Request for Information No. I
RFP No. 24/25-02 Student Information System
September 24, 2024

Response to Proposers' Questions

1.1 **Question**: How are Ed Tech JPA RFPs run and awarded?

Answer: Ed Tech JPA offers multiple awards so its members can leverage the vendors that best meet their needs. Ed Tech JPA's RFP team will review Vendor Proposals and award to Vendors who comply with all terms and conditions (no substantial exceptions) and meet all essential requirements. Essential requirements are denoted in the RFP with double asterisks and green highlighting.

Vendors should also answer non-essential criteria (blue highlighting) to the best of their ability. Ed Tech JPA members vary in size from 1,500 ADA to 600,000 ADA, and have different needs. Ed Tech JPA will make all prevailing Proposals available to members for review. Members will determine what requirements are most important to them and use the information in Proposals to determine which Vendor best fits the needs of their organization.

Vendors who meet all essential requirements (green, double asterisks) and agree to the terms and conditions will be considered for award contingent upon successful contract negotiations. Non-essential criteria (blue) are optional. Vendors are encouraged to respond to non-essential criteria so member districts can make a determination regarding which solution is the best fit for their needs.

Additionally, the Functionality and Usability RFP is sectioned into different modules. Essential requirements are required only to be considered for award in those specific sections. For example, if a vendor agrees to all terms and conditions and meets all essential requirements for sections 3.1 - 3.4, but not for sections 3.5 - 3.11 they will be awarded for sections 3.1 - 3.4. Below is an example of a possible award scenario.

Vendor	3.1 General	3.2 Attendance	3.3 Census	3.4 Staff	3.5 Enrollment	3.6 Scheduling	3.7 Behavior	3.8 Health	3.9 Testing and Assessment	3.10 Reports, Queries, and Searches	3.11 Special Education
Vendor A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Vendor	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No

B										
Ven dor C	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

JPA members have varying needs, and some may require services for only some modules included in this RFP.   Members will evaluate Proposals based on their specific needs, so please include a clear description of what your solution offers.

If offering multiple separate solutions please be clear in your proposal which solution meets each criteria by either including separate sections for each product, or differentiating in responses:

Example 1:

3.1 - Product 1 Name - response to all criteria

3.2 - Product 1 Name - no response

3.1 - Product 2 Name - no response

3.2 - Product 2 Name - response to all criteria

Example 2:

| ****2.1.5   Specify whether the Solution is Vendor-hosted (web/cloud-based) or Participant-hosted (on-premise). If the Solution offers both on-premise and hosted options, please explain differences in features and/or access to data for the two options.**** |
|---|
| **Product 1 Name:** *Our SIS solution is web/cloud based…*

 Product 2 Name: *Our SIS solution is on-premise….* |

Please also be sure to list each product separately in the Pricing Form.

1.2   **Question**: Are contracts available for future Ed Tech JPA members as well, or just to members at the time the RFP is run?

      Answer: When a member joins Ed Tech JPA it can leverage any current or previously awarded contract. The membership process is very quick and straightforward. There are no fees for members to join. Ed Tech JPA provides sample board agenda and resolution templates for members in an effort to assist members with their boards' required approvals. The Ed Tech JPA Membership site contains detailed instructions for prospective members.

1.3   **Question**: Once the RFP is awarded, how do Ed Tech JPA members enter into agreements with awarded vendors?

Answer: Prevailing vendors will enter into a Master Agreement with the Ed Tech JPA. When JPA members elect to purchase a vendor's product they will enter into a Purchase Agreement between the vendor and JPA member. Samples of the Master Agreement and Purchase Agreements are included as Appendix A of the RFP. For additional clarity please refer to the illustration below.
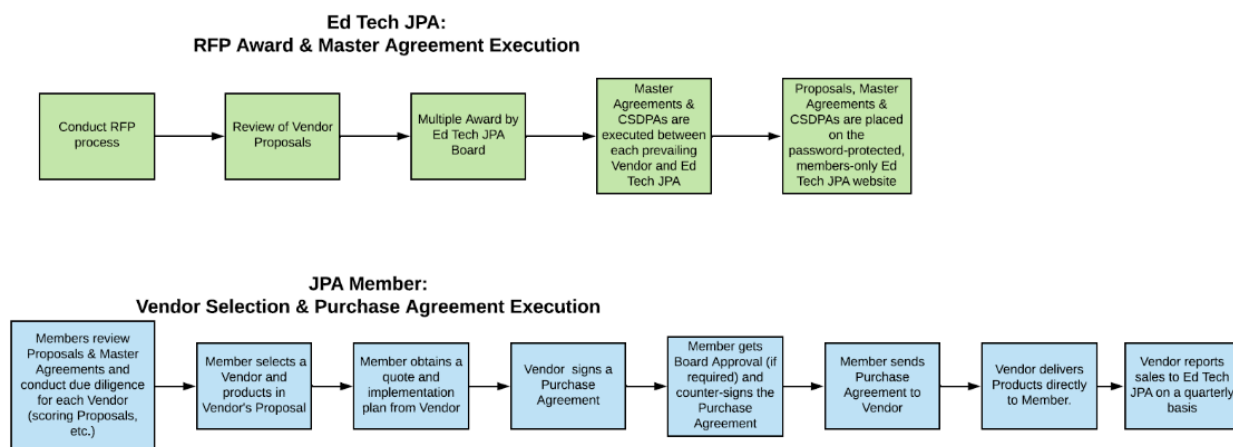
1.4   **Question**: Why is the JPA releasing a new RFP, when there are already SIS agreements awarded under the previous Ed Tech JPA RFP from 2019?

     Answer: Ed Code section 17596 limits contract terms to a maximum five (5) years. The previous RFP for Student Information System was awarded in January 2020. Releasing this RFP allows for award and contract negotiations with responsive vendors with no lapse in contract availability for a student information systems solution for Ed Tech JPA's members.

1.5   **Question**: Could you please share how many districts have made purchases under the previous agreement?

     Answer: The previous Student Information Systems RFP resulted in one sale to a JPA member. Use of the previous SIS RFP may have been limited due to member bandwidth constraints as a result of distance learning and other initiatives during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

     The Ed Tech JPA currently has 183 members, located in 38 counties. In the 2023-24 fiscal year 106 Ed Tech JPA members leveraged Ed Tech JPA contracts with vendor-partners. Ed Tech JPA believes there is higher interest in purchasing student information systems in the current market and is optimistic about the use of awarded contracts resulting from this procurement.

1.6   **Question**: The RFP indicates that Irvine Unified School District has an immediate need for a Student Information System and plans to review proposals to determine a Vendor best suited to provide it (page 4). Will the District outline its expected timeline, including award, contract signing, and go-live of the new system?

Answer: Prevailing vendors will enter into a Master Agreement with the Ed Tech JPA. When JPA members elect to purchase a vendor's product they will enter into a Purchase Agreement between the vendor and JPA member. Samples of the Master Agreement and Purchase Agreements are included as Appendix A of the RFP. For additional clarity please refer to the illustration below.
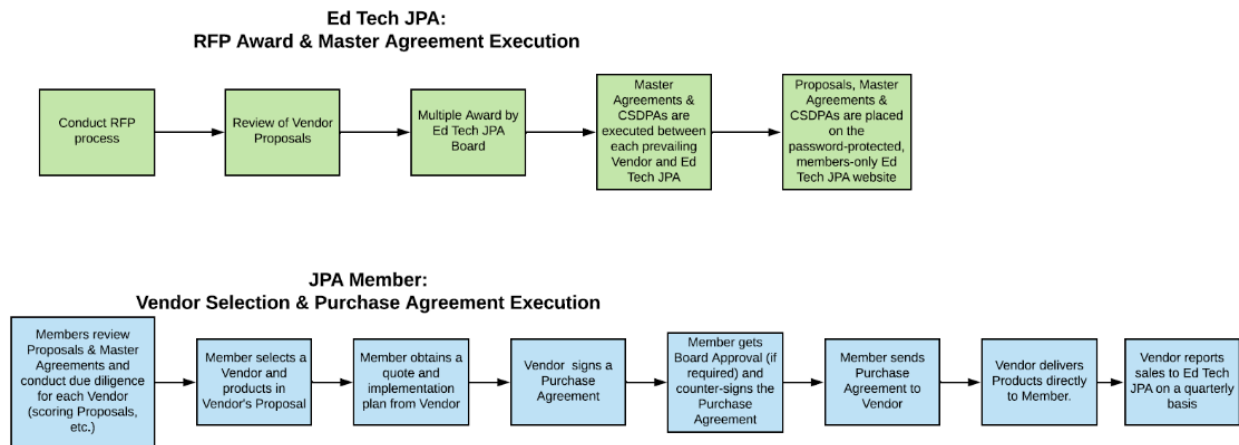
Irvine Unified School District has not set a timeline to review these solutions, as the selection team has been pulled to other priorities including opening of schools and a federal programs monitoring review, but will explore timelines later this fall.

1.7   **Question**: The RFP indicates an Evaluation and Selection of Finalists schedule of November 4-22, 2024 (page 14). Does Ed Tech JPA plan to include product demonstrations as part of the evaluation?

Answer: Vendors are selected for the Ed Tech JPA multiple award by scoring of proposals, and possible follow up phone calls and/or written clarifying questions to obtain additional information to determine if a vendor meets the essential requirements. There is typically not an on-site demonstration prior to the Ed Tech JPA award. Ed Tech JPA also does not predetermine how many vendors will be awarded.

Ed Tech JPA members may require onsite demonstrations prior to entering into a Purchase Agreement with vendors, but that will be worked out directly between members and vendors.

1.8   **Question**: Could you share how many districts have purchased an SIS through the Ed Tech JPA agreements since its inception?

Answer: Please see RFI No. 1.5.

1.9   **Question**: What does the typical evaluation process look like for districts selecting an SIS using these established agreements?

Answer: Please see RFI No 1.6.

1.10   **Question**: Can schools purchase an SIS independent of the JPA?

    Answer: Yes, schools may purchase an SIS independent of the Ed Tech JPA. However, given the cost of Student Information Systems, most purchases would exceed the California bid limit and require a formal procurement. Organizations are free to run their own, independent bid/RFP process. Given the time and resources involved, Ed Tech JPA Members tend to choose to leverage Ed Tech JPA agreements.

1.11   **Question**: Can you clarify how the 4% administrative fees collected from vendors are utilized by Ed Tech JPA?

    Answer: The Ed Tech JPA is a public agency and legally cannot make a profit. All resources pay for legal fees associated with procurement and agreement negotiation, advertising of procurements, and other operational costs of running the Ed Tech JPA. Ed Tech JPA incurred significant start up costs to ensure that our organizational structure and procurements were aligned with Federal and State requirements. As Ed Tech JPA pays down those deferred costs and grows its membership, our Board aims to continue to reduce the Administrative Fee. The Admin Fee has been lowered in the past for sales over $300,0000.00.

1.12   **Question**: What measures does the Ed Tech JPA take to ensure fair competition among vendors and facilitate an 'apples-to-apples' comparison for districts?

    Answer: Vendors who meet all essential requirements (green, double asterisks) and agree to the terms and conditions will be considered for award contingent upon successful contract negotiations. Non-essential criteria (blue) are optional, but are made available to members so they can get all information when scoring. Vendors are encouraged to respond to non-essential criteria so member districts can make a determination regarding which solution is the best fit for their needs.
    Questions that arise during Ed Tech JPA's scoring, or information that is not clear are addressed during the Clarifying Questions process, wherein questions are sent to vendors to obtain additional information. These questions and answers are also provided to members to utilize during their scoring process. Members can additionally ask questions, request demos, and ask for pilots individually prior to making their final scores and determining the best fit for their needs. Ed Tech JPA shares scoring templates to help members facilitate a fair final selection process.

1.13   **Question**: How does Ed Tech JPA facilitate communication and support between vendors and districts during the purchasing process?

    Answer: Following the successful completion of contract negotiations with awarded vendors, the Ed Tech JPA will announce the newly available contracts to our members via our monthly member newsletter. The Ed Tech JPA also has partnerships with CITE and CASBO and advertises available contracts through these organizations and by maintaining a vendor table and presenting at both conferences.

Additionally, Ed Tech JPA leadership and staff have also previously joined calls and webinars for awarded vendors to discuss the Ed Tech JPA purchasing process with potential vendor customers and internal sales staff.

Vendors use the previously negotiated Purchase Agreement (including any vendor agreements and Quotes included as exhibits) when contracting directly with members. If you or a potential customer of yours have questions about using agreements we can set up a meeting to help with questions. We try to make the process simple as well as be available when questions arise.

1.14 **Question**: We are a mid-sized org and recently raised $20 million. Does the JPA provide any support to get a detailed list of features? Or is there a way where we could meet some district CTOs CIOs to pilot our solution?

Answer: Through our monthly member newsletters and emails, the Ed Tech JPA is able to advertise upcoming vendor events (presentations and user group meetings) for members following award and the completion of contract negotiations. Typically vendors wait to submit events in the newsletter until agreements are finalized, so that members can leverage solutions without delay. Ed Tech JPA members may request pilots or onsite demonstrations prior to entering into a Purchase Agreement with vendors, but that will be worked out directly between members and vendors.

1.15 **Question**: How will your members review vendor responses? Since this response requires 2 hard copies, will it be done in person as well as online?

Answer: Hard copies are required only for Ed Tech JPA's review team to complete our evaluation of the proposals. Proposals, Clarifying Questions, and agreements are posted on the members-only password-protected webpage following the successful completion of contract negotiations. Vendors are also given the opportunity to redact information from their proposals prior to posting. Typically members review vendor responses electronically through the members-only password protected website.

1.16 **Question**: Could you explain how Irvine USD's procurement process is integrated with this RFP through Ed Tech JPA? Are there any unique steps or considerations that apply specifically to their district?

Answer: IUSD is a separate entity from Ed Tech JPA, so its process is the same as other Ed Tech JPA's members. After Ed Tech JPA's board award, IUSD would reach out to an awarded vendor and enter into a Purchase Agreement between the vendor and IUSD. If the IUSD staff determines that they require further information or a demonstration, IUSD will reach out to the awarded vendor with a tentative agenda for interviews/demos. IUSD has not set a timeline to review these solutions, as we are coming out of a federal funds audit, but will explore timelines later this fall.

1.17 **Question**: Do you have a list of districts that are JPA members?

Answer: A list of members can be found on the Ed Tech JPA website located at https://Ed Techjpa.org/about/our-ed-tech-jpa-members. They do not have to be a member at the time of award. They just need to join prior to making the purchase and it is free for them to join.

1.18   **Question**: Any specific reason for the SIS RFP at this juncture? It takes a lot of effort to replace one.

Answer: The Ed Tech JPA has been hearing feedback from its members that there is an increased interest in exploring new SIS systems. Interest seems to be centered around new products introduced into the market, new features in existing products introduced, different levels of support offered by current providers, and also an increase in cost for some platforms which districts currently utilize. Additionally, there is anecdotal evidence that some sole source contracts may be questioned increasingly by COEs, resulting in the need for a formal procurement and re-evaluation of providers. Finally, districts and COEs may also finally be far enough removed from the COVID-19 criss that they can make that kind of investment. Our timing is planned to coincide with peak purchasing for districts' fiscal year.

1.19   **Question**: Is this an open competition or is there a standing relationship with an SIS provider that is looking to renew? Would we be able to utilize different school districts for the referrals?

Answer: All Ed Tech JPA procurements are open competitions. Our Ed Tech JPA Members are in different stages of their relationship with current providers (some may be looking to renew, and others are actively looking for new Solutions). The Ed Tech JPA offers multiple awards so its members can leverage the vendors that best meet their needs. Ed Tech JPA's RFP team will review Vendor Proposals and award to Vendors who comply with all terms and conditions (no substantial exceptions) and meet all essential requirements. Criteria 1.13 requests five K-12 references, but the references are not required to be from any particular state. As most of our members are located in California, you may want to include details about how you intend to comply with state reporting requirements in your proposal.