

ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Request for Proposal

RFP ALSDE 2024-14

COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT SCHOOLS REVIEW

(RETURNING CSI-R)

OFFICE OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Note: FAXED OR E-MAILED PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Inquiries and response submissions related to this RFP are to be addressed to:

Cindy Gillespie

Office of Operations

Alabama State Department of Education

50 North Ripley Street, Room P305

Gordon Persons Building

Montgomery, AL 36104

Email: cgillespie@alsde.edu

Deadline:

Proposals must be received no later than 4PM Central on September 10, 2024.

It is required that each vendor clearly mark the envelope RFP ALSDE 2024-14 in the lower left corner of the envelope (Response packages that are not marked will be rejected).

The proposal package must contain the following:

1. Original proposal plus four copies with original signatures (The proposal must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the vendor to the information provided). One (1) electronic copy on a USB flash drive in MS Word format.
2. Must be currently registered with The Alabama Department of Finance, Division of Procurement as a State Vendor and provide vendor number. <http://www.purchasing.alabama.gov>
3. The vendor must complete the affidavit for business entity/employer/vendor. Verification of enrollment in E-verify should be presented on the form found in Appendix A.

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Section 1.00 Administrative Overview

1.1 Purpose and Background

The ALSDE Office of School Improvement (OSI) in the Division of Teaching and Learning provides differentiated and tiered support and intervention for chronically underperforming schools receiving Title I, Part A funds within the state. These schools are identified on a three-year cycle.

- The ALSDE Office of School Improvement has provided differentiated support, professional learning, and technical assistance for all identified Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools and districts using evidence-based strategies, approaches, and interventions including but not limited to the following practices:
- Data-driven instruction
- High-quality teaching and leadership
- Culture of high expectations
- Multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS)

Alabama identified schools for Comprehensive Support and Improvement in 2018, 2022 and 2023. Per Alabama’s Consolidated State plan under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, schools that fail to exit CSI status will be subject to more rigorous interventions and elevated to Comprehensive Support and Improvement-Returning (CSI-R) status. As stated in the plan, schools identified for Priority Support under previous iterations of the law and identified under ESSA as Comprehensive Support Schools will automatically be elevated to Comprehensive Support and Improvement-Returning (CSI-R) status. Schools that do not exit CSI status within four years will enter CSI-R status. ALSDE will work collaboratively with the LEAs and CSI-R schools to identify potential partners to provide professional development and assistance. CSI schools identified in fall 2018 unable to exit will be subject to more rigorous interventions beginning fall 2024. This will be the first identification cycle for CSIR school.

Purpose:

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) invites qualified and experienced vendors to submit a proposal to provide both qualitative and quantitative comprehensive needs assessments for our schools and districts who may become identified as CSI-R. The successful vendor will partner with the ALSDE Office of School Improvement to conduct a needs assessment that examines previous school improvement efforts/plans, programs, strategies, initiatives, instructional practices, assessments, staffing, systems development, operational processes, and other factors aimed at fostering change. This assessment will also include an evaluation of leadership capacity/competency, resources, and opportunity gaps at the school and district levels. Per Alabama’s Consolidated State Plan, using external partners to conduct the needs assessments will allow the LEAs/schools will get an unbiased, objective assessment of the schools and districts.

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This RFP indicates the key components required for bidders in order to have their proposals considered. These components include:

1. Experience and Qualifications:
 - a. Description of the vendor's experience in conducting comprehensive needs assessments, evaluations and providing wrap-around supports.
 - b. Examples of previous work relevant to this RFP.
 - i. Demonstrated experience in conducting similar assessments.
 - ii. Qualifications and experience of key personnel.
2. Approach and Methodology:
 - a. Detailed description of the proposed approach to conducting the comprehensive needs assessment.
 - b. Methods for data collection and analysis.
 - c. Strategies for ensuring unbiased and objective assessments.
 - d. Description of the tools and processes that will be used to ensure objectivity and accuracy in the assessments that are aligned to include but not limited to:
 - i. Alabama Teacher Growth Program (ATGP)/Alabama Teacher Observation Tool (ATOT).
 - ii. Alabama Continuous Improvement Plan (ACIP).
 - iii. Four Domains of Rapid School Improvement.
 - iv. Alabama Standards for School Leadership.
 - v. Alabama Principal Leadership Development System
3. Work Plan and Timeline:
 - a. Proposed timeline for completing the comprehensive needs assessments and related services.
 - i. Alignment meeting with the ALSDE OSI to ensure calibration of supports.
 - ii. LEA and School Leadership coaching prior to and following the comprehensive needs assessment.
 - b. Detailed plan outlining key activities, trainings, and deliverables.
 - i. Actionable next steps to address improvement priorities.
 - ii. Professional development aligned to the next steps.
 - c. Proposed timeline for implementation and delivering the final report.
 - i. Debriefing with the ALSDE OSI, LEA, and schools to unpack the comprehensive needs assessment findings.

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1.2 Anticipated Time Table

August 29, 2024	Question Submission Deadline
August 30, 2024	Question Responses Due
September 10, 2024	Proposal Submission Deadline 4:00 P.M. CST

1.3 Proposal Evaluation

An Evaluation Team will review the proposals and make a recommendation. The criteria listed below will be used to evaluate the proposals for the purpose of ranking them in relative position based on how fully each proposal meets the requirements of this RFP.

Evaluation Criteria:

Executive Summary & Vendor qualifications and experience	35 Points
Budget Proposal - Detailed budget, including all costs associated with conducting the needs assessments and providing the proposed related services.	30 points
Proposed Plan and Approach	35 points

Best and Final Offers:

The ALSDE may either accept a vendor's initial proposal by award of a contract or enter into discussions with vendors whose proposals are deemed to be reasonably acceptable consideration for award. After discussions are concluded, a vendor may be allowed to submit a "Best and Final Offer" for consideration in a manner and method prescribed by the ALSDE. By submitting a proposal each vendor accepts and agrees to all conditions and requirements herein.

The ALSDE will make all decisions regarding evaluation of the proposal. The ALSDE reserves the right to judge and determine whether a request is compliant with and has satisfactorily met the requirements of the RFP. The ALSDE reserves the right to waive technical and other defects if, in its judgment, the interest of the ALSDE so requires. Any further information disclosed about the RFP during this process will be provided to all vendors in a manner and method prescribed by the ALSDE.

Rejection of Proposal:

ALSDE reserves the right to reject any or all proposals which are deemed to be non-responsive, late in submission, or unsatisfactory in any way. ALSDE shall have no obligation to award a contract for work, goods and/or services as a result of this RFP.

Qualified bidders aggrieved in connection with the with the solicitation of a contract may protest to the Chief Procurement Officer. See generally State of Alabama Department of Finance Administrative Code Regulations at <https://finance.alabama.gov/media/rni4ga1/administrative-code-355-4-1-01-thru-06.pdf>.

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Confidentiality:

All information contained in the RFP is considered to be the exclusive property of the ALSDE. Recipients of this RFP are not to disclose any information contained within the RFP unless such information is publicly available. This RFP is provided for the sole purpose of allowing Vendors to respond to these specifications.

Selection Process:

The ALSDE will select the vendor that provides the most technically sound and cost-effective proposal that best fits the needs of the ALSDE. Final selection of the successful vendor will not be based solely on cost. The vendor product will be evaluated primarily on the scope of the activities linked to associated costs as detailed in the RFP. RFPs will be reviewed to ascertain that minimum requirements have been met. The ALSDE reserves the right to conduct discussions with potential vendors in order to clarify information contained in their proposals, but the ALSDE has no obligation to do so. This may include requesting a presentation of top finalists for final scoring. The vendor will provide notice to the ALSDE any partnership with another firm to provide parts of the solution; however, the vendor must provide management of the partner and is responsible for all project performance. Any subcontractor or partner will be subject to the same vetting process as the vendor, and the vendor is responsible for ensuring that each subcontractor acknowledges and is contractually bound by the staffing plan and other commitments listed in this RFP.

Unless provided by law, nothing in this RFP shall be construed to create any legal obligation on the part of the ALSDE or any respondents. The ALSDE reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to amend, suspend, terminate, or reissue the RFP in whole or in part, at any stage. In no event shall the ALSDE be liable to respondents for any cost or damages incurred in connection with the RFP process, including, but not limited to, any and all costs of preparing a response to this RFP or any other costs incurred in reliance on this RFP. No respondent shall be entitled to repayment from ALSDE for any costs, expenses, or fees related to the RFP. All supporting documentation submitted in response to the RFP will become the property of the ALSDE. Respondents may also withdraw their interest in the RFP, in writing, at any point in time, as more information becomes known. If, within the confines of this RFP, the vendor provides intellectual property be it understood that all RFP contents are subject to *Open Records Act* laws and thus are subsequently in the public domain.

Intent to Award

Division of Procurement will send out an intent to award to participating suppliers, defining the protest period. The Chief Procurement Officer (CPO), is the awarding authority and as such is a signatory on the agreement/contract.

Disclaimer Notice:

The ALSDE shall not be liable for any costs associated with the preparation of proposals or negotiations of a contract incurred by any party.

Availability of Funds:

It is expressly understood and agreed that the obligations of the ALSDE to proceed is conditioned upon the continued availability of funds that may be expended for these purposes.

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1.4 Conditions and Terms

Contract Terms:

The contract resulting from this RFP may be renewable for four (4) additional years pending written agreement of the vendor and the ALSDE, dependent upon required state approvals, availability of funds, performance evaluations of the project, at the full discretion of the ALSDE. The contract will commence pending Legislative Review Committee approval and the CPO's signature.

The vendor shall be fully prepared to commence work immediately after full execution of the contract by parties and the receipt of required governmental approvals.

Proposals should reference each element in the RFP by number on the cover of each copy and be arranged in the same sequence. All fees and costs are to be stated in United States currency. Vendors must reply to each element of the RFP.

Section 2.00 Scope

2.1 Scope of Vendor's Work and Responsibilities

Comprehensive Needs Assessment:

● **Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of Existing Efforts:**

- Examine existing school improvement plans and efforts.
- Analyze programs, strategies, and initiatives implemented to date.
- Review instructional practices, assessments, staffing models, and operational processes.
- Evaluate leadership capacity and competency at both school and district levels.
- Assess resources and identify equity gaps.
- Identify factors that have influenced the current state of the schools.

Assessment Areas:

- **Leadership Capacity and Competency:** Evaluate current leadership at both the school and district levels to determine their effectiveness in driving school improvement and student achievement.
- **Resource Allocation:** Assess the availability and utilization of resources to support educational initiatives and student success.
- **Equity Gaps:** Identify disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes among different student groups and provide recommendations to address these gaps.

Unbiased Evaluation:

- Ensure the assessments are objective and free from internal biases to provide a clear and accurate picture of the current state of the schools and districts.

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Wrap-Around Supports:

- Develop and align professional learning to meet the identified needs and improve instructional quality.
 - Include evidence-based literacy & math practices to enhance teacher instruction and student achievement.
- Outline of services to build schools' capacity in using data to inform decisions and improve instructional practices.

Deliverables:

- A comprehensive report detailing the findings of the needs assessment, including identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and actionable next steps.
 - Present findings to school and district leadership teams.
 - Collaborate with the ALSDE Office School Improvement on follow up and next steps

2.2 Scope of Alabama State Department of Education's Work and Responsibilities

The ALSDE OSI staff will work collaboratively with the selected vendor to:

- Provide vendor with background information about the CSI-R schools.
- Collaborate with the vendor in the comprehensive needs assessment and related services.
- Provide guidance on data collection tools.
- Notify the vendor of changes in timeline/expectations.
- Specify information to be included in the report(s).
- Assist in the planning stages of the comprehensive needs assessment.
- Support the implementation of recommended strategies and initiatives.
- Facilitate workshops and training sessions for teachers and school leaders.
- Engage school teams in using data and identified problems of practice to revise school improvement plans.

The ALSDE OSI staff are responsible for:

- Facilitating the establishment of school improvement goals to better meet student needs.
- Obtaining school and district schedules, participating personnel, and all other documents necessary to complete the comprehensive needs assessment.
- Providing technical assistance to LEAs (local education agencies), as needed.
- Coordinating the development and implementation of key goals within the continuous improvement plan (ACIP) based upon the findings of the comprehensive needs assessment.
- Reviewing and approving the continuous improvement plan (ACIP) and funding application for school improvement.
- Supporting implementation of research-based instructional strategies.
- Monitoring improvement progress of schools/systems.
- Directing the coordination of identified supports which may include, but not limited to the following: principal coach, instructional coach, math specialist, reading specialist, high school graduation coach. Articulating deadlines.
- Evaluating the deliverables.

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Section 3.00 General Requirements

3.1 Requirements of Proposal

The vendor must provide the following mandatory information. **Failure to provide this information may be cause for the proposal to be rejected.** Qualifications, experience, and cost will be evaluated for contract award. The proposal may be submitted under the same cover with Vendor Requirements and Cost Proposal in two distinct sections. E-verify information is required to be submitted for all employees to include contractors of the vendors if necessary and applicable.

Part I

Signed Cover Letter:

The cover letter shall serve as the first page of the vendor's proposal. The vendor shall complete the cover letter and attach it to the proposal in response to the RFP. The cover letter must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the vendor. It will state that the vendor is a legal entity that will meet the specifications. The cover letter must accompany the submitted proposal. The letter accompanying the proposal must have original signatures and must include contact numbers and e-mail addresses for the authorized official signing the letters.

Part II

Vendor Qualification and Experience:

Vendor shall provide satisfactory evidence of the vendor's capability to coordinate the types of activities and to provide the services described in the RFP in a timely manner. Special attention should be given to the discussion of qualifications. The discussion shall include a description of the vendor's background and relevant experience as related to the required activities in the RFP.

Part III

Vendor shall provide a detailed plan describing how the services will be performed to meet the requirements of the RFP. The description shall encompass the requirements of this RFP. The response must be prepared and organized in a clear and concise manner that is easily understandable.

Vendor Organization:

Describe your organizational structure and explain how your organization qualifies to be responsive to the requirements of this RFP.

References:

The vendor shall provide a minimum of three (3) references that can support and validate training and/or projects and outcomes, including names or persons who may be contacted, position of person, addresses, and phone numbers where similar training and/or projects to that described in this RFP have been conducted.

Executive Summary:

An executive summary is required. This summary will condense and highlight the contents of the vendor's proposal.

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Part IV

Cost Proposal:

Provide a budget proposal outlining the total cost of services requested in the RFP. You may provide a budget for the initial year of support and the four possible additional years (each done separately) of support and services to include the following:

- Detailed description of budget proposal.
- Detailed description of wrap around services.
- Budget Value, actual cost of work provided.

Be sure each year is broken down separately with explicit detail, as this contributes to the overall scoring.

Subcontractor Disclosure:

If the execution of work to be performed requires the hiring of subcontractors, **you must clearly state this in the bid proposal and provide qualification for such individuals.** Subcontractors must be identified and the services they will provide or work they will perform must be clearly defined. The ALSDE will not refuse a proposal based upon use of a subcontractor; however, the ALSDE reserves the right to refuse the subcontractor you have selected. Contractor and associated personnel shall remain solely responsible for the performance of all work, including work that may be subcontracted.

Describe your rationale for utilizing Subcontractors including relevant past experience partnering with stated subcontractor(s). Documents for E-verification of subcontractors are the sole responsibility of the contractor and must be available upon request to ensure compliance.

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Section 4.00 General Terms and Conditions

4.1 Governance

This RFP and its terms shall be governed and construed according to the laws of the State of Alabama. Any dispute arising out of this RFP shall be brought in the State of Alabama, with venue in Montgomery County, Alabama. Vendors agree to comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

4.2 Immigration

The proposal must contain a statement that the firm is aware of and in compliance with the requirements of the Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act; a statement that the vendor is enrolled in the E-Verify as required by Section 31-13-9 (b), Code of Alabama 1975, as amended:

BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT COMPLIANCE

The *Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act* (31-13-1 et seq, *Code of Alabama, 1975* as amended by Act 2012-491) regulates illegal immigration in the State of Alabama. All contracts with the State or political subdivision thereof must fully comply with each provision as provided by law.

A proposal must include a statement that the vendor has knowledge of this law and is in compliance. Before a contract is signed, the vendor awarded the contract must submit a Certificate of Compliance using the form at Appendix A. E-Verify enrollment can be accomplished at the website of the United States Department of Homeland Security at <http://www.uscis.gov>.

See Section 10 for additional language required by Section 10(k) of the Act to be included in the contract.

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4.3 Conflict of Interest

The vendor attests that no employee, officer, or agent of the vendor shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract if a real or apparent conflict of interest may be involved. A conflict would arise when the employee, officer, agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein has a financial or other interest in the organization selected for an award. The officers, employees, and agents of the vendor, if selected as the career planning system vendor, shall neither award nor offer gratuities, favors, nor anything of monetary value from vendors or subcontractors.

4.4 Discrimination

Alabama Non-Discrimination Statement:

No person shall be denied employment, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of disability, gender, race, religion, national origin, color, age, genetic information, or any other category protected under the law. Ref: Sec. 1983, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C.; Title VI and VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Sec. 504; Age Discrimination in Employment Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008; Equal Pay Act of 1963; Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972; Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008. Title IX Coordinator, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101 or call (334) 694-4717.

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APPENDIX "A"

State of _____)
County of _____)

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT (ACT 2011-535, as amended by ACT 2012-491)

DATE: _____

RE Contract/Grant/Incentive (describe by number or subject):

_____ by and between
_____ (Contractor/Grantee) and
_____ (State Agency, Department or Public Entity)

The undersigned hereby certifies to the State of Alabama as follows:

1. The undersigned holds the position of _____ with the Contractor/Grantee named above, and is authorized to provide representations set out in this Certificate as the official and binding act of that entity, and has knowledge of the provisions of THE BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT (ACT 2011-535 of the Alabama Legislature, as amended by ACT 2012-491) which is described herein as "the Act."
2. Using the following definitions from Section 3 of the Act, select and initial either (a) or (b), below, to describe the Contractor/Grantee's business structure.

BUSINESS ENTITY. Any person or group of persons employing one or more persons performing or engaging in any activity, enterprise, profession, or occupation for gain, benefit, advantage, or livelihood, whether for profit or not for profit.

a. Self-employed individuals, business entities filing articles of incorporation, partnerships, limited partnerships, limited liability companies, foreign corporations, foreign limited partnerships, and foreign limited liability companies authorized to transact business in this state, business trusts, and any business entity that registers with the Secretary of State.

b. Any business entity that possesses a business license, permit, certificate, approval, registration, charter, or similar form of authorization issued by the state, any business entity that is exempt by law from obtaining such a business license, and any business entity that is operating unlawfully without a business license.

EMPLOYER. Any person, firm, corporation, partnership, joint stock association, agent, manager, representative, foreman, or other person having control or custody of any employment, place of employment, or of any employee, including any person or entity employing any person for hire within the State of Alabama, including a public employer. This term shall not include the occupant of a household contracting with another person to perform casual domestic labor within the household.

____ (a) The Contractor/Grantee is a business entity or employer as those terms are defined in Section 3 of the Act.

____ (b) The Contractor/Grantee is not a business entity or employer as those terms are defined in Section 3 of the Act.

3. As of the date of this Certificate, the Contractor/Grantee does not knowingly employ an unauthorized alien within the State of Alabama and hereafter it will not knowingly employ, hire for employment, or continue to employ an unauthorized alien within the State of Alabama;
4. The Contractor/Grantee is enrolled in E-Verify unless it is not eligible to enroll because of the rules of that program or other factors beyond its control.

Certified this _____ day of _____ 20_____.

Name of Contractor/Grantee/Recipient
By: _____
Its _____

The above Certification was signed in my presence by the person whose name appears above, on this _____ day of _____ 20_____.

WITNESS: _____

Printed Name of Witness

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APPENDIX B

Written Proposal Template

The vendor must provide the following information in a binder with clearly labeled tabs and the coversheet provided for each section.

Part I: Signed Cover Letter

Part II: Executive Summary

Part III: Vendor Qualifications and Experience

Proposed Personnel

Vendor Comparable Clients and Work Samples

Vendor Organization

Vendor Qualifications

Part IV: Proposed Project Plan and Approach

Design Samples

Part IV: Cost Proposal

Subcontractor Disclosure