

Questions and Answers

RFP ALSDE 2024-15 - Career Planning Management Platform

| Question | Answer |
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| What is the requested go-live date for the Career Planning Management Platform? | The current contract in place ends September 30, 2024. We understand it is not reasonable to expect a platform to be operational by October 1, 2024. We will work with the selected vendor to develop an implementation timeline. |
| Can you please provide what type of data the State would like to view with the reporting capabilities requirement? EX: Students' favorited careers, students' progress toward graduation. | In addition to what you listed, platform usage; 4-year education plan progress/completion; complete of assessments; assessment data showing student interest, aptitude, values, and personality; occupations, industry clusters, and sectors that align with student profiles; electronic portfolio progress/completion (ex. resume is complete/in progress); parent engagement/usage |
| Can you please provide the total number of students in grades K-12? | As of 8.13.24 – 706,612 |
| Can you please provide the total number of Elementary students in grades K-5? | As of 8.13.24 – 325,346 |
| Can you please provide the total number of Middle School students in grades 6-8? | As of 8.13.24 – 162,105 |
| Can you please provide the total number of students in grade 8 alone? | As of 8.13.24 – 54,562 |
| Can you please provide the total number of High School students in grades 9-12? | As of 8.13.24 – 219,161 |
| What is the intended date of implementation for services? | The current contract in place ends September 30, 2024. We understand it is not reasonable to expect a platform to be operational by October 1, 2024. We will work with the selected vendor to develop an implementation timeline. |
| Is this RFP for an awarded contract or does this add the winning bid to a catalog of options for the state? | Our intention is to enter into a contract with the selected vendor. |
| What is the span of implementation anticipated? (Which students will be served?) | The Career Planning Management Platform should serve students in K-12. |
| Are we required to meet all requirements of the Scope before responding, or is it permissible to respond and address each component with an | Yes, it is permissible to respond and address each component with an explanation of what the vendor can/cannot do? |

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| <p>explanation of what we can/cannot do? The scope says "The vendor's proposal should fully address all components outlined below with clarity and precision." Can I clarify that our <u>proposal</u> must address all components, but not necessarily that our solution must have a feature for all components?</p> | |
| <p>Do prospective vendors need to be registered to transact business in the state of Alabama, or is it sufficient to provide a vendor number with The Alabama Department of Finance, Division of Procurement?</p> | <p>No. However, the vendor must be currently registered with The Alabama Department of Finance, Division of Procurement as a State Vendor and provide vendor number.</p> |
| <p>Can the ALSDE please confirm the breakdown of sites and students requiring licenses by grade?</p> | <p>As of 8.13.24 Total K-12 Enrollment - 706,612 Total K-5 - 325,346 Total 6-8 - 162,105 Total 9-12 - 219,161</p> |
| <p>Can ALSDE please advise what will be the initial length of the contract, as the RFP only references renewals?</p> | <p>Our intent is for the initial contract to be for two years.</p> |
| <p>What is ALSDE's desired timeline for implementation?</p> | <p>The current contract in place ends September 30, 2024. We understand it is not reasonable to expect a platform to be operational by October 1, 2024. We will work with the selected vendor to develop an implementation timeline.</p> |
| <p>If ALSDE is at liberty to share, what is the annual value of the current contract in place for its college and career readiness platform?</p> | <p>We can't disclose budget information.</p> |
| <p>Does the contract include private schools and/or charter schools? Does the contract cover adult education students enrolled in LEAs?</p> | <p>This platform is for public K-12 schools.</p> |
| <p>If ALSDE is able to share, can you please provide more clarity on who would be included in the Evaluation Committee, as well as which departments will be represented? If at all</p> | <p>The evaluation committee will be made up of individuals from Career and Technical Education, Instructional Services (houses school counseling), and Information Systems.</p> |

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| possible, we would appreciate the names and titles of the members of the committee. | |
| The Evaluation Criteria consisting of 3 parts: Vendor qualifications and experience; Budget proposal; Detailed description and delivery of training, materials, presentations, and/or modules, seems to align to section 3.1 Requirements of Proposal, specifically Part II, Part III and Part IV. Should the actual product description that explicitly addresses the requirements in section 2.1 Scope of Vendor's Work and Responsibilities be included in Part II of the response, or Part III? | Depending on what part of the scope of vendor's work and responsibilities you are addressing, it is acceptable for the response to be in either part II or part III. |
| Is it permissible to include optional items in the cost proposal? | Yes. |
| Are we able to provide the electronic version of the proposal in PDF format? | Electronic proposals will not be accepted. Proposals should be mailed to: Cindy Gillespie Office of Operations Alabama State Department of Education 50 North Ripley Street, Room P305 Gordon Persons Building Montgomery, AL 36104 |
| Should the test preparation resources listed in Section 2.1 of the RFP be included in the base price within our Cost Proposal or listed as an optional add-on? | Included in cost proposal. |
| Is the cost of test preparation resources included in the current contract? | Yes. |
| Can you please confirm the breakdown of sites by elementary, middle and high school, which will require licenses? | Approximate number of buildings that have some combination of K-5 – 854 Approximate number of buildings that have some combination of 6-8 - 630 Approximate number of buildings that have some combination of 9-12 -396 |

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| <p>The RFP states that in addition to the printed proposal vendors must also submit one electronic copy on a USB flash drive in MS Word format. We wanted to enquire if it was possible to provide this electronic copy in PDF format instead?</p> | <p>Submit via USB flash drive in MS Word format.</p> |
| <p>What grades will be using Career Planning Management Platform?</p> | <p>K-12</p> |
| <p>What is the enrollment for each grade using the Career Planning Platform?</p> | <p>As of 8.13.24 Total K-12 Enrollment - 706,612 Total K-5 - 325,346 Total 6-8 - 162,105 Total 9-12 - 219,161</p> |
| <p>When do you expect to implement the Career Planning Management Platform? In the 2024-2025 or 2025-2026 academic years or other?</p> | <p>The current contract in place ends September 30, 2024. We understand it is not reasonable to expect a platform to be operational by October 1, 2024. We will work with the selected vendor to develop an implementation timeline.</p> |
| <p>What are the expectations around implementation for your districts?</p> | <p>We expect the selected vendor to work with the ALSDE to development an implementation plan. Once the implementation plan is developed, we expect the selected vendor to take the lead in onboarding and training district personnel.</p> |
| <p>Which type of references would be most helpful in assessing vendors: state program references, Alabama-specific references, or both?</p> | <p>Both.</p> |
| <p>Does the state have a process for approving additional subcontractors not listed in the initial proposal, or are we required to list any/all potential subcontractors in our response?</p> | <p>The proposal should include any subcontractors the vendor works with. However, all ALSDE engagement will be with the selected vendor only.</p> |
| <p>Will you please clarify what is meant by “interactive and engaging resources including lesson plans, activities, and presentations”? How would you define interactive resources?</p> | <p>Interactive and engaging resources refer to educational materials designed to actively involve students in the learning process, rather than passively receiving information. These resources aim to stimulate interest, participation, and deeper understanding. Topics should center around Career Awareness, Career Exploration, and Career Preparation. Topic examples can be found in the Career Preparedness course of study and the Alabama Career Development Model.</p> |

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| <p>Will you please share the process you will take post-RFP submissions to evaluate vendors? What milestones can we expect in this process?</p> | <p>After the RFP submission deadline, a team of people will score each RFP. The team will either select a vendor or narrow to top vendors and request a formal presentation.</p> |
| <p>You have stated that one of the desired outcomes is to “collect feedback and evaluate the effectiveness of Career Planning Management Platform”. Is there a required or suggested cadence for the Alabama team to perform your evaluative process? Do you expect that this evaluation can be conducted using our platform functions or by third parties?</p> | <p>Our goal is to have a method to collect feedback from stakeholders and address any concerns or issues in a timely manner. Additionally, in collaboration with the selected vendor, we also plan to develop a process for annual feedback and review or services (ex. focus groups, surveys, etc.).</p> |
| <p>RE: “It is required that each vendor clearly mark the envelope RFP ALSDE 2024-15 in the lower left corner of the envelope.” Q: One original copy plus four copies will need to be bound and boxed for safe shipping. Does it suffice for the exterior of the box to be labeled, or do you expect each binder to be in a marked envelope within the larger shipping box?</p> | <p>Labeled on the exterior of the box is fine.</p> |
| <p>How many students is this RFP for? Can you provide a breakdown of students in grades 6-12? How many buildings serve grades K-5? How many districts in total?</p> | <p>As of 8.13.24 Total K-12 Enrollment - 706,612 Total K-5 - 325,346 Total 6-8 - 162,105 Total 9-12 - 219,161 Approximate number of buildings that have some combination of K-5 – 854 Approximate number of districts - 153</p> |
| <p>Is an e-signature acceptable?</p> | <p>Yes</p> |
| <p>Is AlabamaBuys the procurement portal from which we attain our vendor number, or do we refer to the STAARS portal? (Alabama Buys uses the term “supplier number” but it appears to</p> | <p>Yes. If you need assistance, contact Alabama Buys at: alabamabuys@purchasing.alabama.gov Phone 334-353-0700</p> |

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| be the same as the “vendor number” in the STAARS portal.) | |
| How will we be notified of addenda and where will it be posted? | Any addenda will be posted to STARRS and https://www.alabamaachieves.org/ . |
| Page 11 reads, “See section 10 for additional language require.” the RFP does not have a section 10. Is there more information on what we need to address for the items in Section 4.00 General Terms and Conditions, specifically 4.2? | No additional information. The vendor must submit APPENDIX “A” with their proposal. |
| Do you have an anticipated decision date? | After the RFP submission deadline, a team of people will score each RFP. The team will either select a vendor or narrow to top vendors and request a formal presentation. Once a vendor is selected, we will notify state purchasing and their office will make the award announcement. |
| What grade levels require test prep? | Test Prep should focus on 9-12. |
| RE: SOW requirement, “Interactive and engaging resources including lesson plans, activities, and presentations.” Q: Are you interested in “activities” within the platform or ancillary activities? | Prefer within the platform, but open to both. |
| RE: SOW requirement, “Does the vendor have experience working with K12 partners to provide career planning services.” Q: Can you expand on what you mean by “career planning services”? | Career Planning Services refer to a range of support and guidance offered to individuals to help them identify, pursue, and achieve their career goals. See section 2.1 Scope of Vendor's Work and Responsibilities. |
| Is the State dissatisfied with its current vendor? | We can’t disclose information regarding the current vendor. |
| What is the expected launch date of the platform? | The current contract in place ends September 30, 2024. We understand it is not reasonable to expect a platform to be operational by October 1, 2024. We will work with the selected vendor to develop an implementation timeline. |
| What is the budget? | We can’t disclose budget information. |
| Broken down by grade, how many students is the platform expected to serve? | As of 8.13.24 Total K-12 Enrollment - 706,612 Total K-5 - 325,346 Total 6-8 - 162,105 |

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| | Total 9-12 - 219,161 |
| Given the relatively quick turnaround for a RFP for a statewide platform – and the fact that the current vendor’s contract ends on Sept 30th, is the State truly considering a new vendor? | We understand it is not reasonable to expect a platform to be operational by October 1, 2024. We will work with the selected vendor to develop an implementation timeline. |
| Due to time to mail and appropriately take into account the State's response to questions, will the State extend the submission deadline by 2 weeks to September 11, 2024? | No. Proposals must be received no later than 4:00PM Central on August 28, 2024. |
| Has the State received or had any demonstrations, sales presentation, or exploratory discussions with any Vendor regarding this capability prior to the release of this RFP? | We can’t disclose information regarding other vendors. |
| Has the State received any assistance in the creation of requirements from any Vendor? | No. |
| If the State intends to award subsequent Operations and Maintenance (O&M) contracts for post go-live support, how many years of O&M does the State expect the Vendor to propose for costing? Can the State clarify for the initial contract, is it an implementation plus four (4) year O&M contract? Can the State clarify what the scope of work is included in the 'management'? Will the Vendor strictly manage the O&M or is does the State plan for a mixed O&M team of both Vendor and State resources? | Our intent is for the initial contract to be for two years and renew for an additional 3 three years (total 5 years). All O&M costs should be included in the budget proposal. The vendor and ALSDE will collaborate to develop a management plan. However, the bulk of management responsibilities will fall to the selected vendor. |
| What is the expected budgetary range for this project? | We can’t disclose budget information. |
| How is the State expecting to fund this? Is this through Federal Grant, State Funding, etc? If it is through Federal Grant will the State identify the Grant and any publicly available | We can’t disclose funding sources. |

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| <p>documentation pertaining to the State's proposal for the grant. This includes intended Grant Project Proposals, expected outcomes, timelines, etc.</p> | |
| <p>What is the solution delivery model does the State expects? For example, does the State only expect to pay for licensing only (SaaS), does the State expect to pay for licensing and hosting or infrastructure costs (PaaS/IaaS)?</p> | <p>The selected vendor is expected to handle all of this.</p> |
| <p>Will the state further explain the Evaluation Criteria as it relates to "modules" in "Detailed description and delivery of training materials, presentations, and/or modules". Is "modules" in relation to training and presentations or in relation to the solution itself?</p> | <p>We expect the selected vendor to work with the ALSDE to development an implementation plan. Once the implementation plan is developed, we expect the selected vendor to take the lead in onboarding and training district personnel. In this context, modules is in relation to training.</p> |
| <p>Is there any legacy data migration expected within this project? If so, can the state provide the number or data sources and their schemas? Are these sources owned and maintained by the State or provided by Third Party Vendors? What are the exected number of tables and columns and is the data uniform (e.g. are the columns and values year over year consistent/standardized)?</p> | <p>No.</p> |
| <p>Are there other systems and platforms expected to integrate or interface with the solution beyond the PowerSchool SIS? Does the State expect the awarded Vendor to create an interface(s) for PowerSchool and other third party systems or does the State expect the awarded Vendor to integrate with an already developed interface by the third party systems?</p> | <p>At this point, just PowerSchool SIS. The Career Planning Management Platform should have its own interface.</p> |

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| Does the solution need to integrate with only student emails or can students use personal emails? | This will be determined during implementation planning. |
| Does the State have a preference for a custom solution, custom off the shelf product, or hybrid? If so which is preferred? Does the State expect to custom develop a solution specific to the State's needs or does the State intend to use the framework or similar product implemented for other States? | We prefer to have customization options. |
| What technology (e.g. Powerschool, Snowflake)/technology stack (e.g. Microsoft, Salesforce, Oracle, etc.) is primarily used or would like to be used by ALSDE? | PowerSchool SIS. |
| Does the State have a preference for an on-premise solution or cloud-native solution? If so what is the State's preference? | These decisions will be made during the contract negotiations and data management planning with the selected vendor. |
| Does the State have an expected go-live date and project timeline and is the timeline a phased approach? Will the State please provide this information. | The current contract in place ends September 30, 2024. We understand it is not reasonable to expect a platform to be operational by October 1, 2024. We will work with the selected vendor to develop an implementation timeline. |
| What is the States roll out plan for the end users? Does the State intend to Proof of Concept to a small group of schools, industry, etc., or does the State intend to open enrollment to everyone at the same time? | These decisions will be made during the implementation timeline planning with the selected vendor. |
| Does the State have a technical team (i.e., developers, infrastructure, system admins, etc.) expected to work side by side with the vendor for design, develop, and implementation activities? If so, can you elaborate on the expected coordination and collaboration? | ALSDE personnel will be involved in each phase of the project. The level of involvement will be determined during implementation timeline planning with the selected vendor. |

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| <p>Are notifications required? If so, are notifications expected to be internal to the solution (e.g. via alerts within the system) or external (e.g. via email)?</p> | <p>These decisions will be made during the implementation planning with the selected vendor.</p> |
| <p>What type of reporting should the Administrative Dashboard include? Does the State expect to create any publicly accessible reports? Does the State want interactive business intelligence report and/or to provide defined reports for export? If the latter, will the State provide an example?</p> | <p>Dashboard information/reports should include but not limited to 4-year education plan progress/completion; complete of assessments; assessment data showing student interest, aptitude, values, and personality; occupations, industry clusters, and sectors that align with student profiles; electronic portfolio progress/completion (ex. resume is complete/in progress); parent engagement/usage.</p> <p>At this point, we don't expect any public accessible reports.</p> <p>Additional reporting decisions will be made during the implementation planning.</p> |
| <p>What types of data does the State plan to expose through this Platform and by what age/grades?</p> | <p>4-year education plan progress/completion; complete of assessments; assessment data showing student interest, aptitude, values, and personality; occupations, industry clusters, and sectors that align with student profiles; electronic portfolio progress/completion (ex. resume is complete/in progress); parent engagement/usage.</p> <p>Grades K-5 Grades 6-8 Grades 9-12</p> |
| <p>What are the registration requirements for each type of person (e.g. Student, Teacher, Post Secondary, Business, etc)? Does the State expect the system to manage this registration process?</p> | <p>Specific registration requirements will be determined during the implementation planning with the selected vendor. Yes, the selected vendor will manage the registration process.</p> |
| <p>Does the state currently maintain physical or digital versions of the four-year plans? Are these current plans expected to be migrated by the vendor? If so, what is the format and structure of the data (e.g. are these pdfs or data)?</p> | <p>Currently, school systems can manage 4-year plans electronically or physical hard copies. At this point, we don't plan to migrate that data.</p> |

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| <p>Will the State please elaborate on the scope of work for the high quality, tested, and proven career assessments conducted within the solution--can the State provide currently approved and used career assessments? Will the State be providing the logic and measurements for the career assessment evaluations, or does the State want the vendor to staff a subject matter expert on career assessment evaluations and measurements?</p> | <p>We can't disclose current assessments being used. The ALSDE will work with the selected vendor to develop assessments during implementation.</p> |
| <p>What is the golden source ALSDE uses for workforce information?</p> | <p>There are multiple workforce information sources. The ALSDE will work with the selected vendor to identify appropriate sources during implementation.</p> |
| <p>Does this system need to support SSO for all integrated systems?</p> | <p>Yes.</p> |
| <p>What is the volume of users expected to be in the system? Please provide the anticipated volume by type of person (Student, Educator, Parent).</p> | <p>As of 8.13.24 student counts Total K-12 Enrollment - 706,612 Total K-5 - 325,346 Total 6-8 - 162,105 Total 9-12 - 219,161 Approximate total educators - 47,335</p> |
| <p>Will the State provide a list of expected schools, districts, school systems, workforce regions, state level agencies, and other entities expected to operate within this system? If the State is unable to provide this list, can the State identify every type of person/entity expected to operate in the system?</p> | <p>Primarily users will be students, educators, and parents.</p> |
| <p>Does the State expect the solution to allow Industry and Post Secondary Institution users to directly interact within the system? If so, will the State provide a list of expected Business and Industry and Post Secondary Institution Partners</p> | <p>Potentially. Specifics will be determined during implementation planning with the selected vendor. There is no list available.</p> |

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| or an estimated number of expected users, per type? | |
| Are there additional user types expected to interact within the system that were not identified in the requirements? If so, will the State identify the user types and expected volume of users? | No. |
| Does the State have a defined governance process the system must enforce for each expected process? | The ALSDE will work with the selected vendor to identify appropriate governance structure during implementation planning. |
| Does the State expect the system to provide for communications services (e.g. internal or external messaging, video conferencing, etc.)? | Potentially. Specifics will be determined during implementation planning with the selected vendor. |
| What security and privacy requirements exist for each age group? For example, does the State expect a Business or Industry Partner to be able to view information on a kindergartner? | These decisions will be made during the data management planning with the selected vendor. |
| Does the State expect this solution to be mobile friendly? | Preferred not required. |
| Is it expected for School staff to be able to load lesson plans, activities, and presentations into the solution or integrate with another system or provide links to the resources such as for test preparation resources? | School staff will not be loading lesson plans, etc. The Career Planning Management Platform should provide Interactive and engaging resources including lesson plans, activities, and presentations. |
| What security and privacy requirements are expected to be incorporated into this system, (e.g. FERPA, HIPAA)? | The selected vendor must adhere to the Alabama Administrative Code and all state and federal laws surrounding student data security and privacy. |
| Does the State have a preference for virtual or in-person training? If in-person, what are the expected locales for providing training? | We expect there will be both virtual and in person training opportunities. We will work with the selected vendor to determine training locations during implementation planning. |

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| <p>Does the State currently have a solution for this capability? If so, the State responded that data migration was not in scope. Can the state confirm that it does currently have a solution for this capability and that there is no data migration required or in scope for the new proposal?</p> | <p>Yes, we currently have a solution for this capability. No, we don't expect any data migration.</p> |
| <p>Page 2, Item 1: The requirement states that the electronic copy of the proposal package must be in MS Word. Would you accept PDF?</p> | <p>No. Submit via USB flash drive in MS Word format.</p> |
| <p>Page 2, Item 3, 2nd sentence states, "Verification of enrollment in E-Verify should be presented on the form found in Appendix A." Is this requirement stating that filling out Appendix A meets this requirement? Or is there additional verification of enrollment in E-Verify required to be attached to Appendix A?</p> | <p>Appendix A should be submitted.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>E-verify information is required to be submitted for all employees to include contractors of the vendors if necessary and applicable.</p> |
| <p>Page 5, Item 1.2: Can you share your timeline for evaluations, contract award, and implementation start date?</p> | <p>We will work with the selected vendor to develop an implementation timeline. After the RFP submission deadline, a team of people will score each RFP. The team will either select a vendor or narrow to top vendors and request a formal presentation.</p> |
| <p>Page 5, Item 1.3: Can you describe your scoring methodology for the 30 points awarded for the budget proposal? Is it a wholly objective measure where the lowest bidder receives all 30 points and each subsequent higher bidder receives a pro-rata share of the points in relation to the lowest bid? Or are there other subjective measures (i.e. amount of detail in the budget proposal) that ALSDE will use in awarding a score for this portion of the Evaluation Criteria?</p> | <p>We will evaluate the budget proposal as follows:</p> <p>Budget justification: Proposal provides justification and rationale for each budget line item.</p> <p>Cost-effectiveness: Assessment of the proposed costs in relation to the anticipated benefits and outcomes.</p> <p>Realism: Evaluation of whether the proposed budget is realistic and feasible given the scope and requirements of the project; and assessment of whether the proposed budget fits within available funding.</p> |

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| <p>Page 9: Can you clarify how you would like the proposal structured for each of the Parts? Should each “Part” be a separate document? Or is a binder with Tabs for each Part acceptable? Does the Cost Proposal Part need to be sealed separately from the other three Parts? Also, is the order of the content listed within Part III important or are we free to adjust?</p> | <p>The proposal should be organized in an easy to navigate/easy to read format. Binder with tabs is acceptable.</p> <p>No, the cost proposal doesn’t need to be sealed separately.</p> <p>You are free to adjust, but requested information should be present.</p> |
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