



Pittsburgh Public Schools
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<https://www.pghschools.org>

The School District of Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, PA)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

6-12 (or 6-8, 9-12) Core Literacy Program

Issuance Date:
Submission Date:

1. Introduction

This Request for Proposal (RFP) seeks applicants who can provide a comprehensive literacy curricula influenced by the most-up-to date science of reading principles for students in grades 6-12 that meet the following criteria: research-based, evidence-based, culturally relevant, student centered, engaging, high interest literary program with a balance of contemporary and classical literature exposing students to diverse authors, characters, identities, multiple perspectives, and cultures. In addition, a program that elevates student identity, skills, intellectuality, criticality, and joy. The RFP includes detailed requirements for all proposal submissions. The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to solicit one or more established providers of secondary instructional materials to provide the Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) with an evidence-based, researched, and reviewed program/materials in English Language Arts that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards adopted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education Standards (the "State Standards") for grades 6-12, addressing reading (a balance of fiction and nonfiction texts), writing, speaking, and listening. This RFP seeks publishers ("Respondents" or "Offerors") who share a vision for ensuring that all students have access to the highest quality instructional resources to ultimately increase student achievement and ensure success in college, careers, and community participation. **The district will consider reviewing and recommending a program that only addresses one or both grade bands: 6-8 or 9-12.**

Pittsburgh Public School believes that every student has the right to an equitable educational experience within the School District of Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh Public Schools aims to close the opportunity gap by providing historically underserved students with equitable access to programming and support resources while eliminating policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce individual and institutional bias and create disparate outcomes. Racial disparities stem from the monocultural design and imbalance in the teaching population disproportionately affecting African American students who represent 53 percent of the district. Hanley and Noblit (2009) share that culture is "the basis of prior knowledge, which holistically includes cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning" (pg. 31). However, many school systems across the United States were designed to be monocultural and have reinforced white, middle-class values as the standard, thus invalidating the contributions, perspectives and learning styles of culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse populations.

The Pittsburgh Public School District is the largest of 43 school districts in Allegheny County and the second largest in Pennsylvania. The district serves approximately 20,000 students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12. There are approximately 4,236 students in grades 6-8 and 5,875 students in grades 9-12. Pittsburgh Public Schools has a vision that all students will graduate high school, college, career, and life ready; prepared to complete a two-or four-year college degree or workforce certification. Fifty-three percent of the students who attend Pittsburgh Public Schools are African American and another fourteen percent identify as non-White, but some curricular resources are still outdated and do not consistently reflect the aforementioned representation making it difficult to engage all groups in equitable learning experiences.

Adopted materials will be implemented during the 2024-25 school year and physical materials will need to be delivered by July 31, 2024.

2. Scope of Services

The requirements outlined in this RFP, although extensive, is not exhaustive and is intended to provide interested Respondents with sufficient basic information to submit proposals meeting minimum requirements but is not intended to limit a proposal's content or exclude any relevant or essential information. Proposals should address the entire scope of services requested. In this RFP, Curricular and Instructional Materials are defined to be the comprehensive curricula and materials needed for the entire English Language Arts instructional experience for all students in every classroom, aligned to the Common Core Standards, PA State Standards, and adaptable to meet the needs of students with exceptionalities and English Language Learners.

Proposals must comply with the following selection requirements as written in PPS Board Policy 106, Adoption of Instructional Materials:

- *The primary criteria for the selection of instructional materials are to address the needs of students as described in the Content Standards at each grade level. All instructional materials and supplementary materials shall reflect in both narrative and illustration a diverse American society and shall provide equal representation of African American and other cultural and ethnic groups. Adopted instructional materials should avoid stereotyped images based on race and gender. Instructional materials should reflect gender and ethnic minorities participating in leadership roles in all aspects of society. The instructional materials that are ultimately selected in each subject area must be challenging and stretch students to meet high standards*

3. Instructional Materials Requirements

- **General Requirements**

- Instructional materials must be aligned with the PA Core standards and eligible content for English Language Arts or include a crosswalk document from the Common Core State Standards to the PA Core standards and eligible content for ELA.
- The progression of standards across grade levels is clearly identified.
- Instructional materials are designed so that students build towards critical thinking and textual analysis.
- Embedded principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- Instructional materials must include resources that support the teaching and learning of students needing enrichment and acceleration.
- Digital materials that include opportunities for teachers to extend learning, to personalize learning for all students, and use adaptive or other technological innovations.
- Include tools, resources, and documents that provide parents/guardians and others with the necessary resources to provide transparency in the curriculum and to provide support to academic progress at home or outside the school setting.
- Provide accessible digitally available student-facing, teacher-facing, and parent/guardian-facing materials and resources in multiple languages.
- Include digital and hard-bound print formats.
- A proposal can be submitted for one or both grade bands: 6-8 and 9-12.
- Clear vertical alignment between grade levels is evident, either through alignment of key standards or topics.
- Overarching questions, essential questions for each unit, with daily learning targets/objectives are included.
- Lessons that refer to interdisciplinary connections (e.g., science and social studies grade-level standards)
- Media resources are embedded in the lessons.
- Technology based enhancements should be easily accessible through a variety of devices.
- The materials include exemplars or models of student work.
- The materials include opportunities for real world connections with civic engagement opportunities.
- The student materials include opportunities for student choice and decision-making.
- The materials include resources for remediation and enrichment.
- The materials include resources for small group differentiated instruction.
- The materials include suggestions and resources for literacy intervention.
- The materials provide instruction to accommodate individual differences in cognitive, linguistic, sociocultural, and behavioral aspects of learning.
- The materials provide multimodal and multisensory instruction for decoding, spelling, reading comprehension and written expression.
- The materials provide a well-paced, gradual release of responsibility.
- The materials support the preparation of our students for college, career, and life.

- **Reading**

- The materials provide the application of advanced word decoding and encoding skills to all text focusing

on repeated and extended exposure and practice to support mastery of word parts.

- The materials provide systematic teaching of the decoding of multisyllabic words.
- The materials include a variety of text types at grade-level.
- The materials include a wealth of authentic text at grade-level.
- The materials include a wealth of high interest contemporary pieces written by diverse authors at grade-level.
- The materials include strategies for reading a variety of text and genres to support comprehension within domain and subject knowledge.
- The materials include explicit evidence-based comprehension strategy instruction.
- The materials include opportunities to build background knowledge of students.
- Materials should include reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from texts, both literary and informational.
- Students read, understand, and respond to informational text—with an emphasis on comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and making connections among ideas and between texts with a focus on textual evidence.
 - Key Ideas and Details
 - Craft and Structure
 - Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
 - Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
 - Range of Reading
- Students read and respond to works of literature—with an emphasis on comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and making connections among ideas and between texts with a focus on textual evidence.
 - Key Ideas and Details
 - Craft and Structure
 - Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
 - Vocabulary Acquisition and Use
 - Range of Reading
 - Materials should build knowledge through content-rich nonfiction.
 - Materials should include regular practice with complex texts and academic language.
 - Texts should be developmentally appropriate, quantitatively, and qualitatively complex for the reading level and worthy of multiple readings of text.
- Students read texts at a variety of lengths/genres: poetry, prose, novels, etc.
- Students develop literacy knowledge (print concepts, genres, etc).
- Supplemental contemporary, diverse, high interest trade books or novels are included in the resources and instructional materials.
- Students are provided the opportunity to actively monitor comprehension while reading.
- Students engage in close reading of complex texts, incorporating higher-level questions that require students to think deeply about texts.
- The materials provide varied techniques and methods for building reading fluency.
- The materials provide opportunities for students to develop fluent word-level skills by automatic word reading, oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, and motivation to read.
- **Writing**
 - Instruction supports the development of writing skills and application of writing processes throughout the year.
 - The materials include multiple entry points for differentiated writing topics and assignments which support students in developing the art and craft of writing while working toward standards' mastery.
 - Students are regularly asked to synthesize multiple sources and engage in evidence-based writing across text genres.

- Materials support the developmental phases of the writing process (planning/brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing).
- Students are provided the opportunity to edit writing using the conventions of language.
- Students have opportunities to summarize text, recalling main points of the text.
- Students write for different purposes and audiences. Students write clear and focused text to convey a well-defined perspective and appropriate content.
 - Informative/Explanatory
 - Opinion/Argumentative
 - Narrative
 - Response to Literature
 - Production and Distribution of Writing
 - Technology and Publication
 - Conducting Research
 - Credibility, Reliability, and Validity of Sources
 - Range of Writing
- **Speaking and Listening**
 - Lessons include built-in and frequent opportunities for student centered text based academic discussions.
 - Students present appropriately in formal speaking situations, listen critically, and respond intelligently as individuals or in group discussions.
 - Comprehension and Collaboration
 - Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
 - Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
 - Conventions of Standard English
- **Language**
 - Materials should include opportunities to study academic vocabulary, grammar and mechanics, word study (e.g., analysis of word families, affixes, roots, antonyms/synonyms), morphology, etc. and instruction is connected to and reinforced through texts.
 - Grade-level grammar, usage, and mechanics are taught within the context of authentic written and oral communication.
 - The materials provide opportunities for examining language structure (syntax, semantics, etc.).
 - The materials provide opportunities for examining verbal reasoning (inference, metaphor, etc.).
 - The materials provide explicit methods of vocabulary instruction.
- **English Language Learners**
 - Instructional materials provide strategies and supports for students who read, write, and/or speak in a language other than English to meet or exceed grade-level standards.
 - Integrate explicit instruction and resources to support the teaching and learning of English Language Learners.
- **Students with Exceptionalities**
 - Allow for flexibility in meeting the needs of a wide range of students and include accommodations for special populations, including English Language Learners, students with disabilities, including students who are visually impaired and/or deaf or hard of hearing, those with print disabilities, and students with significant cognitive disabilities, and students identified as gifted and talented. Lessons for whole group, small group, and independent instruction should be included.
- **Culturally Relevant Materials**
 - Include culturally relevant materials and culturally responsive teaching and instructional practices that are inclusive of a variety of cultures and ethnicities and are free from bias in the portrayal of ethnic groups, gender, age, cultures, religion, and people with exceptionalities. Materials should expose

children to many forms of diversity (for example, race, ethnicity, family structure, disabilities). Materials need to portray the child's culture and all cultures in a positive, authentic, and realistic light.

- Materials should never convey that one group is better than another group.
- Materials need to challenge all forms of stereotypes, such as only men or only women can have certain careers, or because you are from a particular race, you have a specific talent.
- Materials need to emphasize individual differences and the diversity within large groups.
- The materials include multiple perspectives and provide exposure to the larger world.
- Authors of the texts represent diverse cultural backgrounds.
- The texts represent a variety of cultures congruent with district demographics and include topics that reflect a variety of student identities and experiences.
- The materials create a bridge between students' home and school lives, while still meeting the expectations of the district and state curricular requirements.
- The materials utilize the backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences of the students to inform the teacher's lessons and methodology.
- The materials include technological enhancements.
- The materials include instruction regarding the traits of writing (i.e., voice, idea, style).
- **Assessment**
 - Include a suite of accessible formative and summative assessment materials, available digitally, aligned to the curriculum, and intended to inform and improve instruction, not intended to replace other standards-based external assessments administered in PPS.
 - Most instructional units include summative assessments (for mastery) that include evidence-based written responses.
 - Most lessons include suggestions for formative assessment (checks for understanding) that include evidence-based written responses.
 - The assessment materials directly align with curriculum, resources and instruction, and are reliable and valid.
 - The materials use unfamiliar passages (cold reads) to assess acquisition and retention of skills and strategies.
 - The assessment materials include research-based suggested interleaving practices to reinforce and/or reteach assessed skills and concepts.

4. Usability

- The instructional materials are organized in a systematic way that is comprehensive and clear.
- The visual design (whether in print or digital) supports students in engaging thoughtfully with the subject and is neither distracting nor chaotic.
- The instructional materials include opportunities for teachers to effectively plan and utilize materials with integrity and to further develop their own understanding of the content.
- The instructional materials include resources that teachers may edit, adapt, or enrich.
- The instructional materials provide teacher guidance with useful annotations and suggestions for how to enact the student materials.
- The instructional materials provide a comprehensive list of supplies needed to support instructional activities, including but not limited to student-centered hands-on investigations.
- The instructional materials include a system of assessments identifying how materials provide tools, guidance, and support for teachers to collect, interpret, and act on data.
- The instructional materials provide data dashboards at the teacher, school, and District level for monitoring usage and performance.
- The instructional materials provide specific guidelines for instruction so digital learning is not solely dependent on student independent work.
- The instructional materials provide strategies for informing all stakeholders, including students, parents, or

caregivers, about the program and suggestions for how they can help support student progress and achievement.

- Parent materials or any home/school connections must be provided in multiple languages to increase access for non-English speakers.

5. Parents/Guardians Engagement

- The instructional materials include printable parent/guardians' letters for sharing data and progress monitoring with families.
- Parent/guardian materials or any home/school connections (digital and print) must be provided in multiple languages to increase access for non-English speakers.
- The instructional materials include tools, resources, and documents that provide parents/guardians and others with the necessary resources to provide transparency in the curriculum and to provide support to academic progress at home or outside the school setting.

6. Technology/Clever Integration Requirements

Platform and Solution Requirements

- Is your online platform compatible with Clever?
- Does your program have a method of effective use within blended learning to promote independent work and teach direct instruction for large and small groups?
- Does your platform provide real-time data reporting in a dashboard with progress reports at the standard and skill level?
- Can your online program be customized to a variety of student proficiency levels?
- Is your online platform aligned to NGSS Standards and Phenomena-driven 3-Dimensional Instruction?
- Does your platform have the ability to create learning paths that specifically meet the needs of individual students?

Technical Specifications

- Is this a web-based application or would the product need to be installed on premises?
- What browsers are compatible with this product?
- If locally hosted and installed on premises, what are the recommended/required hardware and operating system platforms for deployment.
- If locally hosted, what are the recommended/required Relational Database Management System for deployment.
- If locally hosted, do you recommend a dedicated server to support your application?
- How much bandwidth is required for connectivity?
- Is external access required?
- What ports does the application/website use?
- What are the URLs?
- Is the website HTTPS?
- How frequently are system back-ups created?
- What Operating System does the application use?
- What database does the application use?
- Do we need to purchase end user devices?
- What is the authentication method?
- How are logins managed?
- What, if any, 3rd party vendors or stakeholders involved and what is the expiration?
- Are SSLs involved and what is the expiration?
- Do we need to be aware of any legal or regulatory constraints?
- Is there inherent risk, weakness, or data threats?

- Data protection – sharing data social medial policy.
- Data privacy – what are the rules for personally identifiable information, protected health information, and other private data?
- Encryption rules?
- Do you support Clever as a single sign-on using our Active Directory (Azure)?
- What data is needed from other district systems?
- What data will be provided to other district systems?
- How often does data need to be exchanged?
- How are changes in the data handled?
- Students transferring schools, staffing changes, etc.
- How can we ensure the security of the data during exchange?
- Is there a mitigation process established?
- Is there any existing metadata, definition, or classifications of the data elements?
- Is there an existing data dictionary?
- What is the Right to Know procedure?

Data Exchange

- Do you support nightly automated loads to and from your system (we have high mobility and systems must reflect at least a day-behind state)? If not, how do you reflect current student assignment and provide teachers/educators with appropriate access to student data.
- Rostering & data import into your system (in order of preference) – provide the import specifications for each method that you support for review by IT team.
 - Do you support ed-fi integration (if yes what version & have you accomplished this with)?
 - Do you have 1EdTech One Roster integration (1.1)?
 - Do you support clever integration?
 - CSV/flat file (provide import specifications)
- Integration with Learning Platforms:
 - Does your product support standardized mechanisms for import into an LMS (for example 1EdTech LTI certification)?
 - Is your product certified for the 1EdTech Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) standard?
 - Identify locations that you have worked with that have successfully integrated your product with the district’s current LMS (currently Schoology)?
- Integration into testing platforms
 - Does your product integrate with assessment platforms?
 - What certifications does your product have for these integrations?
- Exporting data from your system? (Provide data export specifications and data dictionaries for review by IT and DREA team).
 - This must be provided in an automated, regular data load to the district that does not require staff time or intervention.
 - Ed-fi (what version and what organization have you accomplished this with)
 - API (provide documentation to include what endpoints are included in the API)
 - FTP (provide export specifications)
 - Verify that your nightly export.
 - Is provided in an automated, regular data load to the district that does not require staff time or intervention?
 - Provides individual user level information related to student usage and staff usage explain what elements address the following:
 - Fidelity of usage for students (e.g., daily time logged-in, daily time on task, lessons/segments completed, metrics providing insight into student growth)
 - Staff usage

- Student and staff audit trails
- Describe your data access/permissions at a minimum address:
 - How you automate the process for access provision
 - How do you establish data access and permissions for teachers and school administrators?
 - How do you establish permissions for district administrators?
 - Provide your auditing capabilities (click paths, change log, etc.)

Data Security and Destruction

- The district does not allow organizations to maintain copies of student data provided by the district or generated in the system by our students beyond the scope of the contract. What are your procedures to ensure that all student data is destroyed and eliminated from your system?
- What are your policies and processes for the use of individual student data for anything outside of the delivery of the service provided by your platform?
- Security, privacy, and other agreements must be in addendums to the contracts the contract and agreement shall not reference agreements housed on websites or other changeable mediums– they may not be changed without approval and agreement from the school board.
- The application must include the following:
- The frequency of data exchange must be nightly.
- The data exchange must be automated.
- The program must have data available to support fidelity of usage (minutes logged-in, time on task, lessons/segments completed and student growth)

7. Training and Professional Development

- The proposal shall describe the initial training and professional development necessary to begin implementation of the proposed instructional materials. The training plan should include mechanisms to train district teachers and central staff who, in turn, will train school staff and provide support districtwide, including the availability of digital professional learning tools.
- The professional development plan should be designed to supplement, not supplant, the district’s existing approach to professional development that includes the development of school and district expertise and capacity to deliver training districtwide; a focus on equity and cultural proficiency; school-based embedded support from school and district staff; and development of blended professional learning models that include both face-to-face and virtual learning.
- Define the training required to prevent drift in instructional implementation and assessment administration processes.
- Describe the cost and how often research shows that refresher training is required.

8. Proposal Submission and Deadline

- All proposals must be submitted **electronically to Dr. Lisa Pickett (lpickett1@pghschools.org) by 5:00 PM EST on October 20, 2023**, with “PPS 6-12 English Language Arts Materials” as the subject line. Proposals, including any/all attachments and cover letters, should be submitted as a single PDF document. In addition, digital access to all program materials must be provided along with hard copy sample instructional materials units that can be mailed directly to: Dr. Lisa Pickett, 9-12 Literacy Curriculum Coordinator, School District of Pittsburgh Greenway Professional Development Center, Room 224, 1400 Crucible Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15205. Proposals should be submitted in accordance with the proposal guidelines outlined in this RFP. Pittsburgh Public Schools reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, waive irregularities, and to select the proposal that is determined to be the most advantageous to the school district. Late proposals will not be accepted. Proposals submitted via hard copy or fax will not be accepted.

Upon the release of this RFP and during the conclusion of the selection process, there shall be no communication between any prospective respondents, their lobbyist(s) or agent(s) and any employee of PPS or its elected Board of Directors, except as provided for in the RFP. Any violation of this provision by

any prospective firm and/or its agent shall be grounds for immediate disqualification.

All proposal packages shall be submitted to PPS as follows:

Dr. Lisa Pickett
9-12 Literacy Curriculum Coordinator
School District of Pittsburgh
Greenway Professional Development Center, Room 224
1400 Crucible Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15205
Email: lpickett1@pghschools.org

9. Proposal Introduction

- **Cover Letter:** Provide the name, mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number of the firm submitting the proposal. The cover letter must be signed by an authorized officer of the organization.
- **Table of Contents:** Clearly identify material contained in the proposal by section and page number.
- **Introduction:** Provide an overview of the company and its products as they relate to this RFP. Share relevant data-based evidence of impact, outcomes from prior and current school districts with similar demographics.
- **Program Overview:** Provide an overview of the program and its core components.
- **Independent External Evaluations:** Provide access to findings from independent external evaluations, conducted by non-profit organizations.
- **Confirmation Certification of EBE Compliance:** Include the EBE participation percent.

10. Timeline

- The Pittsburgh Public Schools is requesting proposals from experienced and qualified firms to provide the services described herein. Selection of the firm will be made based upon proposals submitted. There may also be presentations or interviews. A timetable for the selection process is provided below:

RFP Issued	Week of October 2, 2023
Proposals Due	October 20, 2023
Presentations (If requested)	November 1, 2023 November 8, 2023 November 13, 2023 November 14, 2023 *Dates are subject to change. All dates might not be needed.
Approval by the Board of Directors	January 24, 2024
Notification of Board Recommendation to Applicant Finalist	By January 31, 2024

11. Evaluation Criteria and Selection Process

- The contract will be awarded to the qualified proposer whose proposal is most advantageous to PPS, based on the evaluation criteria specified below. The overall evaluation feedback from reviewers will guide PPS in making an award decision based on the evaluation criteria.
- PPS reserves the right to request an interview from those companies determined to be in a competitive range and shall use the information derived from these interviews, if any, in its evaluation.
- An evaluation committee, including but not limited to English Language Arts teachers, principals, chief academic officer, curriculum and instruction staff, assistant superintendents, district-level staff, board members, parents, students, and community members, will review the proposals. The role of the evaluation committee is to review and assess to what extent submitted proposals meet the evaluation criteria and to make a recommendation. The contract will be awarded to the qualified bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the district. The

evaluation criteria will be considered but will not be the sole factor used to determine the successful bidder.

12. Overall Program Cost

- Include overall costs for the entire curriculum and materials including but not limited to instructional materials and guides, interventions, assessments, professional development, program setup, delivery service, and related materials.

13. ELIGIBLE BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (EBE) PARTICIPATION

1. **EBE Goal:** An aspirational Eligible Business Enterprise (EBE) goal of 10%, for business diversity spend, has been assigned for this contract opportunity.

An EBE is a collective of firms that are certified in one or more of the following business diversity categories, registered.

in our online EBE directory, and used to track the District's diversity spend:

- Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)
- Women Business Enterprise (WBE)
- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)
- U. S. Small Business Administration 8(A)

2. Proposed Business Diversity Utilization

- Is your firm a certified MBE, WBE, DBE or 8(a) firm? If so, please provide proof of current certification from a certifying entity. Self-certification is not accepted.
- Please also provide detailed information regarding any additional business entity that will assist in completing the scope of work as defined by this solicitation. This should include the:
 1. Company Name
 2. Company Contact (including title, email, and phone number)
 3. Scope of Work
 4. Dollar Amount & Percentage of Contract
 5. Company Diversity Type (provide proof for each certified firm) oMBE, WBE, DBE, 8(A), Diverse but not certified, N/A

3. Good Faith Effort

If no portion of this contract will be awarded to a diverse business, specifically \$0 or 0% diversity spend, please provide detailed information addressing your firm's culture for business diversity & inclusion.

1. Diversity Spend: How much money did your company spend with certified MBE, WBE, DBE and/or 8(a) firms last year? What was the diversity percentage based on your total spend?
2. Diversity Count: What is the total number of MBE, WBE, DBE and/or 8(a) firms that your company contracted with last year? Please itemize by each diversity type as well.
3. Membership: Are you a member of any supplier/business diversity organizations? If so, please share the name of the organization and provide details concerning your level of involvement with that organization.

For additional documentation related to EBE policies, the proposer should visit the District's website at:

<https://www.pghschools.org/mwbe> or contact Paula B. Castleberry, Minority/Women Business Coordinator at pcastleberry1@pghschools.org.