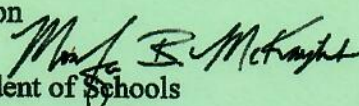Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

January 12, 2023   APPROVED BY BOARD

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Monifa B. McKnight, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Award of Contract: Student Assessment and Data Analytics Platform

Background

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) leverages several crucial technology systems to operationalize district teaching, learning, and business functions. An Instructional Data Management Platform (IDMP) provides a holistic district view, capturing multiple student measures that inform instruction, educational practices, and programs. The goal of an IDMP is to provide a centralized piece of technology for educators to examine patterns in student outcomes and advance equity to become an integral part of daily practices with tools to analyze student data through an equity lens. PowerSchool's Performance Matters has served as the IDMP in MCPS since 2017.

On August 31, 2022, MCPS released a Request for Proposal (RFP). RFP No. 4407.3 Student Assessment and Data Analytics Platform, due to the end of the contract, and extensions being exhausted with the current vendor, PowerSchool. Respective respondents to the RFP needed to provide a comprehensive, fully integrated web-based student assessment and data analytics platform, which includes the following components and capabilities:

1. Assessment form and item development.
2. Online and scanned form-based assessment delivery platform.
3. Compatibility with existing student assessment data set formats to archive, organize, and historically display data.
4. Common Core-aligned student assessment item banks.
5. Robust analytical data tools for use by the teacher, school administrator, and central office staff.
6. Standard-based analysis options to drive customized and personalized professional development options to support student achievement through identified areas for improvement in professional practice.

The proposed platform must provide the functionality to support classroom, school, and district functions appropriate for Pre-K–12 school district with approximately 165,000 students. The platform must have an existing, integrated software system that incorporates the scope of services and technical requirements further outlined in RFP No. 4407.3.

Evaluation and Selection Process

RFP No. 4407.3, Student Assessment and Data Analytics Platform, was released on August 31, 2022. Prospective vendor submissions were due by 2:00 p.m. on September 28, 2022. After the submission window closed, the evaluation and selection process began in three major phases. An overview of each phases detailing the efforts and due diligence to select a viable Student Assessment and Data Analytics Platform solution is as follows:

Phase I: Proposal Evaluation
A core team of MCPS staff representing multiple offices that would engage with the platform was established and tasked with reviewing the six RFP submissions. Members of the evaluation team assessed sections of the RFP and provided feedback on the various modules and components of the response as outlined. Areas assessed included:
- Platform Requirements
- Data Transfers
- Analytics Reporting
- Item Creation
- Assessment Creation
- Assessment Delivery and Scoring
- Integration with the current Student Information System (SIS) and Learning Management System (LMS)
- Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Training and Accessibility of Resources
- Hardware and Technical Overview
- Platform Performance
- Implementation Plan
- Security Plan
- Data Conversion Plan
- System Interface Integrations
- Training and Professional Development
- Quality Assurance and testing
- Disaster Recover Planning
- Ongoing Maintenance and Support
- Cost Proposal
- References
- Point by Point Response
- MCPS General Contract Article Exceptions
- Fiscal Report

- Required Certifications
- Requirements Matrix Overview

Feedback from the evaluation team was compiled and debriefed to reach a consensus on which vendors were recommended to move forward to the next phase of the RFP process. Four vendors were identified and recommended to advance to Phase II: Vendor Demonstrations:

Phase II: Vendor Demonstrations
Four vendors were invited to provide a 90-minute demonstration of their product to a broad stakeholder audience. Presentations were held on a single day, and all four vendors presented. There were 25 MCPS stakeholders in attendance for the vendor product presentation. Stakeholder representation included representatives from the Montgomery County Education Association, from both elementary and secondary schools, the Service Employees International Union Local 500, and the Montgomery County Association of Administrators and Principals, as well as central services administration and staff.

A rating form with criteria was developed from the RFP's outline and detailed instructions related to Phase II were provided to each of the four vendors. Participants were asked to rate and provide feedback on each product. After the vendor presentations, feedback was submitted, analyzed, and used to recommend vendors to move forward to Phase III. As a result, two vendors were identified to advance to Phase III: Technical Interviews:

Phase III: Technical Interviews
Two vendors were invited to participate in technical interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to ask questions about various key areas of the platform and vendor operations organized under four focus areas:

1) Legal
2) Technology and Migration
3) Assessment and Items
4) Data Reporting/Analytics/MTSS to better understand the user experience

Technical interview panel participants representing MCPS consisted of central services staff with expertise and deep content knowledge of the essential specifications to meet the needs of the configurations and applications examined for each particular focus area. Feedback obtained from interview panel participants in each session resulted in areas requiring more clarity regarding proposed platform features. Therefore, a final meeting was organized for the vendors to demonstrate specific performance tasks within the respective proposed platforms, evaluate the products and provide a recommendation for use in MCPS. As a result of Phase III, one product emerged as a clear front-runner for selection.

Final Product Selection

Before selecting the final product, a team of central services staff contacted at least three references for each vendor finalist. This strategy served to understand other districts' experience migrating their student systems, data conversion, system configurations, training, customer service, and lessons learned. We are presenting a recommended product after analyzing the data from each of the three phases of the RFP process, along with information from reference calls and discussions with senior leadership and key stakeholders.

Implementation Plan

As the incumbent platform, it will continue to be implemented as the Instructional Data Management Platform, with the contract effective July 1, 2023.

During the next six months, through collaboration with employee association leaders, school-based leaders, teachers, supporting services staff, central services staff, and senior leadership, significant work is planned for the continued support of the district strategic plan initiative of Academic Excellence. Critical focus areas include process improvements, planning, professional development, and gap analysis. Integral to the continued success of the platform, there will be clear and frequent communication with all stakeholders, collaboration with end users to ensure successful management, and ongoing professional learning for all users to efficiently and effectively conduct their work while capitalizing on the full power and benefits that the assessment and data management platform afford.

Conclusion

In partnership with key stakeholder groups, staff in the Office of the Chief of Staff, Montgomery County Public Schools developed RFP No. 4407.3, Student Assessment and Data Analytics Platform, to solicit high-quality, proven technology solutions for managing student data, assessments, and reporting, and other student information modules from IDMP service providers. Through a multi-phase evaluation cycle, this process resulted in the recommendation of one, high-quality, integrated platform that will serve as our IDMP.

Following approval, staff will begin work with the selected vendor to commence the initial phases of configuration and implementation. Timelines, training information, and professional development plans will be communicated before the end of the 2022–2023 school year. We are confident this platform will be instrumental in helping us move forward with innovative school solutions, and we are excited to begin this work.

Recommended Resolution

WHEREAS, Montgomery County Public Schools issued Request for Proposal No. 4407.3, Student Assessment and Data Analytics Platform, to contract a new student data management system platform; and

WHEREAS, A selection process was developed that included extensive input and feedback from Montgomery County Public Schools stakeholders, including school-based staff and administrators, central services staff, and employee associations in evaluating the responses to Request for Proposal No. 4407.3, Student Assessment and Data Analytics Platform, attending vendor presentations and participating in technical interviews; and

WHEREAS, The selection process identified a vendor product that would best meet the needs of Montgomery County Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, Based on the outcome of the selection process, the superintendent of schools recommends the purchase of PowerSchool's Student Data Management Platform; now therefore be it

Resolved, The Board of Education approve the purchase of the following data management platform modules, based on a fixed student count for an initial term of five years with an opportunity for two one-year extensions. not to exceed the amount of $7,920,000, and be it further,

Resolved, The President of the Board of Education and the superintendent of schools be authorized to negotiate and execute agreements with PowerSchool for the purchase of student data management platform modules; and be it further

Resolved, That the superintendent of schools be authorized to execute all other documents and grant any approvals necessary for these transactions.

MBM:PKM:SSS:KLA:dt