azure)?
- xxv. What data is needed from other district systems?
- xxvi. What data will be provided to other district systems?
- xxvii. How often does data need to be exchanged?
- xxviii. How are changes in the data handled?

- xxix. Students transferring schools, staffing changes, etc.
- xxx. How can we ensure the security of the data during exchange?
- xxxi. Is there a mitigation process established?
- xxxii. Is there any existing metadata, definition, or classifications of the data elements?
- xxxiii. Is there an existing data dictionary?
- xxxiv. What is the Right to Know procedure?

8. Data Exchange

- Do you support nightly automated loads to and from your system (we have high mobility and systems must reflect at least a day-behind state)? If not, how do you reflect current student assignment and provide teachers/educators with appropriate access to student data.
- Rostering & data import into your system (in order of preference) – provide the import specifications for each method that you support for review by IT team.
 - Do you support ed-fi integration (if yes what version & have you accomplished this with)?
 - Do you have 1EdTech One Roster integration (1.1)?
 - Do you support clever integration?
 - CSV/flat file (provide import specifications)
- Integration with Learning Platforms:
 - Does your product support standardized mechanisms for import into an LMS (for example 1EdTech LTI certification)?
 - Is your product certified for the 1EdTech Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) standard?
 - Identify locations that you have worked with that have successfully integrated your product with the district’s current LMS (currently Schoology)?
- Integration into testing platforms
 - Does your product integrate with assessment platforms?
 - What certifications does your product have for these integrations?
- Exporting data from your system? (Provide data export specifications and data dictionaries for review by IT and DREA team).
 - This must be provided in an automated, regular data load to the district that does not require staff time or intervention.
 - Ed-fi (what version and what organization have you accomplished this with)
 - API (provide documentation to include what endpoints are included in the API)
 - FTP (provide export specifications)
- Verify that your nightly export.
 - Is provided in an automated, regular data load to the district that does not require staff time or intervention?
 - Provides individual user level information related to student usage and staff usage explain what elements address the following:
- Fidelity of usage for students (e.g., daily time logged-in, daily time on task, lessons/segments completed, metrics providing insight into student growth)
- Staff usage
- Student and staff audit trails
- Describe your data access/permissions at a minimum address:
 - How you automate the process for access provision
 - How do you establish data access and permissions for teachers and school administrators?
 - How do you establish permissions for district administrators?
 - Provide your auditing capabilities (click paths, change log, etc.)

9. Data security and Destruction

- The district does not allow organizations to maintain copies of student data provided by the district or generated in the system by our students beyond the scope of the contract. What are your procedures to ensure that all student data is destroyed and eliminated from your system?
- What are your policies and processes for the use of individual student data for anything outside of the delivery of the service provided by your platform?
- Security, privacy, and other agreements must be in addendums to the contracts the contract and agreement shall not reference agreements housed on websites or other changeable mediums– they may not be changed without approval and agreement from the school board.
- The application must include the following:
 - The frequency of data exchange must be nightly.
 - The data exchange must be automated.
 - The program must have data available to support fidelity of usage (minutes logged-in, time on task, lessons/segments completed and student growth)

10. Technology Cost

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

11. Overall Program Cost

- Include overall costs for the entire curriculum and materials including but not limited to instructional materials and guides, interventions, assessments, professional development, program setup, delivery service, and related materials.

The Eligible Business Enterprise (EBE) Participation documentation requirement continues on page 8 of this RFP.

12. ELIGIBLE BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (EBE) PARTICIPATION

○ EBE Goal

An aspirational Eligible Business Enterprise (EBE) goal of 10%, for business diversity spend, has been assigned for this contract opportunity.

An EBE is a collective of firms that are certified in one or more of the following business diversity categories, registered.

in our online EBE directory, and used to track the District's diversity spend:

- Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)
- Women Business Enterprise (WBE)
- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)
- U. S. Small Business Administration 8(A)

○ Proposed Business Diversity Utilization

- Is your firm a certified MBE, WBE, DBE or 8(a) firm? If so, please provide proof of current certification from a certifying entity. Self-certification is not accepted.
- Please also provide detailed information regarding any additional business entity that will assist in completing the scope of work as defined by this solicitation. This should include the:
 1. Company Name
 2. Company Contact (including title, email, and phone number)
 3. Scope of Work
 4. Dollar Amount & Percentage of Contract
 5. Company Diversity Type (provide proof for each certified firm) oMBE, WBE, DBE, 8(A), Diverse but not certified, N/A

● Good Faith Effort

If no portion of this contract will be awarded to a diverse business, specifically \$0 or 0% diversity spend, please provide detailed information addressing your firm's culture for business diversity & inclusion.

1. Diversity Spend: How much money did your company spend with certified MBE, WBE, DBE and/or 8(a) firms last year? What was the diversity percentage based on your total spend?
2. Diversity Count: What is the total number of MBE, WBE, DBE and/or 8(a) firms that your company contracted with last year? Please itemize by each diversity type as well.
3. Membership: Are you a member of any supplier/business diversity organizations? If so, please share the name of the organization and provide details concerning your level of involvement with that organization.

For additional documentation related to EBE policies, the proposer should visit the District's website at:

<https://www.pghschools.org/mwbe> or contact Paula B. Castleberry, Minority/Women Business Coordinator at pcastleberry1@pghschools.org.

13. Proposal Submission and Deadline

- All proposals must be submitted electronically to Maya Arnold, at marnold1@pghschools.org by April 25, 2024 with "K-12 Literacy Intervention" as the subject line. Proposals, including any/all attachments and cover letters, should be submitted as a single PDF document. In addition, digital access to all program materials must be provided. Proposals should be submitted in accordance with the proposal guidelines outlined in this RFP. Pittsburgh Public Schools reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, waive irregularities, and to select the proposal that is determined to be the most advantageous to the school district. Late proposals will not be accepted. Proposals submitted via hard copy or fax will not be accepted.

14. Timeline

- The Pittsburgh Public Schools is requesting proposals from experienced and qualified firms to provide the services described herein. Selection of the firm will be made based upon proposals submitted. Presentations may be conducted virtually or in-person. A timetable for the selection process is provided below:

RFP Issued	by March 25, 2024
Proposals Due	by April 25, 2024
Presentations (If requested) <i>Dates are subject to change and additional dates may be added based on proposals received.</i>	May 2, May 7, May 9
Committee Recommendation	May, 2024
Approval by the Board of Directors	May 23, 2024 or June 26, 2024

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 proposal packages (digital or physical) shall be submitted to PPS as follows:

Maya Arnold
K-12 Intervention Specialist
School District of Pittsburgh
Greenway Professional Development Center, Room 220
1400 Crucible Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15205
Email: marnold1@pghschools.org

15. Proposal Introduction

- Cover Letter:** Provide the name, mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number of the firm submitting the proposal. The cover letter must be signed by an authorized officer of the organization.
- Table of Contents:** Clearly identify material contained in the proposal by section and page number.
- Introduction:** Provide an overview of the company and its products as they relate to this RFP. Share relevant data- based evidence of impact, outcomes from prior and current school districts with similar demographics.
- Digital Intervention Overview:** Provide an overview of the assessment system and its core features.
- Independent External Evaluations:** For example EdReports, Evidence for ESSA, or What Works Clearinghouse.
- Confirmation Certification of EBE Compliance:** Include the EBE participation percentage.

16. 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. The overall evaluation feedback from reviewers will guide PPS in making an 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.
- An evaluation committee, including but not limited to teachers, principals, chief academic officer, curriculum and instruction staff, assistant superintendents, librarians, district-level staff, board members, parents, and community members, will review the proposals. The role of the evaluation committee is to review and assess to what extent submitted proposals meet the evaluation criteria and to make a recommendation.