

**Department of Materials Management
Procurement Unit
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
45 W. Gude Drive, Suite 3100
Rockville, Maryland 20850**

September 28, 2017

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

**The following are questions and responses regarding RFP 4418.1, Partnership Programs
for Support Professionals Pursuing Teaching Certification**

Question 1: While the RFP says that "each IHE must submit a complete proposal . . . (p.10), is it correct to infer that the lead IHE would submit for itself plus its partners," if they have specialized roles in the project?

Answer: It is wonderful to include multiple IHEs in order to build a proposal that would best meet the needs of our support professionals. With regards to the RFP, the IHEs would work together in crafting one RFP to submit that would be inclusive of the components from each IHE.

Question 2: If MCPS is willing to work with more than one IHE, will they allow IHEs to work on only a few program content areas, and only a limited number of degree pathways?

Answer: Yes, this is allowed. We are, however, looking for IHEs to provide multiple options for support professionals pursuing degrees in teaching, particularly in critical need areas.

Question 3: What is the expected timeline for employees to complete a post baccalaureate program?

Answer: This depends upon the current continuing education credit status of the support professional; however, we are seeking accelerated options.

Question 4: Is the expectation that employees are enrolled part time or full time as degree seeking students in a program cohort?

Answer: The support professional will be working while completing coursework, so consideration needs to be given to the time constraints of the work, life, and school balance support professionals will be facing. Given these challenges, consideration should be given to summer and possibly winter session options to ease the course load requirements at any given time.

Question 5: If a program of study crosses a two year period of study, is this acceptable to MCPS?

Answer: Yes, this would be acceptable given that our support professionals would be starting at a variety of different places within their careers and within their college credit history.

Question 6: How will student teacher assignments be structured?

Answer: One of the barriers support professionals have faced in the past is the need to leave their current position in order to complete the student teaching experience. To the extent possible, MCPS is looking for alternative avenues for support professionals to complete their student teaching field experiences while continuing to work.

Question 7: This question is written in consideration of the employee's current job commitments: How does MCPS envision the employees as students, meeting the requirements for experiential learning and student teaching?

Answer: See response for question 6.

Question 8: As student teachers, will the employees be able to take time from their current roles to teach during the academic year?

Answer: To the extent possible, MCPS would work with the IHEs to identify appropriate placements for support professionals so that they are able to complete the student teaching requirements while also maintaining employment.

Question 9: Regarding Article 4 "Key Contractor Personnel" of the RFP, please further define "key personnel" and clarify your expectations for this/these roles?

Answer: Any personnel or lead contacts that are identified in a contractor's response will be MCPS contacts, if needed. As awarded contacts change, MCPS shall be notified of any changes.

Question 10: Will Support Professionals be able to remain in their current employment positions throughout the time they are taking course work in the partnership programs, including the field experience and internship components in the certification related courses? It seems like *yes* in the RFP, but we are not sure about the MCPS policy then for teacher education students in other university programs, so clarification would be helpful.

Answer: See responses to questions 6 and 8.

Question 11: Item 5 on page #6 concerns recruitment. Key to this item is "recruiting a broadly diverse teacher workforce," and the preparation of advertising material. We are all set to do that, but are interested in knowing about collaboration with MCPS especially for distribution and opportunities to meet with prospective students. Could you comment on how recruitment might become a collaborative aspect of the partnership?

Answer: MCPS currently disseminates partnership information via the higher education partnership website, the weekly employee bulletin, directly at the school level, and through informational sessions both on site and off site. Additionally, information is disseminated via the Career Pathways Program Specialist as well as SEIU, Service Employees International Union, Local 500. MCPS is also working to provide ongoing information related to career advancement opportunities to school and central office level administration.

Question 12: Regarding appendices, may we include documents that are supportive of the narrative of our proposal in addition to those that are identified in the RFP? If yes, will our appendices be counted or not counted in the 10-15 page limitation?

Answer: Please try to adhere to the 10-15 page narrative requirement. Regarding appendices, these would not be included in the 10-15 page narrative; however, we ask that you attach only documents that are critical in understanding the services proposed.

Question 13: What proportion of the individuals in the listed job categories have expressed an interest in becoming a teacher?

- a. Do we have data that breaks that information down along programmatic lines, such as special education, TESOL, elementary education, middle and high school (disaggregated data by disciplines)?

Answer: We do not have specific information regarding this, as support professionals' interests spanned a variety of content areas. MCPS, however, is looking to focus on the critical need areas outlined in the RFP. Currently, 110 support professionals are enrolled in a partnership or program to pursue a degree in teaching. Furthermore, in a survey conducted in the spring, over 350 additional support professionals, primarily paraeducators, expressed an interest in pursuing a degree in teaching. MCPS would like to enroll at least 100 support professionals each year in teacher certification programs.

Question 14: We would like racial/diversity data disaggregated by the employment groups; is this possible?

Answer: The FY17 demographic profile of MCPS support professionals is as follows: 65.9% female, 34.1% male, 0.3% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 11.6% Asian, 24.7% Black or African-American, 20.4% Hispanic/Latino, 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 1.2% Two or More, and 41.8% White. Additionally, the FY17 demographic profile of paraeducators is identified as 85.5% female, 14.5% male, 0.2% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 8.6% Asian, 19.5% Black or African-American, 14.1% Hispanic/Latino, 1.2% Two or More, and 56.5% White.

Question 15: Is there a cost-per-candidate range or maximum that MCPS has already identified?

Answer: No, there is not.

Question 16: Are we allowed to transform the role/function of matriculated teacher candidates at any point in their program--especially in the latter stages of the program when they are making the shift from support professional to classroom educator?

Answer: I need further clarification regarding what is being asked. If referencing conditional certification, that could be a possibility, depending on the need and the availability. If referencing whether a support professional such as a paraeducator in the classroom could switch roles with the teacher for student teaching purposes, MCPS will work to do its best to provide such opportunities to support professionals in partnership programs.

Question 17: Are there aspects of the paraeducator's role that are non-negotiable?

Answer: Specific information is needed to address this question.

Question 18: Are we free to envision a program grounded in a network of schools that we help to create or is it better to expect that these teacher candidates will always come from different schools?

Answer: These individuals will come from schools all over MCPS.

Question 19: Will we be able to hold any classes in MCPS facilities or should we expect to use Shady Grove? Shady Grove has additional costs associated with its use

Answer: Holding classes in MCPS facilities is definitely an option as long as space is available.

Question 20: Does MCPS have a preference about the delivery model of courses (e.g., online, hybrid, in-person, weekend, evenings)? Do we know if the potential candidates have a preference?

Answer: MCPS is looking for flexible options to address the barriers presented in the RFP.

Question 21: Are we free to consider flexible/shared staffing options? A person who could split their time with MCPS and the IHE with the goal of supporting the execution of such a program.

Answer: More specific information is needed to address this. With regards to MCPS providing staffing to support specific IHE programs, this has not been a consideration during conversations or during planning.

Question 22: What resources and supports will MCPS provide candidates enrolled in such a program (e.g., after hours child care, computer/technology access, paid release from position)?

Answer: Employees have access to computers/technology at their respective school sites and at various times at our CTI labs. MCPS also does offer limited paid release time for support professionals to attend classes via form 440-21 and prior approval; however, we are seeking partnerships that provide flexible classes with evening, weekend, and online or hybrid options.

Question 23: Would MCPS prefer to see proposals that are executed as soon as possible, but roll out in multiple phases? Or would MCPS prefer to see proposals that are executed at full capacity, but start at a later date?

Answer: MCPS is looking to begin the programs in the summer or fall of 2018.

Question 24: What role will the unions play in these programs?

Answer: Aside from the usual contract negotiations process, the primary function of the union will be to provide MCPS with ongoing feedback regarding the needs of support professionals.

Question 25: Could these programs offer IHEs a path for streamlined research opportunities? Especially for research designed to: (a) ensure ongoing program evaluation; and (b) allow data tracking to monitor success of our candidates' post-graduation (e.g., teacher retention)?

Answer: There will be no opportunities for research opportunities aside from the negotiated terms for program evaluation identified in the MOU.

Question 26: What are MCPS's expectations for district-specific certification requirements that extend beyond the state's certification requirements (e.g., 12-credit lab science requirement and 12-credit math requirement in elementary education)?

Answer: The expectation is to finish it within their first 5 years after being hired into a teaching assignment, if it is not completed during their preparation program.

Question 27: Some portions of the RFP do not align with existing state (MSDE) policies related to program approval and teacher certification (e.g., state testing requirement, requirement for secondary candidates to have a major or its equivalent at the secondary level, etc.).

Answer: MCPS is seeking programs that will meet the MSDE requirements for teacher certification.

Question 28: Is MCPS planning to pay supervising teachers/mentor teachers a stipend or is this something our proposals need to accommodate?

Answer: This is something that would need to be determined in the MOU.

Question 29: Which aspects of admissions into this program does MCPS wish to control? Initial recruiting into the pipeline? Joint decision-making as to who is admitted?

Answer: Candidates must meet the requirements of the IHE. Once IHEs present MCPS with a list of potential candidates, we will review each candidate's eligibility based upon employment status and whether or not the employee is in good standing. MCPS will communicate candidate eligibility with the IHE. More specific guidelines regarding this process can be determined in the MOU.

Question 30: What is the main goal for this program? Is it strictly to leverage the diverse population of support staff to fill high-need areas within MCPS? Or is it more broadly to move support staff into other teaching areas as well to create a more diverse teacher workforce?

Answer: The purpose of the program is to more broadly offer support professionals opportunities to pursue degrees in teaching, with a specific focus on critical need areas.

Question 31: Depending on the number of interested MCPS students, it would be logical to put them with other students in teacher education program at the College. Is there any objection to this approach?

Answer: MCPS sees the value of cohort programs, but there is not an objection to presenting other possibilities.

Question 32: Is MCPS amenable to having their employees complete their internship requirement in MCPS schools to help them complete?

Answer: See responses to questions 6 and 8.

Question 33: Teacher preparation programs take several years. However, the contract is only for one year at a time. Has there been any discussion of what will be the plan for students in the program if the program were not continued?

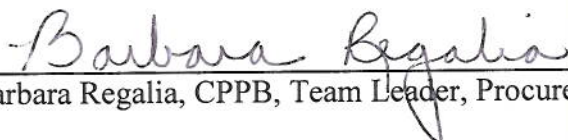
Answer: This will be addressed more specifically in the MOUs.

Question 34: Is the cost of the program a deciding factor on which IHE to work with on delivering the program?

Answer: Cost was identified as one of the barriers support professionals face, so cost is a factor when identifying IHE proposals that will best meet the needs of support professionals.

Question 35: How is MCPS weighting the various items in its RFP? Is there any information you can share on how the various items will be weighted?

Answer: It is important for proposals to specifically address all of the items listed in section 3.1 of the RFP.



Barbara Regalia, CPPB, Team Leader, Procurement Unit

Please indicate your acceptance of this notice by signing below and returning with your RFP or under separate cover.

Accepted:

Name and Title

Company Name