



Implementation and early outcomes of educator evaluation

15OPRCC1

General procurement information

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| Purchasing department | Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education |
| Address | 75 Pleasant St., Malden, MA 02148 |
| Procurement contact | Carrie Conaway, Associate Commissioner |
| Email address | cconaway@doe.mass.edu |
| RFR number and title | 15OPRCC1: Implementation and early outcomes of educator evaluation |

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|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| RFR posting and release | Wednesday, February 26, 2014 |
| Questions due (first deadline) | Friday, March 21, 2014 |
| Answers posted (first deadline) | Friday, March 28, 2014 |
| Questions due (final deadline) | Friday, April 11, 2014 |
| Answers posted (final deadline) | Friday, April 18, 2014 |
| RFR responses due | Wednesday, April 30, 2014 |

Background

On June 28, 2011, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted new [regulations](#) for the evaluation of all Massachusetts educators. The regulations, which apply to administrators and teachers throughout the state, are designed to:

- Promote growth and development among leaders and teachers;
- Place student learning at the center, using multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement;
- Recognize excellence in teaching and leading;
- Set a high bar for professional teaching status; and
- Shorten timelines for improvement.

Since that time, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) has been working with districts statewide to implement these new regulations. Implementation was phased in by cohort as follows:

- 2011–12: 34 Level 4 schools in nine districts, along with 11 early adopter districts
- 2012–13: Race to the Top districts (current N=233)
- 2013–14: All other districts (current N=170)

In Year 1 of each cohort's implementation, at least half of district educators must be evaluated using the five-step evaluation cycle defined in regulation:

- 1) Self-assessment
- 2) Analysis, goal-setting, and plan development
- 3) Implementation of the plan
- 4) Formative assessment and evaluation
- 5) Summative evaluation

Educators are evaluated against four standards of effective practice, which vary by role as follows:

| Principals and other administrators | Teachers/Specialized Instructional Support Personnel |
|--|---|
| Instructional leadership | Curriculum, planning, and assessment |
| Management and operations | Teaching all students |
| Family and community partnerships | Family and community partnerships |
| Professional culture | Professional culture |

This process results in a summative performance rating of one of four levels: exemplary, proficient, needs improvement, and unsatisfactory.

Separately, educators are also rated on their impact on student learning. This is measured using growth data from statewide assessments where available, as well as district-determined measures (DDMs), and must be based on trends and patterns in student learning, growth, and achievement. *Trends* refers to results over time of at least two years, while *patterns* refers to results on at least two different measures of student learning, growth, and achievement. Educators are given one of three possible ratings (high, moderate, or low impact) on the basis of these data.

The two ratings, taken together, determine an educator’s improvement plan:

- Self-directed growth plan (one or two years in duration, for experienced educators)
- Directed growth plan (one year in duration, for experienced educators)
- Improvement plan (up to one year in duration, for experienced educators)
- Developing educator plan (up to one year in duration, for new educators)

Much more information about the regulations, timeline, and state supports for implementation is available on the Department’s [educator evaluation](#) webpage.

Scope of work

ESE seeks to procure a vendor to evaluate the implementation and early outcomes of this initiative. Our objectives in conducting this evaluation are to understand the successes and challenges of districts implementing this initiative and to gather information and artifacts that could help support high quality implementation statewide. We have learned from prior evaluation work on this initiative that detailed, contextualized data gathered directly from districts and made available quickly is one of the most useful supports our agency can provide, so for this evaluation procurement we are prioritizing depth over breadth and field-oriented, short, timely reporting over massive end-of-year documents.

For fiscal year 2015, we have prioritized three key focus areas that will be foremost in districts’ minds as they implement the initiative that year. We describe these below, along with a preliminary list of sample

research questions for each. These are meant to give a flavor of the types of questions we hope to answer and the level of detail we seek. A final list of research questions will be developed with the awarded vendor as one of the deliverables for the contract. (Note that in future renewals of this contract, different focus areas may be identified.)

The summative performance rating and five-step cycle implementation

- 1) What does it look like when done well?
- 2) What approaches or strategies are districts using to establish fair and consistent evaluation practices such as observations and feedback, goal-setting, evidence selection and analysis, and performance rating?
- 3) In districts where there is significant educator buy-in, how have districts established and maintained that culture?
- 4) How are educators incorporating evaluator feedback into their instructional practice?
- 5) How are districts incorporating student and staff feedback into educator evaluations?
- 6) How are districts using educator goals and plans to drive professional development?

Personnel decision-making, recruitment, and retention

- 1) How are districts using the educator evaluation system to make personnel decisions?
- 2) How knowledgeable about the educator evaluation framework and requirements are human resources directors, and how involved are they in implementation and the use of educator evaluation data?
- 3) To what extent is the educator evaluation system driving recruitment of new teachers?
- 4) To what extent is the system driving placement and equitable distribution of effective educators?
- 5) To what extent is educator evaluation being used to identify, retain, and reward highly effective teachers?

The student impact rating and district-determined measures

- 1) How did districts organize the DDM identification and development work? What went well, and what would they change?
 - a. Did the district integrate DDM identification and development into implementation of the revised curriculum frameworks?
 - b. Did teachers score their own DDMs, score each others', or use external scorers?
 - c. How does the district's approach affect perceptions of fairness and utility?
 - d. How useful were DDMs as a tool to help educators improve their instruction?
- 2) What is the relationship between an educator's students' performance on DDMs and his/her summative performance rating?
- 3) What is the relationship between different measures for an individual teacher? (i.e., if an educator's students demonstrate high growth on the first DDM, are they also likely to demonstrate high growth on the second DDM?)

Answering these questions will require a variety of data collection and analysis strategies. The Department anticipates that vendors' proposals will include the following forms of data collection.

- 1) A **statewide sample survey** to gauge statewide sentiment on key issues around educator evaluation (for instance, perceptions of fairness and utility), as well as to identify districts that may have particularly interesting practices that may be worth investigating further with qualitative work. The survey should have sufficient sample size to produce results aggregated to

the district level, not just statewide, for districts participating in the survey. Planning for district-level aggregation will help identify potential case study districts and will also give districts a greater reason to participate in the survey, as they'll get data about their own district to compare to statewide trends.

- 2) **Qualitative data collection** such as case studies, focus groups, or interviews designed to generate detailed, specific examples of best practices in the evaluation's focus areas. The districts to feature in this qualitative work will be selected in conjunction with the state agency from sources such as the statewide sample survey, [Professional Practice Innovation grant](#) award winners, and agency staff knowledgeable about district implementation strategies. The goal is not that the sample is representative, but rather that it helps us highlight innovative and effective practices in districts. We imagine that this work might feature approximately six districts if done as full case studies, or more districts if the methodological approach is focus groups, interviews, or other less intensive qualitative data collection. Bidders should propose a specific qualitative approach and number of districts to be included.
- 3) **Artifact-gathering** designed to supplement the specific examples of best practices by providing authentic materials from districts used in program implementation, along with information about the context in which the materials were used and how they changed over time. These would be shared with other districts to help promote strong statewide implementation and learning across districts. Examples of artifacts might include:
 - a. Data management tools, e.g., educator evaluation data management tools, analysis tools for district-determined measures
 - b. Communications and training resources, e.g., district-created communiqués and training materials
 - c. Five-step cycle exemplars, e.g., example S.M.A.R.T. goals, educator plans, observation-related tools or protocols for various types of educators, feedback notes, formative/summative write-ups, evidence samples
- 4) **Extant quantitative data analysis** designed to answer technical questions about the educator evaluation system, for example, questions 2 and 3 under Student Impact Rating and DDMs above. Bidders should anticipate that ESE will have statewide data on individual educators' summative performance ratings and ratings on the four standards of effective practice, phased in with data available for approximately 50 percent of each implementation cohort's educators in the first year of implementation and the remainder in the second year. (See page 1 of this document for more information on the implementation cohorts.) Data on educators' individual district-determined measures and ratings will need to be collected directly from districts. We anticipate that this analysis would involve data from a sample of at least 15 districts.

The Department anticipates that information gathered from these various data collection and analysis projects will be turned into a variety of reports and products intended for ESE stakeholders and for the field. These deliverables are described below.

This initiative has had a formal implementation evaluation underway during school years 2012–13 and 2013–14. Proposed research designs and data collection strategies must build off of this prior work, to maintain continuity in the focus of the evaluation. Further, a related evaluation of the Teacher Incentive Fund program in Springfield will still be underway in fiscal year 2015. This program is closely related to educator evaluation in that educators' ratings in Springfield's TIF schools influence the additional

compensation available to them under TIF. Thus, the two evaluations must work closely together. The winning bidder of this procurement will be expected to collaborate with the previous evaluation vendor on protocol design, sample selection, study implementation, and reporting. This will ensure that the state maintains the synergy between the two evaluations, that Springfield is not overly burdened by participation in the two evaluations, and that information gathered in Springfield can be used to inform the statewide evaluation of the implementation and early outcomes of educator evaluation.

Deliverables

The winning vendor will be required to produce the following deliverables:

- 1) Final research questions, research designs, and field products plan for Department approval
- 2) A statewide sample survey of districts
- 3) Qualitative data collection and artifact-gathering from districts
- 4) A statewide report of data gathered through the statewide sample survey and separate reports of their own data for each participating district
- 5) A minimum of five brief field-oriented products sharing findings, best practices, and artifacts from districts.
- 6) A report summarizing findings from quantitative analyses of extant data
- 7) An end-of-year summary brief highlighting key findings from all data collection activities
- 8) Project management activities such as a project plan and timeline, monthly progress reports, and updates to the detailed project plans and budget

Further detail follows on the requirements for each deliverable.

1) Research questions, research design, and field products plan

The vendor will develop the final research questions and the appropriate research designs required to answer these questions based on the vendor's own expertise, the sample questions provided in this RFR, and the information needs of program managers. The research questions and designs should:

- Include both quantitative and qualitative methods and analysis.
- Build on prior research questions and research designs from the current evaluation of this initiative.
- Articulate a clear strategic design for data collection that minimizes the intrusion on participating schools and districts and incentivizes their participation as appropriate.
- Demonstrate sensitivity to the fact that there are multiple audiences for these analyses and reports including ESE research and program staff, district leadership, school leadership, teachers, other educators, and the public.
- Provide a sound basis for timely written products that are actionable for the project stakeholders, including educators in the field.

The vendor will also develop a final plan for the number, length, and type of field-oriented products to meet the requirement for deliverable 5 above. All of these items are subject to ESE approval.

2) Statewide sample survey

The vendor will create and conduct a statewide sample survey, as described above in the scope of work, using surveys from prior years as a basis for the design.

3) Qualitative data collection and artifact-gathering

The vendor will collect qualitative data and artifacts of practice from districts, as described above in the scope of work.

4) Survey reports

The vendor will report results from the statewide sample survey in two forms. First, it will produce a statewide report including a brief summary of key findings, tables showing results for each question, and selected crosstabulations. Second, it will produce a separate report for each district that participated in the survey including key findings, tables, crosstabulations, and comparisons of the district's responses to the state average.

5) Field-oriented products

The vendor will produce a minimum of five brief field-oriented products sharing findings, best practices, and artifacts from districts. These might take the form of short reports, presentation materials, videos, webinars featuring findings plus a presentation from a featured district, and so forth. They are intended to share the qualitative and quantitative findings from the study with practitioners in districts and to help improve the quality of implementation statewide. The specific topics for the reports will be determined in collaboration with ESE staff and could be focused on deep case studies of individual districts or brief summaries that showcase best practices in a particular focus area across several different districts. We intend that these be succinct, targeted resources (for example, written briefs would be approximately four pages each). They should be produced as quickly after data collection as possible, coming out throughout the year rather than being back-loaded at the end of the year. Vendors should propose a set of products and a timeline for release in their application. The exact number and type of deliverables will be jointly agreed upon by the selected vendor and ESE after the award of the contract, as part of deliverable 1.

6) Quantitative analysis report

The vendor will produce a report summarizing findings from the quantitative analyses described above. This report will be intended primarily for an ESE audience with sophistication in statistical analysis. The selected vendor will provide ESE with cleaned data files and statistical syntax at the end of the project, so that ESE can reproduce the analyses in future years if needed. The data files and code must be provided in SPSS format or a format that is transferable to SPSS.

7) End-of-year summary report

At the end of the year, the vendor will produce a brief report, envisioned as approximately two to four pages, summarizing highlighted findings from all data collection activities. This will serve as a "state of the state of educator evaluation" that can be used by the commissioner and other stakeholders to share the major findings from the evaluation statewide.

8) Project management activities

The vendor will conduct activities required to manage the project effectively. These will include:

- A detailed project plan produced for ESE approval before research work commences. This will include, at a minimum, identification of the major tasks, task owners, milestones, risks and mitigation strategies, deliverables, and anticipated completion dates.
- Regular meetings with the relevant ESE project managers and research staff to:
 - Plan and design the evaluation to inform the program implementations in a timely way, including reporting and feedback loops to effectively disseminate useful information to the field;

- Design, implement, and develop evaluation tools, measures, and data collection strategies that coordinate data collection across and minimize intrusion in participating schools and districts; and
- Identify and report regularly on areas of the program that are in need of improvement.
- Monthly progress reports including updated project plans showing the planned versus actual effort and the percentage of work completed. The progress reports will include accomplishments during the current reporting periods, activities for the next reporting period, and any open risks, issues and/or changes needed to the projects. The progress reports will also include updates to the budget showing actual costs, forecasted costs to completion, and any major variances.

Budget guidelines

The duration of this contract will be from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016, with a maximum obligation of \$650,000. Three one-year renewals are available. The total dollar amount of this RFR is \$2,600,000.00. Bidders should submit a deliverables-based budget for the deliverables listed above, for each fiscal year of this RFR as follows: FY2015 (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016), FY2016 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017) and FY2017 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017), FY2018 (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018) and FY2019 (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019). All travel and other incidental costs must be included in this budget.

Required qualifications

The bidder selected for this engagement must have no apparent or actual conflict of interest and have a demonstrable recent track record of successfully completing multiple projects with similar scopes to the satisfaction of clients.

The key personnel proposed for this engagement must meet the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated experience conducting large-scale program evaluations of educator evaluation systems and practices, particularly at a state or national level;
- Demonstrated expertise in designing and implementing qualitative and quantitative research studies;
- Demonstrated ability to generate actionable findings and products from research projects in a format accessible to a general audience;
- Familiarity with the nature and governance of Massachusetts public schools;
- Experience with successfully conducting research in district and school environments;
- Experience working successfully with complex organizations, preferably state education agencies.

To demonstrate these qualifications, bidders must present samples of at least three related work products from similar engagements. These samples should include at least one brief, field-oriented product sharing actionable findings that support effective program implementation, at least one report summarizing findings from quantitative analyses similar to those required in this RFR, and at least one report demonstrating the ability to communicate actionable findings from qualitative work. Bidders may use the same work sample to meet more than one of these criteria but should note so in their application. They must also provide resumes of no more than two pages each for the key personnel proposed to support the work, if awarded.

Evaluation criteria

Bidders will be evaluated on:

- The quality and feasibility of their proposal to meet the requirements of this RFR
- Their depth of experience and the quality of their prior work conducting large-scale evaluations of educator evaluation systems, particularly in a Massachusetts context
- Their demonstrated ability to generate actionable findings and products from research projects in a format accessible to a general audience
- Their experience in conducting research in districts and schools, particularly in a Massachusetts context
- The reasonableness of the proposed budget given anticipated deliverables
- The qualifications of key personnel

See the evaluation scorecard for details of how the proposals will be scored.

Submission requirements

Bidders should submit the following:

- A narrative of no more than 15 single-spaced pages describing the services they will provide to meet the requirements of this RFR. This narrative should also describe the vendor's qualifications to provide those services, including descriptions of similar analyses they have conducted and of their depth of experience in working with local school districts or state education agencies.
- Resumes of key personnel, of no more than two pages each
- Examples of at least three similar work products the vendor has completed successfully, as described above
- A deliverables-based budget meeting the requirements detailed above
- A proposed timeline of activities and deliverables

Vendor must submit an original bid plus three photocopies and one electronic copy on CD or a flash/jump drive by the application deadline of April 30, 2014 to:

Carrie Conaway
Office of Planning and Research
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant St., Malden, MA 02148
cconaway@doe.mass.edu

Questions about this RFR will be accepted by **email only** until 5 pm on Friday, April 11, 2014. Responses to questions received by Friday, March 21 will be posted by Friday, March 28. Responses to questions received after 5:00 PM on Friday, March 21 and before 5:00 PM on Friday, April 11 will be posted on Friday, April 18. Questions received after 5:00 PM on Friday, April 11 will not be answered.

Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan

Massachusetts Executive Order 524 established a policy to promote the award of state contracts in a manner that develops and strengthens Minority and Women Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) that resulted in the Supplier Diversity Program in Public Contracting. M/WBEs are strongly encouraged to submit responses to this RFR, either as prime vendors, joint venture partners or other type of business partnerships. Similarly, Executive Order 546 established the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (SDVOBE) Program to encourage the participation of businesses owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans in all areas of state procurement and contracting, thereby including them in the SDP. All bidders must follow the requirements set forth in the SDP section of the RFR, which will detail the specific requirements relating to the prime vendor’s inclusion of M/WBEs and/or SDVOBEs. Bidders are required to develop creative initiatives to help foster new business relationships with M/WBEs and/or SDVOBEs within the primary industries affected by this RFR. In order to satisfy the compliance of this section and encourage bidder’s participation of SDP objectives, the Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan for large procurements greater than \$150,000 will be evaluated at 10% or more of the total evaluation. Once an SDP commitment, expressed as a percentage of contract revenues, is submitted, negotiated and approved, the agency will then monitor the contractor’s performance, and use actual expenditures with SDO certified M/WBE contractors and the Center for Veterans Enterprise certified SDVOBEs to fulfill their own SDP expenditure benchmarks. M/WBE and SDVOBE participation must be incorporated into and monitored for all types of procurements regardless of size; however, submission of an SDP Plan is mandated only for large procurements over \$150,000.

SDP forms are required to be submitted by the deadlines noted below in order to meet the mandatory participation requirements of the SDP:

| SDP Plan Form #/Name | Submitted By | When Submitted |
|--|---------------------------|---|
| SDP Plan Form #1 – SDP Plan Commitment | All Bidders | With Bid Response |
| SDP Plan Form #2 – Declaration of SDP Partners | Newly Awarded Contractors | Within 30 days of contract execution |
| SDP Plan Form #3 – SDP Spending Report | Contractors | Within 45 days of the end of each quarter |

Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Resources:

- Resources available to assist Prime Bidders in finding potential Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) and Women Business Enterprises (WBE) partners can be found on the [Supplier Diversity Program Webpage](http://www.mass.gov/sdp) (www.mass.gov/sdp).
- Resources available to assist Prime Bidders in finding potential Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (SDVOBE) partners can be found on the [Supplier Diversity Office Webpage](http://www.mass.gov/sdo) (www.mass.gov/sdo).
- The Supplier Diversity Program offers training on the SDP Plan requirements. The dates of upcoming trainings can be found on the [OSD Training & Outreach Webpage](#). In addition, the SDP Webinar can be located on the [Supplier Diversity Program Webpage](http://www.mass.gov/sdp) (www.mass.gov/sdp).

Supplier Diversity Program Subcontracting Policies. Prior approval of the agency is required for any subcontracted service of the contract. Agencies may define required deliverables including, but not limited to, documentation necessary to verify subcontractor commitments and expenditures with Minority- or Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) and/or Service Disabled Veteran Owned

Business Enterprises (SDV)Bes) for the purpose of monitoring and enforcing compliance of subcontracting commitments made in a bidder's Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) Plan. Contractors are responsible for the satisfactory performance and adequate oversight of their subcontractors.

Contractors are responsible for compliance with all other contract reporting requirements including, but not limited to, Supplier Diversity Program (SDP) and other contract reports, as required by this contract.