The School District of Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, PA)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Grades 6-12: English as a Second Language (ESL) Program

Issuance Date:

Submission Date:

1. Purpose

This Request for Proposal (RFP) seeks applicants who can provide a comprehensive, research-based, and evidence-based program that will ensure all Pittsburgh Public Schools' teachers and English Learners in grades 6-12 will have access to the most effective, culturally inclusive, and highest quality curriculum and instructional resources that promote academic language and growth in the four domains of English language acquisition. The RFP includes detailed requirements for all proposal submissions. The program should also be compatible with the ESL program delivery model and align with the educational philosophies of the ESL Department.

2. Background

As the largest of 43 school districts in Allegheny County and the second largest in Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) serves approximately 23,000 Kindergarten through Grade 12 students in 54 schools. In addition, Early Childhood programs serve over 1,500 three and four-year-olds in classrooms across the city. There are 1,389 English Learners in PPS. 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.

3. Pittsburgh Public Schools Board Policy 106

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.

4. Curriculum Requirements

As requirements, the curricula and materials for ESL must include the following components as informed by the Council of Great City Schools' (CGCS) *Re-envisioning English Language Arts and English Language Development for English Language Learners* and other related research:

4.1 Cultural Relevance:

- Instructional materials must be respectful and inclusive of all students' backgrounds, language, culture, ethnicity, race, gender, and refugee or immigration experience; and must pay special attention to cultural implications for ELs, providing appropriate supports for teachers.
- ELs' backgrounds are valued as assets and built upon within the learning.
- Texts acknowledge students' life experiences and social and emotional development.
- ELs' first languages are recognized and celebrated within the materials.

- A range of perspectives are presented within the materials and are structured to allow meaningful access for ELs.

4.2 Reading

- Materials include a range of grade-level and age-appropriate instructional texts (e.g., small group, guided) and independent reading texts along a staircase of reading and linguistic complexity.
- Text sets are consistent with grade-appropriate content, themes, and topics, and promote the development of grade-level academic language and content.
- Text sets address and support WIDA standards, Pennsylvania Standards for English Language Development, and grade level Pennsylvania English Language Arts Core Standards.
- Language progressions are provided in a spiraling and reciprocal manner without sacrificing content or rigor, providing abundant opportunities for students to hear, read, and experience the rhythms and patterns of English.
- Integration of high quality, culturally responsive texts that tap into student assets to deepen understanding and expand knowledge.
- Provides sustained time on the themes, with opportunities (texts, tasks, talk) to reinforce conceptual development and extend the academic language that frames those concepts.
- The materials include diverse representations of culture, language, race, gender, ethnicity, immigration experiences, etc.
- The materials consider the unique needs of SIFE students and Experienced Multilinguals. There is a clear, articulated connection between foundational skill building and the reading process.

4.3 Foundational Skills

- Connect to grade-level (not watered-down) content; they incorporate a contextualized approach to teaching such foundational skills as phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary/syntax/ fluency development.
- Build foundational skills by attending to comparative linguistics, highlighting similarities and differences (phonological, orthographic, and syntactic) between English and the native language(s), and promoting transfer between native language skills and English.
- Materials for this component are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate for a diverse group of learners.
- Materials acknowledge a wide range of literacy development and reading readiness.

4.4 Language

- Materials pay explicit attention to, and engage students with, academic language—its features, functions, and grammar—for varied purposes and in varied contexts in service of effective communication and meaningful academic work.
- Materials attend to the language that frames the concepts/ideas; they provide linguistic frames, templates, and other recommendations to scaffold the academic language demands required for extended discourse.
- Materials provide regular opportunities for students to constantly expand their command of academic language as they read across connected texts of various genres, grapple with essential

questions, express opinions (with reasoning and rationale), and explore and discuss diverse points of view on important themes.

- Academic language supports are tiered and accelerated for all English Learners within grade level content and concepts. Appropriate scaffolding is provided as needed.

4.5 Speaking and Listening

- Questions and tasks are grade-level appropriate; they promote and support expansion of students' spoken English proficiency.
- Materials include multiple opportunities for students to listen to authentic models of academic English across genres and registers; they provide insight into disciplinary demands and features across genres, and call attention to cultural differences in thought and writing patterns.
- Materials provide abundant and varied opportunities for teachers to read rich and compelling texts aloud to students. These read-alouds expose students to rich language, new ideas, and content knowledge they may not be able to access through independent reading.
- Materials provide opportunities for students to develop receptive listening skills, through note-taking and other active listening techniques, and support teachers in assessing comprehension of texts read aloud.
- Structured speaking activities are explicit and allow numerous student opportunities to discuss in social and academic English.
- All materials are aligned with WIDA and Pennsylvania specific ELD standards. Research based best practices for elevating productive and receptive language are embedded within all materials.

4.6 Writing

- Offers ELs at all proficiency levels regular opportunities to engage in writing tasks that gradually build the content, language, and skills required to produce increasingly complex, extended writings (argument, informative/expository, narrative).
- Includes routine and systematic practice and opportunities for guided/shared and independent writing events to develop proficiency in structuring cohesive texts—shifting language use based on task, purpose, audience, and text types.
- Includes how the writing process may differ across languages. Explicit, best practice instruction on the process of writing is embedded within all materials.
- Per the Pennsylvania English Language Proficiency Standards, the writing process connects and reinforces content area writing skills necessary for academic success in Social Studies, Math, Science, and Language Arts.
- The writing tasks are inclusive and include the needs of students who have interrupted formal schooling and are not literate in their native language. The productive language of Experienced Multilinguals and students that are literate in their first language are also included in programming tasks for writing.

4.7 Assessments

- Initial diagnostics are incorporated into the materials to measure English language acquisition and content development.

- Rubrics and student work examples across proficiency levels are available.
- Guidance and recommendations for formative assessment of both productive (speaking and writing) and receptive (listening and reading) dimensions of language and literacy, with a goal of informing instruction.
- Varied, scaffolded assessments are a component within the assessment suite of materials.
- Clear, concise reporting of assessment results are available to teachers, students, and families in a variety of print and virtual formats.
- Progress monitoring is detailed and readily present in the materials; all forms of performance data can be easily disaggregated.
- Assessments are developmentally and age appropriate for a variety of English Learners (SIFE, Experienced Multilinguals, etc.)

4.8 Scaffolding Opportunities and Related Considerations

- Materials incorporate carefully chosen, age-appropriate visuals and graphic supports to activate prior knowledge and scaffold conceptual development. These graphics are used to clarify concepts and relationships within the text that are critical to comprehension.
- Teacher materials incorporate evidence-based approaches, strategies, and resources so that all ELs (e.g., SIFE, literate in native language, Experienced Multilinguals, etc.) may access and attain grade-level standards.
- Materials can serve as a resource for non ESL teachers that instruct ELs in content area classes. A broad range of practical supports and best practices are available to them.
- Teacher resources provide instructional suggestions and recommendations for scaffolding for ELs with diverse needs that incorporate cultural, linguistic, and background experiences students bring to the classroom.
- Teacher resources are comprehensive, robust, and include both print and digital formats. Student textbooks are in both digital and hard copy formats.
- Teacher resources provide examples of student work, highlighting potential areas of linguistic challenge and offering related instructional guidance.
- Materials support teachers in scaffolding up rather than watering down, encouraging students to strive upwards, and ensuring that ELs are instructed with rigorous grade-level content.
- Professional learning and training on these materials can be customized based on the needs of Pittsburgh Public Schools.
- Adaptive technologies exist with the program and consider the variety of learning experiences and previous exposure to technology of families and students.

4.9 Family Connections and Support

- Family materials are available in a range of non-English languages. Ideally, there are video, virtual, or audio supports in multiple languages for linguistically diverse families within the curriculum series**.**
- Smartphones have the capability to access family materials in a variety of languages. Ideally, the company can sync with the Talking Points platform to deliver messages to families.
- Curricular resources to support English language development are available for families in addition to students.

- Real time and asynchronous technology support are available to assist families and students in a variety of languages.
- The family materials are inclusive and cognizant of the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse families.
- For languages not represented in translated family materials, translation and interpretation support of those materials are available at the request of Pittsburgh Public Schools.

5.0 Training and Professional Development

The proposal shall describe the initial training and professional development necessary to begin implementation of the proposed curriculum. 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 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 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.

5.1 Proposal Submission and Deadline

All proposals must be submitted electronically to Jonathan Covel, at jcovel1@pghchools.org by 5:00 PM EST by November 14, 2023 with "PPS 6-12 ESL Program 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 curriculum units that can be mailed directly to Jonathan Covel, ESL Director, Room 2, Pittsburgh Public Schools, 341 S. Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

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.

5.2 Timeline

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

RFP Issued	Week of October 2, 2023
Proposals Due	November 14
Presentations	November 28, 2023 December 5, 2023 December 12, 2023 December 13, 2023 *Dates are subject to change

Committee Recommendation	February 28, 2024
Approval by the Board of Directors	By March 6, 2024

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:

> Jonathan Covel
> ESL Director
> Room 2
> Pittsburgh Public Schools
> 341 S. Bellefield Avenue
> Pittsburgh, PA 15213
> Email: jcovel1@pghschools.org

5.3 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 databased 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 (ex. EdReports), Evidence of ESSA, and US Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the What Works Clearinghouse.

5.4 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 teachers, principals, chief academic officer, curriculum and instruction staff, assistant superintendents, librarians, district-level staff, board members, parents 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.

5.5 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 WIDA Standards, Pennsylvania English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), and PA Core Standards/Eligible Content?
- Does your platform have the ability to create learning paths that specifically meet the needs of individual students?

5.6 Product Information

- Software product name
- Complete Product Description
- Current release version and length this product has been on the market. If you are presenting multiple products to meet our business requirements, please specify for each product.
- Total customer sites that are currently using the current version of the product, particularly with a client of our size.
- Please indicate if any of them are in Pennsylvania.
- Product licensing structure

5.7 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?
- 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?

5.8 Data Exchange

- Rostering & data import into your system (in order of preference) – provide the import specifications for review by IT team.
- Do you support ed-fi integration (if yes what version & have you accomplished this with)?
- Do you have IMS Global One Roster integration (1.1)?
- Do you support clever integration?
- CSV/flat file (provide import specifications)
- Exporting data from your system? (Provide data export specifications and data dictionaries for review by IT and DREA team).
- 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)
- Your nightly export is expected to provide information related to student usage and staff usage explain what elements address the following:

  (a) Fidelity of usage for students (e.g. daily time logged-in, daily time on task, lessons/segments completed, metrics providing insight into student growth)
  (b) Staff usage
  (c) Student and staff audit trails

- 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 no, how do you reflect current student assignment and provide teachers/educators with appropriate access to student data.

- Describe your data access/permissions at a minimum address:

  (a) How do you establish data access and permissions for teachers and school administrators?
  (b) How do you establish permissions for district administrators?
  (c) Provide your auditing capabilities (click paths, change log, etc.)

5.9 Data security and Destruction

- 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)

6.0 Technology Cost

- What is the entire cost of implementation? You may attach a separate budget sheet if you prefer.
- One-time cost?
- Ongoing yearly cost?
- Customization rate?
- Report's development costs?
- Is there an additional cost for training?
- Is there an additional cost for support?
- What is the cost associated with integrating other third-party providers?
- If your solution is a cloud-based service, is there a service-level agreement and uptime guarantee? If not, do you provide any discount for the customers?
- Do you provide any contractual flexibility and price discount if either party decides to terminate?

6.1 Overall Program Cost

- Include overall costs for the entire program for 3-4 years, including but not limited to curriculum, instructional resources and materials (hard copy and digital), guides, interventions, assessments, professional development and related materials, program setup, delivery service.
- There are approximately 285 English Learners enrolled in grades 6-8, and 345 English Learners in grades 9-12. 17 ESL teachers support grades 6-8, and 11 ESL teachers support grades 9-12. These numbers are very fluid and subject to change based on recent enrollment trends.

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)
      o MBE, 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..