

Massachusetts Priority Partners for Turnaround Initiative

Priority Partner RFQ: Effective Use of Data

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and
Secondary Education

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Attachment A- 12RFQAPAMV9

Background

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (the Department) is committed to supporting sustainable efforts to turnaround low performing schools identified as Level 3 or 4 in the Massachusetts Framework for District and School Accountability. As part of this commitment, the Department seeks to develop a network of educational improvement service providers to support districts in their turnaround initiatives.

The Department seeks additional information from educational improvement service providers that offer research-proven services (to assist schools in implementing effective, intensive, turnaround interventions and measuring their progress toward achievable, sustained outcomes.

This Request for a Quote (RFQ) addresses the effective use of data component of the Conditions for School Effectiveness: Student Assessment and Effective Instruction (Conditions 9 and 11). Additional RFQ's will be issued to focus on other Conditions for School Effectiveness. Vendors approved under these conditions in 10APAJPI by August 1, 2011 are eligible to apply.

Purpose

Over the past 12 months, the Department has prequalified, through Request for Response 10APAJPI (Supporting the Conditions for School Effectiveness), educational services providers that can support the schools and districts in meeting the Conditions for School Effectiveness. Prequalified providers under this RFR are now eligible to become part of the network of Priority Partners for Turnaround. Only the most rigorous interventions that hold the promise of rapid improvement for student achievement will be implemented through the support of Race to the Top funds.

Cities and Towns are eligible to use certain contracts procured by Commonwealth Departments that issue procurements subject to 801 CMR 21.00. Any Cities and Towns exercising this right must execute their own contract and any additional legal terms with the awarded vendor and are responsible for any contract management, performance or payment issues relative to their contract.

This RFQ invites responses from organizations, currently approved under 10APAJPI in these categories, that help districts and schools effectively use student data to accelerate student achievement and contribute to district and school turnaround efforts. The capacity to analyze and use student data to drive decision-making as part of a continuous improvement process is essential to district and school turnaround efforts and sustained improvement. This includes regularly reviewing and monitoring student assessment data and other pertinent student data to:

- prioritize goals
- inform instructional practice
- place students, monitor progress, and drive timely interventions as part of a system of tiered instruction
- initiate, modify, or discontinue programs and services
- maximize effectiveness in allocating human and financial resources

To help districts effectively use student data, providers will address components of an integrated

approach and offer products and services accordingly, including but not limited to:

- Specific processes used to collect, analyze, review, and report results of assessments of student learning
- Coaching, mentoring, and/or facilitating leaders and instructional staff on using data real time
- Professional development and ongoing assistance in developing student assessments, analyzing assessment data, drawing meaningful conclusions from the results, and tailoring instruction accordingly
- Strategic assistance and training in interpreting and analyzing the implications of a range of student data and using it to implement an iterative, action-oriented process in which districts/schools use data to support continuous improvement grounded in evidence and target resources accordingly.
- Training and ongoing assistance in monitoring student data throughout the year in order to ascertain progress toward goals identified in school improvement plans and to make needed adjustments to programs, policies, services or supervision practices.

Vendors selected will work in cooperation with state, district, and school staff members, principals, teachers, community partners, and other providers. They will also be expected to learn about the work of colleagues in the network of priority partners across subject areas and Massachusetts districts.

In addition to being a pre-qualified provider, organizations that are selected as a result of this process will be:

- Included on the Race to the Top 2011-2012 list of Priority Partners for Turnaround for Effective Use of Data. This will allow districts participating in Race to the Top Initiative 6A to enter into contracts directly with the Providers using Race to the Top funds.

The purpose of the list of Priority Partners for Turnaround is to provide a resource for districts that choose to utilize the support and services from state-approved Priority Partners in their efforts to effectively use student data. The Department will disseminate the list to Massachusetts schools and districts to support their selection of providers. It is expected that providers that are included on the 2011-2012 list will be available to assist eligible schools during the 2011-2012 school year. Inclusion on the list does not, however, guarantee that an organization will be chosen to serve districts or schools. Similarly, this RFQ process does not carry an award of state or federal funds. If a school or district chooses to select one of the approved vendors on this RFQ for a contract through the Priority Partners for Turnaround RTTT initiative, districts have to enter into a separate contract with the vendor.

Procurements through this RFQ may be executed through a work order at the Department and/or through contracts with participating districts and providers. Vendors will be hired to provide services in the form of direct technical assistance, program content, service, support, consulting, research, and materials to the department, districts and/or individual schools.

The Department reserves the right to reopen this RFQ for additional responses if deemed necessary.

All potential bidders may submit questions regarding this RFQ posting no later than August 24, 2011 – 5:00 EST. All questions will be reviewed and posted to the Comm-PASS website (in the same location of this RFQ) with their corresponding answer. No phone calls will be accepted. All

Emails must be sent to ewerner@doe.mass.edu. The subject line must contain the following: **Questions pertaining to 12RFOAPAMV9**. Questions and Answers document will be posted to Comm-PASS (same location as this RFQ posting) on or around August 26, 2011.

The Department reserves the right to reopen an additional Question and Answer time period if deemed necessary.

Policy for Removal of SES Provider Approval

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will monitor the quality and effectiveness of vendors approved under this RFQ.

The Department will conduct reviews at least annually (and reserves the right to conduct these reviews more frequently at its discretion) to ensure that students receive services that are effective in increasing student achievement, are of consistently high quality, and are provided professionally, in a safe and legally compliant atmosphere. When these criteria are not met, the Department may remove providers from the State list of approved providers. Individual franchises may be monitored and removed from the State list of approved providers separately and apart from their franchisor entity.

Removal of Approval Resulting from a Complaint

If the Department, in its sole discretion, determines that one or more complaints about a provider may have validity, the Department may choose to commence a review of the provider outside the annual review process. Complaints may be from a school or school district, a parent/guardian, a student, a mandated reporter (any person legally obligated to report suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the Department of Social Services, pursuant to MGL ch. 51A), a representative of a governmental entity, a Departmental quality review, or another source deemed credible by the Department.

If the Department receives a written complaint from a provider about a parent/guardian or student, the Department will refer the written complaint to the appropriate school principal, school district superintendent, or assignee thereof. The Department, in its sole discretion, may also refer the written complaint to the appropriate legal/code enforcement authorities for investigation.

If, upon investigation, a provider is deemed in violation of the RFR or state or federal law, the provider shall be immediately withdrawn from approval.

In other cases, the Department will order the provider to take one or more corrective actions specified by the Department within 30 days. If after 30 days the Department determines that the provider did not take corrective action, the provider shall be immediately withdrawn from approval.

Reinstatement of a Provider

Providers removed from the State list of approved providers for failure to adhere to the Assurances and Certification, or due to a violation of the RFR or state or federal law, will be ineligible for reapplication.

Providers removed from the State list of approved providers as a result of failure to take corrective action specified by the Department within 30 days of notification of said corrective action, may, in the sole discretion of the Department, be ineligible for reapplication.

An approved provider must have significant knowledge and experience with the following

components of Department priorities:

- Engaging in cooperative and collaborative service settings with multiple vendors and constituencies
- Providing resources and services that are aligned with raising achievement and closing gaps
- Providing frequent progress assessments and demonstrating an adaptability to changing program needs
- Demonstrating ongoing, significant progress while building district capacity to implement and sustain activities aligned with improving student outcomes
- Demonstrating a track record of success with complex organizations and/or high poverty and low performing schools

All approved providers should have expertise in communicating and working with a wide array of education stakeholders including, where relevant, constituencies within all levels of state and district administration, principals, teachers, community partners, parents, and other providers in a coordinated effort to meet education improvement priorities.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- A. Prequalified through Request for Response 10APAJ1 (Supporting the Conditions for School Effectiveness) by August 1, 2011 which evaluated providers for:
 - Established local or national expertise in education improvement services, design advisory, leadership, or research and evaluation supporting Department priorities.
 - Ability to articulate planned strategies that have been proven effective (or are highly promising) relevant to *effective use of student data*.
 - Ability to work effectively with the lead partner (if there is one), school and district leadership, and the Department leadership
 - Experience serving high-poverty and/or chronically low performing schools, with evaluation reports, quantitative data, or similar past performance measures as evidence
- B. Ability to build capacity for sustained improvement for the school or district beyond the term of the proposed services
- C. Established processes for measuring outcomes throughout the engagement and protocol for adapting practices depending on progress
- D. Financial stability that ensures commitment to the project for the next three years

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- A. Previous work with Massachusetts schools to the extent it provides evidence for adapting to Massachusetts standards and commitment to the state
- B. Previous experience with growth and creative problem solving to drive sustainable change

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

NOTE: Employees of potential service providers who contract with both districts as well as State Agencies should seek advice regarding potential conflict of interests from the State Ethics Commission at www.mass.gov/ethics or (617)727-0060.

The responses to this RFQ should not exceed 20 pages and will be evaluated in conjunction with the initial responses from Request for Response 10APAJPI (Supporting the Conditions for School Effectiveness). A select number of candidates may also be required to give a management presentation to the selection committee. In addition to the prior submission on file, each applicant must submit data and information in the following qualification areas:

1. *Description of Products and Services (Theory of Action)*

Please provide an overview of the organization and its theory of action. Additionally, please describe the applicant's solution(s) for effectively using student data and how these solutions will help the department meet its goals for closing the achievement gap and turning around underperforming schools. Specifically, the proposed services should address one or more of the following categories:

- Collecting, analyzing, reviewing, and reporting results of assessments of student learning
- Developing student assessments, analyzing assessment data, and tailoring instruction accordingly
- Using data real time
- Analyzing, interpreting, and using of a range of student data to inform decision-making and set goals
- Monitoring a range of student data to assess progress towards goals and adjusting programs, policies, services, practices or resource allocation accordingly

Provide 2-3 examples of tools, methods, and/or programming used in the past to support schools and districts in more effectively using student data. The following represent examples of acceptable submissions:

- Assessment tools
- Professional development agendas or content
- Student assessment data reports or summaries
- Strategic frameworks

2. *Experience and Willingness to Collaborate for Turnaround*

Approved Priority Partners will be required to work collaboratively with providers in each district. Depending on the mix of services, this collaboration could require significant coordination to integrate the service plan in the best interest of the school or district or simply require an awareness of those providers working in the district. In addition, Priority Partners should be prepared to participate in network activities designed to inform and educate each provider on the activities and methodologies used throughout Massachusetts' districts.

Please provide examples of how the applicant has worked collaboratively with other providers to achieve desired outcomes in the school district. These partners may include those who worked alongside the applicant to address another area of need or deeper integration of services. Applicants must provide the names and contact information for 1-3 partners from work in other districts that the Department can contact.

3. *Demonstrated Record of Effectiveness:*

In addition to the evidence of effectiveness provided in the Request for Response 10APAJ1 (Supporting the Conditions for School Effectiveness), applicants must also:

- Demonstrating effectiveness is critical for all applicants. Reviewers of this RFQ will carefully review any data submitted previously as well as additional evidence of effectiveness. Applicants who feel their initial submission did not fully represent the available data *may* submit additional examples (no more than 2 pages) of effectiveness in academic improvement in underperforming schools to supplement the initial submission. Applicants are encouraged to provide data on the extent to which the assessment solutions have served as a predictor of MCAS performance.
- Provide the names and contact information for three to five references in schools and/or districts in which the applicant has operated in a similar capacity. These references must include administrators in at least three districts with whom the Department can speak and should represent the applicant’s experience in urban, high poverty districts with significant special needs and ELL populations.
- Describe (in no more than two pages) the necessary preconditions for your model to be most successful. Provide an example where your organization was unexpectedly successful in an unlikely situation.

4. Ability to Build Capacity for Sustained Improvement

The Race to the Top initiative is a 4-year investment that is built around the concept of creating sustainable change. Describe how the applicant intends to build a system that enables the full management of the function to be returned to the school or school district after a three-year period with adequate capacity to sustain the improvements and growth made over the course of the intervention. This may involve phasing out the need for services or creating cost savings through redundant services or reallocation.

5. Proven Outcomes Based Measurement Plan

(Optional – if you feel this is sufficiently addressed in the original RFR response, please reference the section/page number) Discuss how the applicant will implement an outcomes-based measurement plan and what resources are in place to support that work. How will the applicant approach mid-course corrections if benchmarks aren’t being met. Please provide one or two examples of where mid-course corrections were necessary.

Please use the template below to provide a summary of the key goals and how the applicant will measure success. Specifically, fill in the chart for the goal provided and expand the chart with additional goals. If the two goals do not apply to the applicant’s approach, please explain why.

Goal – What Are We Trying to Accomplish?	What Measurement Is Being Done to Ensure It’s on Track?
Improved MCAS scores	

Continuation of services to a district will be contingent upon the provider’s ability to meet or exceed the performance expectations specified at the onset of the contract.

6. Financial Capacity

Provide evidence that the applicant **has** adequate financial resources to administer implementation of the proposed program. This evidence must include:

- Size of Total Budget
 - Current Fiscal Year Projected Expense Budget: List the applicant’s total projected expenses for the fiscal year in which the organization is currently operating. Do not include in-kind donations.
 - Current Fiscal Year Projected Revenue Target – List the applicant’s total projected revenues for the fiscal year in which the organization is currently operating. Please recognize only the portion of a multi-year grant that is accessible in the current year. Do not include in-kind donations.
- Actual Revenue and Expense
 - Actual Expenses for the Previous Two Years - List the applicant’s actual annual expenses for the previous two closed fiscal years. Do not include in-kind donations.
 - Actual Revenues for the Previous Two Years - List the applicant’s actual annual revenues for the previous two closed fiscal years. Please recognize only the portion of a multi-year grant that was accessible each year Do not include in-kind donations.
- Operating structure – standalone 501c3, subsidiary, etc.
- Allocation of Revenue by Source – Please list the percentage of revenue sources that are listed below from the two most recent fiscal year. The answer should total 100%.

Source	Percentage
Individual	
Corporate	
Event	
Fee-for-Service	
Other	

- Evidence of sufficient financial capacity to operate for up to six months prior to receiving payment from the contracting school district;
- Specific information on the fee structure for the proposed services. Please reference the specific section and data in the original proposal if you feel it is sufficiently addressed.

Submissions (original, two copies, and jump drive version) must be hard copies and directed to:

Mauricio Vasquez
 Fiscal Officer
 Division for Accountability, Partnerships & Assistance
 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
 75 Pleasant Street
 Malden, MA 02148

by August 30, 2011 at 3PM EST.

EVALUATION CRITERIA SCORECARD

For ESE use only

(This document will be used to evaluate all proposals submitted to this RFR)

Page 1

Name of Bidder: Assessment Technology RFQ Number: 12RFQAPAMV9 Name of Reviewer: Combined Average Date:	Score Un-satisfactory 0 pts	Score Satisfactory 1 pt	Score Good 2 pts	Score Very Good 3 pts	Score Excellent 4 pts	Score Outstanding 5 pts	Multiplier	Points Awarded (Score 0–5 x Multiplier)	Maximum Points Available (5 x Multiplier)
Evaluation Criteria:									
1. Defined Theory of Action									
1a. Vendor describes organization and a theory of action for effectively using data.							(x1)	3.3	5
1b. Proposal is aligned with ESE’s perspective on effectively using data to support turnaround efforts.							(x2)	6.0	10
1c. Proposal provides examples of tools, methods, and/or programming that have been established and tested in the school environment.							(x1)	4.3	5
2. Experience and Willingness to Collaborate for Turnaround									
Narrative detail includes examples of collaboration with district, community, and/or other providers.							(x2)	8.7	10
3. Demonstrated Record of Effectiveness									
3a. Vendor provides data that compellingly demonstrates a record of effectiveness in underperforming school environments (through RFR 10APAJ1, Supporting the Conditions for School Effectiveness, and/or additional submissions included in this RFQ).							(X3)	12.0	15
3b. Narrative describes necessary preconditions for model to be successful.							(X1)	3.0	5
3c. Vendor provides compelling example of success in an unlikely situation.							(X1)	3.7	5
4. Ability to Build Capacity for Sustained Improvement									
Vendor describes how the model intends to build adequate district or school capacity after three years to sustain improvement and growth made through the intervention.							(X2)	6.7	10

EVALUATION CRITERIA SCORECARD

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(This document will be used to evaluate all proposals submitted to this RFR)

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Name of Bidder: RFQ Number: 12RFQAPAMV9 Name of Reviewer: Date:	Score Un-satisfactory 0 pts	Score Satisfactory 1 pt	Score Good 2 pts	Score Very Good 3 pts	Score Excellent 4 pts	Score Outstanding 5 pts	Multiplier	Points Awarded (Score 0–5 x Multiplier)	Maximum Points Available (5 x Multiplier)
5. Proven Outcomes Based Measurement Plan									
Vendor provides a detailed plan and provides examples for measuring benchmarks of progress and outcomes and how mid-course corrections based on the data will be made(through RFR 10APAJ1, Supporting the Conditions for School Effectiveness, and/or additional submissions included in this RFQ).							(x3)	14.0	15
6. Financial Capacity									
6a. Vendor demonstrates evidence of financial stability and adequate financial resources to administer implementation of the proposed program/service.							(x3)	13.0	15
6b. Vendor demonstrates evidence of financial capacity to operate for six months prior to receiving payment.							(x1)	4.3	5
							Total:	79.0	100

Scoring rubric

Outstanding: Application materials is complete, suggest exemplary qualifications, providing compelling, clear, and well-documented evidence of expertise.

Excellent: Application materials are complete and suggest solid qualifications, providing clear and well-documented evidence of expertise.

Very Good: Application materials are complete and suggest adequate qualifications, providing clear evidence of expertise.

Good: Evidence of expertise or qualification in some areas is unclear or unsubstantiated by supporting documentation. Some required elements are missing.

Satisfactory: Little evidence of qualification. Many required elements are missing.

Unsatisfactory: Qualifications is not applicable to request; elements missing / non-responsive to request.

Comments: