


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

May 10, 2022

MEMORANDUM

APPROVED BY BOARD

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Monifa B. McKnight, Interim Superintendent of Schools 

Subject: Contract Approval for RFP No. 4407.2, Student Assessment and Data Analytics Platform

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) leverages a number of crucial technology systems to operationalize teaching, learning, and business functions within the district. An Instructional Data Management Platform (IDMP) provides a holistic view across the district 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 with the opportunity for examination of patterns in student outcomes and advancing equity to become an integral part of the daily practices with tools to examine student data through an equity lens. PowerSchool's Performance Matters has served as the IDMP in MCPS since 2017.

In June 2021, MCPS released Request for Proposal (RFP) No. 4407.2, Student Assessment and Data Analytics Platform, due to the end of contract and extensions had been 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 included the following components and capabilities: (1) assessment form and item development; (2) on-line and scan form based assessment delivery platform; (3) compatibility with existing student assessment data set formats to archive, organize, and display historical data; (4) Common Core aligned student assessment item banks; (5) robust analytical data tools for use by teachers, school administrators, and central office staff; and, (6) standards-based analysis options for the purpose of driving customized and personalized professional development options to support student achievement through identified areas for improvement in professional practice. The proposed platform must provide functionality to support classroom, school, and district functions appropriate for a PreK–12 school district with approximately 165,000 students. The platform is required to have an existing, integrated software system that incorporates the scope of services and technical requirements further outlined in RFP No. 4407.2.

Evaluation and Selection Process

RFP No. 4407.2, Student Assessment and Data Analytics Platform, was released on August 16, 2021. Prospective vendor submissions were due by September 20, 2021, no later than 2:00 p.m. After the submission window closed, the evaluation and selection process began and occurred in three major phases. An overview of each of the phases detailing the efforts and due diligence to select a viable Student Assessment and Data Analytics Platform solution 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 nine RFP submissions. Members of the core team assessed sections of the RFP and provided feedback on the various modules and components of the response as outlined in the RFP. Areas assessed included:

- Platform Requirements
- Data Transfers
- Analytics Reporting
- Item Creation
- Assessment Creation
- Assessment Delivery and Scoring
- Integration with current Learning Management System
- Multitiered Systems of Support
- Training and Accessibility of Resources
- Hardware and Technical Overview
- Platform Performance
- Implementation Plan
- Security Plan
- Data Conversion Plan
- System Interface Integrations
- Training/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 and Required Certifications
- Requirements Matrix Overview

Feedback from the core team was compiled and the core team debriefed to reach 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 Presentations.

Phase II: Vendor Presentations

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. All four invited vendors presented. There were 44 stakeholders in attendance for the vendor product demonstration presentations. Stakeholder representation included Montgomery County Education Association representatives from secondary and elementary schools, Service Employees International Union, Local 500 representatives, The Montgomery County Association of Administrators and Principals/Montgomery County Business and Operations Administrators representatives, information technology, and central services administration and staff.

Participants were asked to rate and provide feedback on each product. The criteria were framed from the outline provided in the RFP and in detailed instructions related to Phase II that were provided to each of the four vendors.

At the conclusion of the vendor presentations, feedback was analyzed and used to recommend vendors to move to Phase III. As a result, two vendors were identified to move to Phase III:

Phase III: Technical Interviews

Two vendors were invited to participate in technical interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to better understand, experience, and ask questions about various key areas of the platform and vendor operations organized under four focus areas:

- 1) Legal
- 2) Technology and Migration
- 3) Items/Assessment/Accessibility
- 4) Reporting/Analytics/MTSS

Technical interview panel participants representing MCPS consisted of central services with deep content expertise and knowledge of the configurations and applications being examined for each particular interview focus. Feedback collected from the interview panel participants in each session was used to further 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. This strategy served to understand other districts' experience migrating their student systems, data conversion, system configurations, training, customer service, and lessons learned. Upon 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, we are presenting a recommended product.

Implementation Plan

Through collaboration with employee association leaders, school-based leaders, teachers, supporting services and central services staff, and senior leadership, the new platform will

be implemented during the course of the 2022–2023 school year. By summer 2023, the transition to the new IDMP will be completed.

In the next 14 months, major work is planned in order to meet this goal. Essential components include process improvements, planning, professional development, gap analysis, data migration, and configuring the new platform. Establishing the environment, configuring and testing security, creating roles, conducting reporting pathways, and formatting assessment and data migration pathways are key activities that will begin this summer and will continue through the next year. Critical to success will be continued clear and frequent communication with all stakeholders, collaboration with end users to ensure successful change management, and ongoing professional development and training for all users so that they efficiently and effectively can conduct their work while capitalizing on the full power and benefits that this new platform affords.

While the implementation process is under way, MCPS will be required to maintain functionality for certain key systems with the existing vendor until the transition is complete and the new modules are fully functional. During the transition period, MCPS will continue to utilize the PowerSchool platform through June 30, 2023, to ensure that there are no gaps in services of student system functionality.

Conclusion

In partnership with key stakeholder groups, staff in the Office of the Chief of Staff, Montgomery County Public Schools developed RFP No. 4407.2, Student Assessment and Data Analytics Platform, to solicit high-quality, proven technology solutions for managing student data, assessment 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 new IDMP.

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

Recommended Resolution

WHEREAS, Montgomery County Public Schools issued Request for Proposal 4407.2, 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 4407.2, 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 interim superintendent of schools recommends the purchase of Illuminate Education's Student Data Management Platform; now therefore be it

Resolved, That 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 three years with an opportunity for two one-year extensions, not to exceed the amount of \$4,900,000; and be it further

Resolved, That the president of the Board of Education and the interim superintendent of schools be authorized to negotiate and execute agreements with Illuminate Education for the purchase of student data management platform modules; and be it further

Resolved, That the president of the Board of Education and the interim superintendent of schools be authorized to negotiate and execute an extension of the existing contract (reference RFP 4407.1) with PowerSchool to ensure services continuity of the student data management platform during the transition period necessary to implement the Illuminate Education student data management platform in an amount not to exceed \$1,300,000 for the period from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023; and be it further

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

MBM:ESD:KLA:ASM

