

RFP #15-021:

Title: Evaluation of the New York State Charter Schools Program

Questions and Answers

Program – (Answers are in italic bold)

1. Why did the last contract end in 2014?

The last contract had a five year term, beginning 7/1/09 and ending 6/30/14.

2. Who was the previous vendor?

The previous vendor was the Center for Evaluation and Educational Policy at Indiana University.

3. The RFP notes that a contract with an outside vendor to perform this work ended in 2014. Are you able to disclose who this outside vendor was?

The previous vendor was the Center for Evaluation and Educational Policy at Indiana University.

4. Can the SED provide a working definition of “best practice”?

For the purpose of this RFP, best practices:

- ***Have been developed, tested, and proven successful in charter schools.***
- ***Are evidence-based, proven to advance student achievement, and can be replicated at non-chartered district schools.***
- ***Are practices and programs that have been developed, tested, and proven successful in significantly increasing student achievement in charter schools.***

5. Would SED be interested in proposed optional services at additional costs that could enhance the statewide evaluation beyond what is called for in the RFP?

No, bidders should not propose optional services at an additional cost.

6. Can the NYSED provide the name of the outside vendor that was contracted to perform the work associated with the evaluation RFP through 2014? Is this vendor eligible for this new procurement opportunity?

The previous vendor was the Center for Evaluation and Educational Policy at Indiana University. Yes, the previous vendor is eligible to apply for this new opportunity.

7. Will the survey template provided by SED to the selected vendor include items to be used in each of the 6 surveys?

The surveys that have been previously sent out will be provided to the contracted vendor. Circumstances may arise where a survey question that was used in the past needs to be updated.

8. Is it the SED's expectation that the winning vendor will, in collaboration with NYSED, create additional survey items for some or all surveys to enhance and deepen the information retrieved from targeted respondents?

The surveys to be sent out should be the same as previous surveys so that trend data can be seen. Circumstances may arise where a survey question that was used in the past needs to be updated.

9. Since there are multiple respondent groups involved, is it possible that respondents to one survey might also be respondents to another?

Yes.

10. Where a subject area is addressed in multiple surveys, would the SED want to compare and contrast the various results?

No.

11. Can you direct us to information about NY's CSP's changes in survey results since August 2011 (as noted on p. 7 of the RFP)?

The survey reports written by the prior vendor will be provided to the contracted vendor.

12. Have all surveys been developed?

Yes all surveys have been developed. Circumstances may arise where a survey question that was used in the past needs to be updated.

13. Can the contractor modify the survey templates?

Surveys that are to be sent out will have the same questions as the previous survey. However, circumstances may arise where a survey question that was used in the past needs to be updated.

14. Have any surveys been conducted in 2015?

Yes.

15. Can NYSED provide a copy of the All Charters Survey as an example of the mix of questions and the length of the questionnaire?

Please see the All Charters Survey attached to the Q&A document.

16. For budgeting purposes, please provide the length (i.e., number of questions) for each of the 6 surveys to be administered.

All charters Survey: 25 questions

New School Applicant Survey: 23 questions

Charter School Program Grant (CSP) Survey: 32 questions

Partnership Survey: 9 questions

Survey for Dissemination School Partners: 15 questions

Dissemination survey for Traditional Public School District Personnel: 15 questions

17. In what format(s), and on what schedule, will the chosen vendor receive the surveys, survey results, and survey reports produced during the previous contract for this work?
The All Charters Survey is attached. All additional surveys and survey reports which include survey results, will be provided to the contracted vendor. It is anticipated that the surveys will be provided within one month of contract start. The surveys will be provided in a PDF format and the survey results will be provided in an Excel format.
18. Do the survey templates that NYSED provides include all survey questions or should the bidder submit potential survey questions?
The templates provide all survey questions. Bidders should not submit potential survey questions.
19. Can you provide the prior contract survey reports?
The All Charters Survey is attached. All additional surveys, survey reports and survey results, prepared by the prior contractor will be provided to the contracted vendor.
20. Would NYSED expect the reports to be in the same format as the previous contract?
The contracted vendor may determine structure and format of the reports.
21. What is the expected method of survey distribution to stakeholders (email, letters sent directly to stakeholders, distribution at schools, etc.)?
Each survey must be developed using an online survey tool to be selected by the winning bidder and will be distributed via email only.
22. What data on the survey population will be provided by NYSED (how many individuals at each Charter School, what titles, etc.)?
NYSED will provide the email lists for the survey populations. Please see the estimated numbers of recipients for each survey in the Deliverables section of the RFP.
23. What format will the survey population data be in?
Excel and/or Word.
24. Will the questions on the current surveys be consistent or comparable to the previous surveys? If no, did the previous survey questions result in any significant changes in the Charter School Program?
Questions will remain the same as in previous surveys. However, circumstances may arise where a survey question that was used in the past needs to be updated.
25. Would survey results in the deliverables be identifiable to a specific charter school?
No.

26. Will NYSED advise the contractor on how survey questions are relevant to the new charter school application process?

Yes.

27. What was the scope of the previous contract? Were there surveys conducted for all areas noted in the Deliverables sections A-G?

The scope of the previous contract differed greatly. For example, the vendor was contracted to:

- ***assist NYSED with the completion of the annual report to the Regents, Governor and State Legislature;***
- ***provide technical assistance and measure timeliness of SED's evaluation work plan activities;***
- ***develop and refine a logic model framework;***
- ***travel frequently to meet with NYSED and USDOE program staff; and***
- ***Develop (as well as conduct and summarize) the surveys outlined in sections A-D in the RFP. (The vendor was not contracted to carry out deliverables E-G of the current RFP.)***

28. What are the minimum requirements for response rates for each survey?

NYSED has not set a minimum requirement.

29. Will the surveys be made available during the bidding process? If not, can sample items from each survey be shared?

A sample survey is attached.

30. Is NYSDE satisfied with the quality of their current surveys?

Yes.

31. Is NYSDE interested in evaluation methods beyond surveys?

No.

32. Are there previous surveys or survey results reports available that we can review?

A sample survey is attached.

33. The RFP notes that survey summary reports are to be completed and submitted within 30 or 45 days of the survey due date. Is the survey due date the number of noted days after the survey closes? If not, how does NYSED view "survey due date"?

The survey due date is when the completed surveys are due back to the evaluator.

Eligibility

1. In our review of NYSED's RFP for an evaluation of New York's Charter School program, we noted that a previous vendor's contract had ended in 2014. Is this incumbent evaluator eligible to compete for this project? Thank you for your consideration.

Yes, the previous vendor is eligible to apply for this new opportunity.

2. Is the previous vendor eligible to bid on this RFP?

Yes, the previous vendor is eligible to apply for this new opportunity.

M/WBE

1. If the prime bidder is a certified women-owned business, does this satisfy the 13% WBE goal or can the goal only be met by subcontracting with another WBE?

If the prime bidder is a NYS certified women-owned business through Empire State Development, it would satisfy the 30% MWBE goal.

2. Can we use non-M/WBE subcontractors? If so, would that allow the contractor to go above the 30% limitation for subcontractors noted on page 1?

The subcontracting limit of 30% cannot be changed. NYS certified M/WBE firms used for services would be included in the subcontractor percentage; however, M/WBE firms used for equipment, materials and/or supplies would not. The contact person on M/WBE matters is available throughout the application and procurement process to assist bidders in meeting the M/WBE goals.

3. If a firm qualifies as both an MBE and WBE, would that firm suffice for the 30% utilization goal?

If a firm is designated MBE and WBE it would count towards the overall goal of 30%. If the prime bidder is the firm that is a NYS certified MBE and WBE, then the bidder would meet the 30% MWBE goal.

4. Our reading of the M/WBE requirements is that to achieve full compliance, we would need to subcontract to an MBE for at least 17 percent and a WBE for at least 13 percent, and that if we are only able to meet one of these requirements (e.g., subcontract to a WBE but not an MBE, or subcontract to an MBE for less than 17 percent) we need to file for a waiver of the other requirement. Is that correct? If so, are we required to submit all of the documents listed as attachments in document MWBE 101?

The participation goal for this procurement is 30%: 17% MBE and 13%WBE. If the bidder is unable to meet 30% using the stated percentages, they may reach the 30% goal with different percentages. If you cannot meet the 30% goal, you may submit a request for a waiver, which must include Good Faith Effort documentation. The contact person on M/WBE matters is available throughout the application and procurement process to assist bidders in meeting the M/WBE goals.

5. Can a certified WBE be included in more than one proposal in response to this RFP?

Yes, a M/WBE firm can be included in multiple proposals.

Fiscal

1. What was the contract value of the previous contract?

The previous contract was for \$178,123. Please be aware that the scope and the scale of the current RFP have been significantly reduced from the previous contract. Please refer to Program question #27 for additional information.

2. Can the State confirm what contract type they are looking for? Is it FFP, T&M?
This is a multi-year agreement with a fixed price, deliverable-based budget.
3. Pg. 14 Cost Proposal-Can the State provide the Bid Form Cost Proposal?
The Bid Form Cost Proposal can be found on page 19 of the Submission Documents posted with the RFP.
4. Can the NYSED provide information on the amount that was earmarked for the evaluation in the first four years of the CSP grant?
In the first four years of the Charter School Program grant there was \$250,000 earmarked for the evaluation.
5. Can the NYSED provide information on the budget available for the 16-month contract period (September 1, 2016 through December 31, 2017)
NYSED is not disclosing this information. Bidders should develop budgets based on the anticipated expenses associated with carrying out the deliverables that are outlined in this RFP. Please keep in mind that this is a "best value competitive procurement" with 30 percent of the total available points awarded based on cost, with lowest cost proposals receiving the highest score.
6. Please confirm that there are only four (4) items to submit with the cost proposal and not five (5)?
Correct. The Cost Proposal will include the following four items:
 - ***Bid Form Cost Proposal***
 - ***Budget Narrative***
 - ***Subcontracting Form***
 - ***M/WBE Subcontracting/Supplier Form***
7. What will be the weighting used for each component within the cost proposal?
The cost proposal will be scored based on the grand total, not each deliverable/component. The budget will be awarded points pursuant to a formula that awards the highest score of 30 points to the budget that reflects the lowest overall cost. The remaining budgets will be awarded points based on a calculation that computes the relative difference of each proposal against the lowest budget submitted. The resulting percentage is then applied to the maximum point value of 30 points.
8. What was the contract value of the previous contract?
Please see the response in Fiscal Question #1.
9. What is the anticipated budget for this evaluation project?
NYSED is not disclosing this information. Please see the answer to Fiscal question #5.

10. What is the estimated level of effort and/or cost for the evaluation?

Bidders should determine the level of effort and develop budgets based on the deliverables that are described in this RFP.

11. Are you able to disclose the resources available for this evaluation? If not, are there any general guidelines on an acceptable budget range?

Please see the answer to Fiscal question #5.

Attachment: All Charters Survey

Welcome to the 2012 New York State Education Department (NYSED) survey for charter schools operating in New York State. This survey is being conducted for the NYSED Charter School Office (CSO) to evaluate the implementation of its Strategic Plan (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/documents/CSOstrategicPlanJuly2011.pdf>) and federal Charter Schools Program grant.

The intended respondents are any charter schools operating (open and serving students) in New York State during the 2012-2013 school year. Each operating charter school should submit one response. Your responses are very important and we thank you for taking the time to provide feedback regarding the CSO's oversight practices.

Findings from the evaluation will be used by NYSED to improve upon its oversight practices and is part of an ongoing effort to solicit feedback from the field. The U.S. Department of Education, policy-makers, and practitioners are all interested in the results. Therefore, each respondent's participation is critical to providing policymakers with complete and accurate information.

The independent, external evaluator administering this survey will report its general findings, but individual respondents will not be identified. The survey will require about 15 minutes of your time. We would like you to respond to the survey by Friday, December 21.

Q2 Choose from the list below which best describes your organization.

- Operating Charter School authorized by SUNY trustees
- Operating Charter School authorized by NYCDoE Chancellor or Buffalo Board of Education
- Operating Charter School authorized by the Board of Regents

Q3 In what year did your charter school open for instruction?

Q4 Are you aware of the shift in practice for NYS CSO monitoring visits to charter schools, regardless of authorizer, since summer of 2010?

- Yes
- No

Q5 Do you expect to receive a site visit from NYS CSO staff in 2012-2013?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

Q6 Did your school receive a site visit conducted by the NYS CSO during the 2011-2012 school year?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Did your school submit an annual repo...

Q7 What kind of site visit did your school experience?

- Pre-opening visit
- Check-in visit
- Full interim site visit
- Renewal

Q8 Please state your level of satisfaction with the following areas regarding the NYS CSO site visit:

| | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Communication and logistics before the visit | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Communication and logistics during the day(s) of the visit | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Professionalism and conduct of site visit team members during the day(s) of the visit | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Communication after the visit | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Timeliness of feedback conveyed via the written memo/report after the visit | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Quality of feedback conveyed via the written memo/report after the visit | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Usefulness of feedback conveyed via the written memo/report after the visit | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Accuracy of the feedback conveyed via the written memo/report after the visit | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Q9 Please add further comments.

Q10 Did your school submit an annual report due August 1st, 2012 for the 2011-2012 school year?

- Yes
- No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Please provide a response indicating ...

Q11 Please provide a response indicating your level of satisfaction with the annual reporting process in the following areas:

| | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Communication regarding the requirements of the annual report submission | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Responsiveness to the needs of charter schools authorized by different entities in the content and format of the report | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Clarity of the written guidelines provided at http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/form.html | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Q12 Please add further comments.

Q13 Please provide a response indicating your level of satisfaction with NYS CSO monitoring strategies in the following areas:

| | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Review of academic performance reports, financial audits, and other paper based reports submitted by schools | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Information from the electronic student data system | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Information from the electronic and/or web based system schools are required to use to provide compliance, fiscal and other operational reports | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Q14 Please provide a response indicating your level of satisfaction with NYS CSO performance in the following areas:

| | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Communication via Director’s messages | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Communication via the CSO website | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| CSO webinars | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Responsiveness to emails | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Responsiveness to telephone calls | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Q15 Please state your level of satisfaction to the statements below. NYS CSO provides:

| | Very Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Satisfied | Very Satisfied |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Clearly articulated statutory and regulatory requirements | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Clear guidance in relation to new provisions of the 2010 amendments of the Charter Schools Act | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Clear guidance in relation to requirements applicable to all charter schools regardless of authorizer | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Effective connections for charter schools to other program offices within SED | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Q16 In the following table please indicate your current perception of the percentage of time that NYSED CSO focuses on in its administrative/oversight practices. Please make sure that the total equals 100%.

| | % |
|-------------|---|
| Compliance | |
| Performance | |

Q17 Please explain your answer.

Q27 In the following table please indicate your current perception of the percentage of time that NYSED CSO focuses on in its administrative/oversight practices. Please make sure that the total equals 100%.

| | % |
|----------------|---|
| Accountability | |
| Access | |

Q28 Please explain your answer.

Q18 Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements below. NYS CSO provides our school with autonomy in the following areas:

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Educational programming | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Staffing | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Budget | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Class schedule | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Q19 Please indicate your level of agreement to the statements below. NYS CSO defines clear and articulated performance standards and criteria expected of our school for:

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Renewals | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Revisions | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Revocations | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Non-renewals | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Q20 Are you aware of the section of Education Law which describes the charter revision process which includes the requirements for hearings, public notices, and its submission to the school's authorizer?

- Yes
- No

Q21 Did you submit a charter revision to your authorizer in 2011-2012?

- Yes
- No

Answer If Did you submit a charter revision to your authorizer in 2... Yes Is Selected

Q22 Were you previously aware of the following types of technical assistance and resources available to you on the NYS CSO website (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/psc/documents/charterrevisionTA21.09.10.seb.PDF>) when submitting a revision?

| | Yes | No |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Required information to complete a revision request | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Use of charterschools@mail.nysed.gov mailbox for submission | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Material versus nonmaterial revision differences | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Answer If Did you submit a charter revision to your authorizer in 2... No Is Selected

Q23 Please indicate your awareness and/or understanding of the following areas:

| | Yes | No |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Are you aware of the section of Ed Law that describes the submission of a revision request from your authorizer to the BoR? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Do you understand the process that occurs after you submit your revision request to your authorizer? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Do you understand the process that occurs after your authorizer submits your revision request to the BoR? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Do you understand what Operation of Law means and how it affects the submission of your revision? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Do you understand that upon submission by your authorizer to the BoR your revision request is not effective until BoR approval or Operation of Law? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Q24 Please state your level of agreement with the statements below. NYS CSO defines what it means to have clear, measurable and attainable:

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Performance framework | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Academic performance standards | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Financial performance standards | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Operational performance standards | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Q25 Please add any further comments you wish to make regarding your level of satisfaction with NYS CSO NYSED BoR/All Survey 2012