

DATE: November 9, 2012

TO: All Offerors

FROM: Gaurang P. Pathak
Procurement & Contracts Manager

SUBJECT: ADDENDUM #2 TO RFI - CSD-2012-30

**District-wide Evaluation of Learning Focused Solution Strategies
CHR1230-LFS Strategies**

ADDENDUM #2 – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. **Does LFS have a framework of strategies/components that are implemented as a cohesive whole?**

The following information is taken directly from Learning Focused Solutions official documentation:

Learning-Focused is a comprehensive continuous school improvement model that:

- *Provides schools with a consistent framework for learning*
- *Provides exemplary strategies instruction*
- *Integrates research-based exemplary practices*

*Schools identified as “exemplary” choose three or four strategies, and **all** teachers use these strategies **all** of the time. How a strategy is implemented is up to the teacher (some ways are better than others.), as long as it is being used. An example is previewing vocabulary and then teaching vocabulary in context. If all teachers in a school do this, based on research across thousands of schools, students will learn and retain more. When a school chooses to do something consistently and pervasively, it is typically monitored by administrators to ensure it is being done and to support teachers as they are learning how to best implement the strategies.*

LFS began in CSD at Glasgow High School in 2005. Over the implementation of LFS in the Christina School District, there were several leaders in the four to five year period. Walk-through tools were developed to define the LFS “look fors.” The walk through tools targeted the use of such practices as essential questions, explicit vocabulary instruction and word walls, small group differentiated instruction, and graphic organizers. LFS, as implemented in the Christina School District, is essentially a “toolkit” for teachers rather than a system-wide framework with components that have to be implemented.

2. What is the relationship of LFS to Race to the Top?

There is no direct relationship other than the funds for this evaluation will come from Race to the Top funds.

3. Is implementation of LFS voluntary for teachers? May teachers choose to implement some components and not others?

Theoretically no. All classroom teachers in district schools are expected to implement LFS practices.

4. How is LFS related to the district professional learning communities' initiative (if operational)?

PLCs were the intended vehicle for the delivery of the LFS strategies, lesson planning, and student/curriculum learning maps.

5. What is the unit of analysis for implementation—teacher level or school level?

At the school and district level. Teachers will represent the observational unit, but we are not looking to report on individual teachers.

6. Has any monitoring of LFS been conducted formally or informally to date?

Yes, there has been site-based monitoring using the walk-through tools. The degree to which there is written documentation of the use of these tools and/or results from the use of these tools will vary greatly by school.

7. Are organizations or individuals who have provided LFS training/PD/technical assistance prohibited from responding to this RFI due to conflict of interest?

No. With the exception of GHS and NHS, who received intensive school wide training, this training was provided through a train-the-trainer model across the district. The PD was then redelivered by building based teams. The LFS initiative was very much building-driven and dependent upon the principal at the time. There has been a great deal of turnover in building leadership and teaching staff.

8. The second bullet on page 3 seems to contain cut and paste errors. Please clarify language.

Response to this RFI should provide a straight-forward concise description of the Vendor's offer to meet the requirements of the RFI. Response should be submitted electronically. Any materials provided during the presentations (if scheduled at a later date) will be considered as part of the Vendor Information Packet. In addition, vendor must provide a contact person's name including phone number and email address.

9. What is the funding level or estimated level of effort for this work?

The level of funding has not been specified purposefully. We wish to find out what prospective evaluators can do both on methodology and price. We would like this to be a relatively short evaluation, perhaps three months maximum observing and conducting the fieldwork in schools and an additional three months or so compiling and analyzing the data and writing the final report of findings. We are not looking to spend any more than we absolutely have to. However, obtaining cost estimates was part of the rationale for releasing an RFI rather than a RFP at this time. Cost will represent a significant point of interest in our review of the information we receive.

10. How many schools are participating in the LFS? 25

Twenty-five elementary (18), middle (4), and high schools (3). We are not looking to include our K-12 Special Education and Alternative schools or pre-K program.

11. How many teachers and administrators in total are participating in the LFS?

Theoretically, this would include all classroom teachers in the 25 schools. This would represent just fewer than 1,200 teachers. Each of these schools has one principal, with larger schools served by at least one Asst. Principal, and high schools employing multiple Asst. Principals. In total, there would be roughly 50 school administrators altogether.

12. What is the start and end date for the project? How many years?

We would like the duration of the study to be short, no more than three months of fieldwork in schools. Subsequent data collection and analysis would obviously take more time. We'd like the overall process to take no more than 6-7 months. Optimally, evaluative work would begin in spring of 2013, with on-site activities being completed by the end of the 2012-13 school years.

13. Is there a page limit for the proposal?

No.

14. What is the budget estimate for the project?

Please refer to Question # 9.

15. Is there a current incumbent for the evaluation? If yes, are they allowed to re-apply?

No. This initiative has not been formally evaluated in our district previously.

16. Will you accept proposals via email on the due date?

Yes.

17. How will the vendor gain access to the DE student database? Do we need to contact each school or will be gain access to the master database?

Any centrally collected and maintained data will be provided to the evaluator by the District's Office of Accountability and Assessment. Once an evaluator is selected, all school leadership in the District will be instructed on the expectations of the evaluation, the procedures and requirements of them, and any other relevant information needed to make sure that the evaluators can carry out the work efficiently and effectively.

18. When will the responses be emailed/posted?

As mentioned in the RFI, responses will be posted on website. We will email the link to all parties who sent in their questions.

19. On page 1 of the RFI, you ask that the evaluation "assess the degree to which LFS strategies are being implemented."

a. Could you provide more information about the LFS strategies CSD expects to see in place in classrooms?

Please refer to Question #1. Additional information about implementation expectations will be provided upon the selection of an evaluator for this project. However, the specific

components of the LFS program which are emphasized and targeted for attention may differ by school according to the principal's focus and assessment of needs. Additional information on LFS is also available on the internet.

b. Do those differ at the elementary, middle, and high school levels?

Yes, by school. Specific foci, and therefore, particular practices that are emphasized will likely vary by school building.

20. On page 2 of RFI, you ask that the evaluation "assess the impact of LFS implementation on student outcomes, primarily in the area of academic achievement."

a. What measures of academic achievement are you looking for or are available (e.g., DCAS, graduation data, others)?

Standardized test measures primarily, which can include DCAS, DSTP (before DCAS implementation), PSAT, DIBELS, or others as identified as appropriate by the evaluator and the District.

b. What kinds of improvements to student achievement does CSD expect from exemplary implementation of LFS in the classroom?

We realize that any achievement trends measured across the last 4-5 years will be the result of many different factors. However, we would like the evaluator on this project to devise optimal methods for assessing the likely impact of differential levels of LFS implementation on those multi-year trends.

21. Learning Focused Strategies appears to have several categories for its on-site training (e.g., assessments, curriculum, and literacy, learning focused strategies).

a. Which categories of professional development did CSD staff receive during the three years of program implementation?

Different teaching and administrative staff have received different amounts of training on different components of LFS. We have records of professional development provided to staff, specified by school, which could be made available to the evaluator once selected.

b. Does this vary with each school?

Yes.

c. Year?

Different staff received training in different years. This will vary by individual, both within and between schools. Training records will indicate the date.

22. What is the amount of LFS training that teachers receive?

This varied by individual and by school. See responses to Question 21a and 21c.

23. Was LFS training phased in or was it provided to all teachers in all schools starting in 2009–2010?

See response to Question #1. Different levels of training were provided in different years. The specifics of this will require further discussion with those directly involved in LFS implementation that remains with the District.

24. Is the expectation that only teachers who received training in 2009–2010 be observed?

No. The evaluator will need to determine the degree to which each observed teacher has been exposed professional development in LFS. This should optimally be incorporated into the observation protocol.

25. Has LFS training been implemented at all school levels (elementary, middle, and high school)?

Yes. Implementation will vary by school and by individual, however.

26. What is the approximate number of teachers in CSD that have received LFS training?

It is difficult to specify this figure for the current population of teachers in our District in part due to teacher turnover across the past four years and in part because the District's professional development attendance records are likely not complete and do not include every LFS-related training provided across the past four years. It is safe to assume that nearly all teachers in classrooms who are not new to the District this school year have had some LFS-related training.

27. Does CSD (or LFS) maintain a record of teachers' or schools' experiences with the PD (e.g., how many years of LFS professional development teachers have received)?

See responses to Questions #21 and #26.

28. On page 2 of the RFI, you ask that the sampling methodology "maximize the representativeness of the evaluation's findings." What kinds of criteria does CSD anticipate for consideration of "representativeness"?

The specific sampling methods proposed by prospective evaluators represent an important criterion for us in assessing incoming proposals. We are looking for an evaluation plan that is extensive in scope, covering 25 schools, but efficient in terms of cost. Therefore, we are interested in the types of sampling designs that prospective evaluators will offer. Obviously, we do not expect that every teacher will be observed.

29. Will data from LFS walkthroughs be available for use by the evaluation?

Unlikely. Walkthroughs have largely been conducted at the school level. The degree to which this archival data can be made available to the evaluator is unknown.

30. Is the expectation that the evaluation will be primarily informed by classroom observation or a combination of survey and a sample of classroom observations?

See response to Question 28. Overall research design is an important criterion for us in assessing incoming proposals. We are not looking to over-specify research methods up front, and will be looking at the methods proposed by prospective evaluators.

31. What is the budget available for this work?

See response to Question #9.

32. What is the expected completion date for the evaluation?

See response to Question #12.

33. Could the Christina School District (CSD) provide a rough estimate of the budget that is available for this evaluation?

See response to Question #9.

34. Does the CSD have data on the amount of teacher participation in the LFS professional development over the three years (i.e. number of teachers participating, specific sessions in which they participated)?

See responses to Questions #21 and #26.

35. Was the LFS professional development evaluated over the three years it was offered? If so, who conducted this evaluation? What was the scope of the evaluation? Are the evaluation results available to bidders?

No, LFS in our district has not been formally evaluated across the implementation period.

36. Will the selected evaluator be provided access to student achievement data that is linked to students' teachers? If so, what is the earliest that achievement data from the 2012-13 school year could be made available to the evaluator?

See response to Question #17. Christina School District's Office of Accountability and Assessment maintains many years of achievement data across a wide range of indicators/measures. Depending on the specific measures identified, data could be provided going back up to nearly a decade.

37. Has the CSD conducted any previous evaluations of LFS implementation or impact? If so, can the results of these evaluations be made available to bidders?

See response to Question #35.

38. Could the CSD provide information about their expected timeline for this work, or when they would like to receive a final report?

See response to Question #12.