

Alabama State Department of Education



Request for Proposal

RFP ALSDE 2025-01

**Educational Resource Platform for Students with the
Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities
Alabama State Department of Education
Special Education Services Section**

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

Cindy Gillespie

Office of Operations

Alabama State Department of Education

Email: rfpproposals@alsde.edu

Deadline: NEW ELECTRONIC PROCEDURES FOR SUBMISSION

Proposals must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on February 24, 2025

It is required that each vendor clearly note the RFP number & Vendor Name in the subject line and email to: rfpproposals@alsde.edu

The proposal package must contain the following and be submitted electronically.

1. The proposal must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the vendor to the information provided.
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.

Pursuant to Alabama Administrative Code 355-4-3.03(12), proposal openings are not open to the public

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Section 1.00 Administrative Overview

1.1 Purpose and Background

Purpose:

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), Special Education Services (SES) section, seeks the submission of proposals from vendors that can provide a platform with an expansive collection of educational resources for teachers who work with students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The population of students that would benefit from this educational platform are the students with extensive support needs identified in Alabama as the students with the most significant cognitive disability (IQ score typically 55 and below) with concurrent adaptive behavior deficits. Sometimes due to the nature of their disability, these students require specialized strategies to help them show progress in the educational setting. The platform must provide resources in the areas of English language arts, reading, math, science, social studies, and writing. The ALSDE is requesting a vendor(s) with established and diverse clients and proven experience in providing educational resources.

Background:

Students with the most significant cognitive disability struggle with acquiring learning ideas, skills, or concepts with degrees of accuracy. Through repetition and engaging activities, the students show motivation and interest when interactive methods are incorporated into learning. Student learning thrives when there is continuous reinforcement. These students also react well to embedded rewards or positive reinforcement in learning.

Students with the most significant cognitive disability struggle with the fluency stage of learning. In the fluency stage, the emphasis is on enhancing efficiency by honing precision and achieving the right pace in execution. Teachers individualize lessons with this in mind for each student and having a platform to pull resources (e.g., activities, games, songs) is an invaluable tool. By providing educational resources on varying grade levels teachers can find the zone of proximal development for the student while minimizing the need for prompts and aiding in accuracy for the student in completion of learning tasks.

Students with the most significant cognitive disability struggle with the maintenance of skills, ideas, or concepts. Teachers can promote skill maintenance by reassigning individualized content for the student and checking specific skills identified as a target for the student. The student can show this third step in the learning process if the new skill can be done without reteaching. In other words, the individual's performance is reliable, although it may not yet be adaptable.

Students with the most significant cognitive disability struggle with the final stage in the learning process, generalization. Generalization involves applying a skill across various environments, to diverse individuals, or using different resources.

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Those eligible to apply must provide evidence of experience in providing:

- Resources that use leading pedagogical practices.
- Digital resources, tools, and learning materials developed by educational experts.
- Instructional content embedded into the core mechanics of gameplay.
- Scaffolded material.
- Resources developed by content experts in English language arts, reading, math, science, social studies, and writing.
- Resources that are aligned to content standards in the core areas.
- Differentiated instructional materials that respond to a variety of learning needs and teaching models, including special education.
- Resources for a diverse background of students.

The ALSDE is seeking a vendor(s) that is well established and has the infrastructure to successfully manage a platform comprised of an expansive collection of educational resources.

Each proposal must outline the vendor’s qualifications including (a) vendor experience, (b) vendor experience with similar projects, and (c) vendor technical capabilities.

1.2 Anticipated Timetable

February 10, 2025	Question Submission Deadline
February 11, 2025	Question Responses Due
February 24, 2025	Proposal Submission Deadline

NOTE: All questions must be emailed to rfaqanda@alsde.edu by the deadline noted above. All Q & A will be posted in STAARS and Alabama Achieves website [Alabama State Department of Education - Alabama Achieves - ALSDE](#) on the designated date noted above.

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. This RFP may be awarded to multiple vendors.

Evaluation Criteria:

Vendor qualifications and experience	25 points
Executive Summary	5 points
Detailed description of the Service and/or Product	40 points
Budget Proposal	30 points

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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/rnii4ga1/administrative-code-355-4-1-01-thru-06.pdf>.

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 reserves the right to select more than one vendor to provide the service and/or product. The ALSDE will select the vendor(s) that provide the most technically sound and cost-effective proposal that best fits the needs of the ALSDE. Final selection of the successful vendor(s) will not be based solely on cost. The vendor(s) 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 ALSDE or any respondents. 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 ALSDE be liable to respondents for any cost

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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 CPO, Chief Procurement Officer, 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.

1.4 **Conditions and Terms**

Contract Terms:

The AGENCY intends to execute an initial contract with Contractor for a period of up to two (2) years, with up to three (3) one-year renewal options, pending written agreement of the vendor and AGENCY, dependent upon required state approvals, availability of funds, performance evaluations of the project, at the full discretion of the AGENCY. The contract will commence pending CPO signature, Legislative Review Committee approval, and Governor's signature. Each contract renewal will be presented to the Legislative Oversight Committee for approval.

The vendor shall be fully prepared to commence work 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.

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Section 2.00 Scope

2.1 Scope of Vendor's Work and Responsibilities

The ALSDE is seeking proposals from eligible applicants to provide a platform of educational resources to improve educational outcomes for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in Alabama.

The service and/or product provided should include:

- Lesson plans, guided lessons, worksheets, videos, and workbooks by grade, subject, and skill.
- Educational resources in the areas of English language arts, reading, math, science, social studies, and writing.
- Educational resources that are differentiated by skill level and specifically to students identified as having the most significant cognitive disability.
- Hands-on learning, project-based learning, and student-centered activities.
- Instructional approaches/strategies (e.g., active listening, student-to-student engagement, teaching to multiple learning styles).
- Digital resources that are grade-appropriate and engaging.
- Educational resources such as interactive stories, science experiments, games, songs, and stories with options for the student to be read to or read on his or her own.
- Individual student accounts.
- Ability to access on multiple devices (e.g., Chromebooks, laptops, desktops, interact whiteboards, and tablets)
- Virtual training demonstrations for teachers and administrative staff.
- Provide educators the ability to sort resources according to grade level, subject, student interest, and student engagement.
- A platform that could allow teacher and student access across settings and locations in case of classroom setting interruptions a student could face (e.g., illness, hospital stays, medical stays, medical recoveries).
- A platform that will allow teachers the ability to generate reports of progress.
- A platform where teachers can view the student's view of the platform.
- A platform where teachers can easily add and delete learning activities for students based on need and ability.
- A teacher dashboard or student data collection system.
- Ability to create student rosters and track progress in digital learning programs.
- A report of student learning with identification of student's strengths, weaknesses, progress, and mastery.
- Recommendations for resources targeted to student's problem areas.
- Resources for each of the districts and local education agencies (LEAs) in Alabama by separate accounts.
- Individual access to each district/LEA account for the Special Education Coordinator (of the district/LEA).
- Individual access to each district/LEA account for the ALSDE-SES representative (over all districts/LEAs).

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- Provide requested amounts of individual teacher access points to the resources within each of the district/LEA accounts.
- Technical assistance to LEAs and service providers as needed.
- Ensure that content conforms with Section 508 requirements and is accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- Maintain compliance with the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) and other privacy laws; and ensure that all data collected, managed, stored, transmitted, used, reported, and destroyed is done so in a way that preserves and protects individual and collective privacy rights and ensures confidentiality and security of collected data.

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

The ALSDE will collaborate with the selected vendor(s) to ensure local education agencies (LEAs) have the information needed to access the platform. The ALSDE will obtain and keep current the school and district teacher information to ensure accounts are current. The ALSDE is responsible for evaluating deliverables, initiating contracts, processing and paying invoices, and communicating with the LEAs.

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

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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.

Part IV

Cost Proposal:

Vendor shall include the fee structure and pricing for the training sessions/program if applicable or requested. The vendor shall submit a cost proposal in addition to other required information.

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.** Sub-Contractors 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.

Subcontractors may not be employees/agents of the ALSDE or LEA, nor any entity or agency receiving education trust funds.

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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.

Per the current FPPM: Non-appropriation and Proration (Section 41-4-144(c)).

<https://comptroller.alabama.gov/fiscal-policy-procedures/>

When funds are not appropriated or otherwise made available to support continuation of performance in a subsequent fiscal period, the contract shall be cancelled, and, to the extent permissible by law, the supplier shall be reimbursed for the reasonable value of any non-recurring costs incurred but not amortized in the price of the supplies or services delivered under the contract. To the extent permissible by law, this cost of cancellation may be paid from any appropriations available for that purpose.

In the event that proration of appropriated funds from which the State is to pay the supplier is declared by the Governor pursuant to Section 41-4-90 of the Code of Alabama, the contractor shall have the option, in addition to the other remedies of the contract, of renegotiating the contract to extend or change payment terms or amounts, or terminating the contract. In all circumstances, it is agreed that the terms and commitments of this contract shall not constitute a debt of the State of Alabama in violation of Section 213 of the Constitution of Alabama, as amended.”

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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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.

4.3 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.

4.3 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Systems

AI Model Development and Use Attestation:

The proposal shall include a written statement attesting to the following:

- a. Pretrained AI System: The AI System to be provided in the performance of this RFP have been pretrained.
- b. Responsibility in AI System Development: The vendor used all responsible measures necessary during the development of the AI System to be provided in the performance of this RFP.
- c. Human-in-the-Loop AI System Training: A human-in-the-loop approach was used, wherever possible, in the training of the AI System, ensuring human oversight and intervention were integral parts to the AI System training process.
- d. Unbiased Data Selection and Algorithm Development: The process of data selection for AI System training was conducted in an unbiased manner, wherever possible, adhering to the principles of fairness and non-discrimination.
- e. Expected Outcomes: The results produced by the AI System met the expected outcomes as identified and defined by the vendor.

The vendor further attests and agrees that any violation of this subsection will be considered a material breach of this RFP, and may result in its termination, legal action, or both, at the sole discretion of the ALSDE.

If the vendor's software solution does not use, contain or incorporate Artificial Intelligence (AI), the proposal shall include a written statement attesting that the software solution does not use, contain, or incorporate any AI.

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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