



# **Request for Proposals**

## ***Student Assessment System***

***Vernon Public Schools, Connecticut***  
**Bid # VPS-FY14-004**

Inquiries: Mr. Justin Gusy  
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Information Due: Thursday, May 15, 2014  
2:00 PM, EST

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## 1. General Provisions

### 1.1 Introduction

Vernon Public Schools (VPS) is accepting bids for a turnkey Student Assessment System for core curricular areas, including all required software licenses and other fees. This Request for Proposals (RFP) states the overall scope of products and services desired, specific software functionality, technology foundation as well as desired vendor qualifications. Before submitting a proposal, Vendors shall examine the specifications in order to understand all existing conditions and limitations.

### 1.2 Anticipated Timeline

Listed below are the projected dates and times related to this Request for Proposal.

Vendor Questions Deadline	May 8, 2014 no later than 2:00PM, EST
Proposals Due	May 15, 2014 by 2:00PM, EST
Public Opening of Bids	May 15, 2014 at 2:30 PM, EST
Submitted Proposal Review	May 16, 2014 – May 23, 2014
Hands-on User Evaluations/Presentations	May 27, 2014 – May 30, 2014
Vendor Selection	May 30, 2014
Recommendation to BOE	June, 2014
Award Announcement	June, 2014
Installation and Data	Summer, 2014
Initial Staff Training	August, 2014
Implementation Complete	October 1, 2014

### 1.3 Project Goals and Background

VPS is comprised of eight (8) schools with approximately 3,500 students and 450 staff. The primary goal of this RFP is to assist the VPS in selecting a Student Assessment System (SAS) that will best meet our current and future needs as well as selecting the best vendor with which to partner.

### 1.4 Vernon Public Schools Mission Statement, Goals, and Theory of Action

#### Mission Statement

VPS, in partnership with family and community, is committed to provide a quality education, with high expectations, in a safe environment where all students become independent learners and productive contributors to society.

## Vernon Public Schools Goals

1. Build and improve relationships and partnerships with family and community.
2. Increase the achievement of every student through high quality curriculum, instruction and assessment.
3. Promote safe environments that are socially, emotionally, and physically conducive to learning.

## Theory of Action

The Vernon Public Schools goals are further refined in the VPS's **Theory of Action (ToA)**:

1. If VPS develops **curriculum** aligned with state and national standards, develops common assessments to measure student achievement of the curriculum, and utilizes the results from both local and state-wide assessments to revise the curriculum, then student achievement will improve.
2. If teachers and administrators utilize the **data** from state-wide and local assessments to identify the individual needs of our students and we change our instruction based on those identified student needs, then student achievement will improve.
3. If the adults involved in instruction **collaborate** around student work, instructional strategies, and assessment; develop a common vocabulary regarding instruction and a common understanding of best practice; use that collective information to inform their instruction; employ high-yield research-based instructional strategies; and, hold each other accountable for such, then student achievement will improve.
4. If teachers engage in **professional learning** based on students' instructional needs; and if that professional learning is job-embedded, cyclical, consistent, ongoing, and includes 360 degree feedback regarding implementation, then student achievement will improve.
5. If teachers establish quality **relationships** with students and ensure that students are highly engaged in rigorous relevant work, then student achievement will improve.

Based on the VPS goals and the ToA, VPS is seeking a student assessment system which provides:

- Student academic screening, progress monitoring, achievement, and intervention;
- Collection, reporting and manipulation of student performance data;
- Communication systems which provide real time performance data for all stakeholders, including information to parents and students;
- And the ability to integrate assessment data into student management system and teacher evaluation system to monitor student achievement.

## 1.5 Vernon Public Schools Technical Information

Current Hardware/Software Environment	
Desktop Hardware	Vernon has a wide range of computers from Pentium 4 stations with 1gb Ram to Quad core CPUs with 8GB Ram. Apple iMacs running OS 10.8+
Desktop Operating System	Windows XP (50%) Windows 7 (45%) OSX (5%)
E-mail System	MS Outlook Client and OWA
Internet Browser	Internet Explorer 6+, Firefox, Chrome and Safari.
iPads & Chromebooks	Throughout elementary schools
Existing SIS Infrastructure	
iPass (through June 2014) Transitioning to Follett's Aspen student information system for '14-'15 SY	
Personnel currently using the system	Teachers and support staff
System printers	Located in each school office, media centers, teacher's workrooms and many classrooms.
SRBI Homegrown Database	Local storage of annual student assessments
SWIS Database	Student discipline database
Automated Call System	
Alert Now	Superintendent & Principal Access Only

## 2. Response Instructions

The submitted proposal must follow the rules and format established within this RFP. Adherence to these rules will ensure a fair and objective analysis of all proposals. Each proposal must be submitted in a sealed envelope bearing the bid number "**BID #VPS-FY14-004**" and titled "Student Assessment System". **Five (5)** printed copies of the proposal and one electronic copy on a USB drive or CD Rom must be provided. Each Vendor shall be responsible for all costs incurred in order to prepare and submit their response to this RFP. All submitted materials become the property of VPS. To ensure a fair and objective evaluation of all proposals, Vendors are required to submit all inquiries to Mr. Justin Gusy, Humanities Curriculum Coordinator as noted on the cover of this RFP.

### 2.1 Delivery of Proposal

RFPs must be submitted in a sealed envelope with "**Bid #VPS-FY14-004**" clearly marked **BID – DO NOT OPEN** on the outside of the envelope, to: Mr. Michael Purcaro, Director of Business and Finance, 30 Park Street, Vernon, Connecticut 06066 by 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 15, 2014, at which time proposals shall be opened and read aloud publicly. It is the sole responsibility of the Vendor to see that their RFP is

received in the proper time. Any proposal received after the proposal due date and time shall be eliminated from consideration.

## **2.2 Questions and Communications**

Vendors are hereby notified not to contact any member of the Evaluation Committee, or any member of the VPS staff and its' elected officials, except as provided herein regarding this proposal until such time as a contract has been awarded. Questions concerning any portion of this RFP shall be directed in writing (e-mail encouraged) to Mr. Justin Gusy, Humanities Curriculum Coordinator, who shall be the official point of contact for this RFP. All questions must be submitted by Thursday, May 8, 2014 by 2:00 p.m. as stated in Section 1.2 "Anticipated Timeline". All questions and answers will be posted to the VPS website at the following location: <http://www.vernonpublicschools.org/bid-requests>

Mr. Justin Gusy  
Humanities Coordinator  
[jgusy@vernon-ct.gov](mailto:jgusy@vernon-ct.gov)  
30 Park Street  
Vernon, CT 06066

## **2.3 Public Opening of Bids**

VPS will hold a Public Bid Opening for all Student Assessment System bids submitted. All bids will be opened and recorded by the VPS Business Office on Thursday, May 15, 2014 at 2:30PM after which all bids will be available for public inspection. Vendors are welcome to attend the public bid opening.

## **2.4 Pricing Eligibility Period**

All Vendor proposals are required to be offered for a term not less than 180 calendar days in duration. A proposal may not be modified, withdrawn or cancelled by the Vendor during the 180 day time period following the time and date designated for the receipt of information.

## **2.5 Tax Exemption**

The VPS is tax exempt and will provide appropriate documentation if needed.

## **2.6 Vendor Pricing and Information**

Pricing submitted with this RFP must encompass all design, implementation, training, support, licenses and software acquisitions necessary for development and complete implementation of the SAS system. If your pricing excludes certain fees/charges, either recurring or nonrecurring, you must provide a detailed list of the excluded fees with a complete explanation of the nature of those fees. In the event that the information or pricing submitted by the Vendor is unclear, VPS may request further explanation and/or pricing breakdowns from the Vendor for the purpose of evaluation. The Vendor shall answer requests for additional information or clarification in writing within 24 hours of the initial request. Any/all responses from the Vendor will become part of the Vendor's proposal. Vendors failing to provide adequate information within the specified time shall be considered unresponsive, and their proposal may be subject to rejection.

## 2.7 Proposal Format

All proposals shall be prepared in strict compliance with the Proposal Format outlined below. Failure to comply with all provisions of this RFP may result in the proposal being disqualified.

- All proposals must be securely bound
- Title page: The title page should include the subject: the proposing company's name and address; the name, address, and telephone number of a contact person; and the date of the proposal.
- Table of contents.
- Executive summary: This summary, limited to five (5) single-spaced typewritten pages, should provide a high-level description of the Vendor's ability to meet the requirements of the RFP and a statement describing why the Vendor believes itself to be the best qualified to provide the specified services. The summary must also include the names, titles and background of the officers and operating personnel who will work with VPS.
- References from three (3) K-12 school districts that are currently running the program being proposed. The following information is required:
  - School district name, address, phone number and contact person
  - Number of students
  - How long the program has been operational
  - Minimum of two (2) school districts each having a student population approximate to the VPS that have implemented the program within the past two (2) years.
  - The VPS wishes to implement a Vendor **Hosted** solution. Please describe your hosting services including: hosting site hardware, software and bandwidth specifications, backup solutions and all hosting costs and fees.
  - Upgrades: As your company offers SAS software upgrades please describe the cost (if any) for your company to install these upgrades to our software.
  - Please describe the minimum client system requirements to run your software.
- Warranty: Vendors shall include with the RFP response a detailed overview of all applicable warranties, including exclusions. Vendors must detail the responsibilities the VPS will assume and describe any Vendor services provided during the warranty period.
- Functional Requirements: Vernon will require the following SAS elements to be present and described in all Vendor proposals, in order for a bid to be considered:
  - Student testing, assessment and reporting (data)
  - Online administration access
  - Security settings for users / user groups
  - Customizable / user friendly report functions with data analysis capacity
  - Report exporting to Microsoft Excel & PDF
  - User definable flags and alerts for students
  - SIF certified
  - SAS to be built upon proven/reliable database & is web-based
  - Integration with mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones
- The selected Vendor must be able to supply the services listed below. Please provide a detailed description of how your company will provide the following services:
  - Project management
  - Software installation

- Comprehensive system training for teachers & support staff
- Development of specialized reports (number of reports included in proposal) & cost of additional reports
- Online and telephone support resources
- Ongoing & timely technical support and maintenance services
- Off site hosting solution (high availability) with regular backups

### 3. Evaluation Criteria

VPS intends to enter into a five-year contract with a two-year renewal option based on performance, with a well-established Vendor whose products, features, design philosophy, support policies, and vision for schools come closest to meeting VPS needs today *and* tomorrow. The selected Vendor must be a well-established, financially stable firm committed to providing school software solutions. The ideal Vendor will have a significant installed base of school clients and a proven track record of delivering products and services on-time and within budget. The Vendor evaluation process will utilize the following approach:

#### 3.1 Evaluation Rubric

Ability to Execute	0-40 Possible Points
Technology	0-80 Possible Points
Functions	0-100 Possible Points
Services	0-100 Possible Points
Costs	0-50 Possible Points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0-370 Possible Points</b>

#### 3.2 Proposal Evaluation Sheet

All evaluation criteria will be scored on a scale of 0-10 unless otherwise noted:

ABILITY TO EXECUTE	
Quality of references	
Qualifications of resources	
Comparable size of installations	
Very high customer retention	
TECHNOLOGY	
Current, open, technology	
Multiple client configuration options	

Stability of product	
User centric design	
Compatibility with existing infrastructure	
Ease of migration	
Ease of integration with other 3 <sup>rd</sup> party products	
Overall support	
<b>FUNCTIONS</b>	
Extent to which the proposed application meets the RFP's <b>functional requirements</b> (1-50 pts)	
Overall ease of use (Navigation, Menus, organization, etc.) (1-20 pts)	
Reporting capability/sample reports demonstrating this capability (1-20 pts)	
Security	
<b>SERVICES</b>	
Implementation approach (including amount and type of support)	
Data migration approach	
Project management approach	
Delivery of training (comprehensiveness, quality)	
Vendor staffing provided on the project	
Delivery of training (comprehensiveness, quality)	
Ability to provide timely mandated changes as part of support	
On-going support procedures (prioritization, escalation)	
Hosting solution	
Current workload and ability to complete required work within the VPS schedule	
<b>COSTS</b>	
Initial	
Five Year	
Annual release/upgrades	
Cost of training	

## 4. Evaluation Procedure

Evaluation of the proposals is expected to be completed as detailed in section 1.2, “Anticipated Timeline” after bid closing. An evaluation team will evaluate proposals on a variety of quantitative and qualitative criteria. It is the VPS intention to procure the most functionally complete and cost-effective solution from a growing, viable and financially stable company that will meet both current and future needs. Selected Vendors will be required to provide product demonstrations (as describe in section 1.2 Anticipated Timeline) and may be invited to make oral presentations

### 4.1 Initial Proposal Evaluation

The initial evaluation will be based strictly on the Vendor’s proposal response and be performed prior to any formal demonstrations, reference checking and/or site visits.

### 4.2 Finalists Evaluation

Further evaluation associated with the finalist Vendors will be performed as follows:

- Conduct Vendor demonstrations
- Evaluate Vendor viability and vision for the education market
- Evaluate ability for Vendor to respond to VPS needs
- Evaluate implementation and support approach
- Evaluate functionality of software
- Vendor response to questions by evaluation team
- Perform reference checks and conduct site visits at the discretion of the selection committee

## 5. Terms and Conditions

### 5.1 Proposal Withdrawal

No proposal can be withdrawn after it is filed unless the vendor makes a request in writing to the Procurement Administration, prior to the time set for the opening of proposals.

### 5.2 Collusion Among Vendors

Multiple proposals from an individual, firm, partnership, corporation or association under the same or different names are subject to rejection. Reasonable grounds for believing that a Vendor is interested in more than one proposal submission for the work contemplated may result in rejection of all bids in which the Vendor is interested. Any or all proposals will be rejected if there is any reason for believing that collusion exists among the vendors. Participants in such collusion may not be considered in future solicitations for the same work. Each Vendor, by submitting a bid, certifies that it is not a party to any collusive action.

### 5.3 Irregular Proposals

Proposals may be rejected if they show omissions or irregularities of any kind. Proposals taking or noting exception to any element requested may be rejected in their entirety.

### 5.4 Laws and Regulations

It shall be understood and agreed that any and all articles and/or equipment furnished or contract awarded on this proposal shall comply fully with all Local, State, and Federal laws and regulations.

### **5.5 Non-Conflict of Interest Statement**

It is unlawful for any officer, employee or agent of VPS to participate personally in his/her official capacity through decision, approval, disapproval, recommendation, advice or investigation in any contract or other matter in which he/she, his/her spouse, parent, minor child, brother or sister, has a financial interest, or to which any firm, corporation, association, or other organization in which he/she has a financial interest, or in which he/she is serving as an officer, director, trustee, partner, or employee, or agent. The successful bidder agrees that during the term of the Contract and for twenty four (24) months following the exit conference, the successful bidder, its employees, agents, and representatives, shall not, with or without compensation, on behalf of the successful bidder, or another person, entity, or corporation, take any action in connection or receive any benefit with any specific matter, finding or recommendation associated in any way with this project, except with the express written consent of VPS.

### **5.6 Non-Discrimination of Employment**

VPS actively subscribes to a policy of equal employment opportunity and will not discriminate against any employee or applicant because of race, sex, age, color, physical or mental handicap, marital status, sexual affiliation, religion, nation origin or political affiliation. The Vendor shall not discriminate in any manner against any employee because of race, sex, age, color, physical or mental handicap, marital status, sexual affiliation, religion, national origin or political affiliation.

### **5.7 Confidentiality**

Vendor shall treat confidential all information, reports, and documents, hereafter, "Data", regardless of form, that Vendor receives or is provided access by VPS. Vendor shall take all precautions necessary to prevent disclosure of such Data to others except upon the express written approval of VPS. Any third party to whom Vendor is authorized to provide Data shall be required, as a condition of receiving such Data, to execute confidentiality agreement satisfactory to the VPS. Vendor shall not use Data for any purpose other than the performance of work stipulated under the contract. Upon VPS's request, Vendor will return to VPS all copies of Data. Vendor shall safeguard against disclosure to all others Data in vendor's possession for a period of seven years after completion of the work and only if permitted by law.

### **5.8 Proprietary Information**

VPS recognize that in responding to this request for proposals, Vendors may submit proprietary information. To the extent submitted by law, VPS will keep confidential such proprietary information provided that the conditions as described in the following paragraph are met.

Proprietary information is submitted separately and must be clearly identified as containing proprietary information. Reference to the proprietary information must be clearly made in the detailed response, and conversely the section in the proprietary information packet shall be clearly labeled as to the location in the detailed response it references. Labeling a complete proposal proprietary, that is general in nature, may be cause for rejection of the proposal.

### **5.9 Contingent upon Availability of Funds**

VPS's obligation under this contract is contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds from which payment for contract purposes can be made. No legal liability on the part of VPS for any payment may arise until funds are made available and approved by the Board of Education for this contract and until the Vendor receives a Purchase Order as a notice of such availability.

### **5.10 Award**

The project will be awarded based on a best value solution approach. We will be evaluating both quality of the solution and its cost.

### **5.11 Reserved Rights**

The VPS further reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all of the Proposals.
- Issue subsequent Requests for Proposals.
- Cancel the entire Request for Proposals.
- Remedy technical errors in the Request for Proposals process.
- Appoint evaluation committees to review Proposals.
- Seek the assistance of outside technical experts in Proposals evaluation.
- Require modifications to initial Proposals.
- Excuse technical defects in a proposal when, in its sole discretion, such excuse is beneficial to the VPS.
- Investigate the qualifications of any Vendor under consideration.
- Require confirmation of Proposal furnished by a Vendor.
- Require additional evidence of qualifications to perform the Services described in this RFP.
- Approve or disapprove the use of particular subcontractors.
- Establish a short list of Vendors eligible for discussions after review of written Proposals.
- Negotiate with any, all, or none of the Vendors.
- Solicit best and final offers from all or some of the Vendors.
- Award a contract to one or more Vendors.
- Accept other than the lowest priced bid.
- Waive informalities and irregularities in Proposals.

Failure to include in the proposal all information outlined herein may be cause for rejection of the proposal. Information and/or factors gathered during interviews, negotiations and any reference checks, and any other information or factors deemed relevant by VPS, shall be utilized in the final award.