

## **19MISC3 EXTERNAL EVALUATOR SRCL GRANT**

### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:**

1. A Revised Form of Proposal is enclosed and should be used in lieu of the page 31 contained in the original proposal package. A Revised Technical Proposal is enclosed and should be used in lieu of pages 29 and 30 contained in the original proposal package. Also, on page 25, Section 9. Preparation of Proposal, revise c.ii to read:

The Technical Proposal will include the following forms completed:

- Signature Page
- Statutory Affidavit and Non-Collusion Certification
- Certification of Compliance
- Technical Proposal—Part I - Required Experience
- Technical Proposal—Part II - Questionnaire
- Supporting Documentation

2. In your application to MSDE, was an evaluator named? If so, is this person or firm eligible to bid on this RFP?

An evaluator was not named in our application.

3. Is it possible to receive a copy of the Frederick County Public Schools Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant application to Maryland State Department of Education?

The FCPS Striving Readers' grant application is included in this addendum.

4. Please describe FCPS's implementation plan for the SRCL grant?

The implementation plan is included in the Striving Readers Application.

5. Is a randomized control trial a feasible design for the study?

FCPS leadership will decide this at a later date. The Revised Form of Proposal includes a place to provide a cost for this in the event it is selected as an option at a later date.

6. Is there a specific budget range associated with the project?

The budget includes spending categories in addition to the evaluation and is not relevant to this solicitation.

7. What is the expected nature of the interaction between the evaluation team and the MD State program specialist for the Strivers Program? Please describe in detail.

There would be little to no interaction between the evaluation team and the MD state program specialist for Striving Readers.

8. Will the evaluation team have access to school administrators (i.e. Principal, Asst. Principal, etc.)?

Yes.

9. Is there an expectation that the evaluation team will interact with families of children attending FCPS? Please elaborate on the expectation.

Interaction with families will be limited to surveys and focus group discussions.

10. Is there a designated FCPS Strivers Team available to support the program evaluation team activities?

See the FCPS Striving Readers grant application for information on the project team and grant personnel.

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### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

11. In addition to FCPS, who are other key stakeholders for FCPS or Strivers that must be considered by the evaluation team?

Other key stakeholders that must be considered by the evaluation team would include the Frederick County Board of Education, the Frederick County community, and the Maryland State Department of Education.

12. Will the evaluation team be responsible for developing assessment tools or are assessment tools already developed by either the school district, the State of MD, or the U.S. Department of Education?

We have tools that can serve as a starting point for the evaluation team and would work with the evaluator to determine final assessment tools.

13. Approximately how many students will complete the different types of assessments related to literacy or Strivers that are administered by FCPS annually?

Approximately 40,000 students annually will complete the different assessments related to Striving Readers.

14. Will the evaluation team be responsible for the requesting secondary quantitative data collection related to FCPS assessments (i.e. PARCC, etc.)?

The project director will facilitate the sharing of relevant data from the FCPS data files.

15. Approximately how many different types of assessments related to literacy or Strivers are administered by FCPS annually?

The following literacy assessments are currently used by FCPS:

- PARCC Reading Assessment
- The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)
- The Benchmark Assessment Series (BAS) running record is used in elementary Language Arts in addition to a fluency assessment
- Local benchmark is used in secondary English/Language Arts and includes a narrative assessment, a literary analysis assessment and a research simulation
- The Performance Series Reading Assessment (Grades 2, 5 and 8) Census – before, middle and end for students receiving reading intervention.

16. What current assessment data does FCPS have and has it all been cleaned and analyzed, or will the evaluation team need to clean and analyze current assessment data?

Cleaning processes are conducted on FCPS data by our System Accountability and School Improvement department. All data is reported for analysis either in dynamic dashboards or other visual displays required for systemic use. The evaluator will be provided with raw data files stripped of student identifiers or visuals that report output.

17. Are there FCPS specific indicators that are of interest but not specified in the scope of work?

All indicators are included in the scope of work and in the FCPS Striving Readers grant application.

18. As there are 67 schools listed as part of FCPS, is it expected that the evaluation team will have to complete and conduct evaluation activities with all teachers, all students, at all 67 schools?

If field-based evaluation work is determined to be part of the evaluation, FCPS will work with the evaluator to select a sampling of schools.

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19. Understanding the role of instruction in the Strivers Program, to what extent will the evaluation team have to employ tactics to ascertain implementation fidelity for Curriculum and Instruction (i.e. classroom observation for curriculum fidelity monitoring)?

The extent to which the evaluation team will employ tactics to ascertain implementation fidelity will be limited. Measures of success will be derived from data collected from student assessment data or teacher surveys.

20. If it is not possible to receive the grant application, is it possible to receive copies of the following from the grant application:

- Draft FCPS Comprehensive Literacy Plan,
- SRCL Grant application goals, objectives, and milestones, and
- The evaluation and accountability plan that would include evaluation questions, strategies, and data collection?

A copy of the FCPS Striving Readers grant application and the draft FCPS Comprehensive Literacy Plan are included in this addendum.

21. What data does FCPS plan to collect for the evaluation and what data does FCPS want the evaluators to collect?

FCPS and the evaluator will work collaboratively to collect data.

22. What schools or geographic areas will be participating in the FCPS SRCL grant?

In the Striving Readers' birth to five activities, the geographic areas include those in the attendance areas of the following schools: Butterfly Ridge, Hillcrest, Lincoln, Monocacy, North Frederick, Orchard Grove and Waverley Elementary Schools. In grades 1 through 12, all FCPS schools will participate in Striving Readers. A map of Frederick County schools is included on pages 6-7.

23. Will FCPS be using Maryland's early learning or another assessment for four-year old oral language growth?

The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (see question 15, above) will be administered to the seven schools participating in Striving Readers' birth to five activities. It will be administered as a representative sample (about one-third of all students) in the remaining schools.

24. What is the estimated FTE and/or budget for the evaluation?

This data is not being shared.

25. Is it possible for FCPS to post a copy of their approved project plan for bidders to view prior to submission?

Copies of the FCPS Striving Readers' grant application and draft Comprehensive Literacy Plan are included in this addendum.

26. Can we obtain results of the needs assessment, which the Frederick County Public Schools Striving Readers program was designed to address?

See the "Extent of Need" included in the FCPS Striving Readers' grant application.

27. What intervention model(s) does the Frederick County Public Schools Striving Readers program use?

FCPS uses a tiered approach to intervention.

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### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

28. Are Frederick County Public Schools intervention models consistent across grades/age bands? How do the intervention models vary by grade/age?  
FCPS intervention models are driven by student need, not necessarily by grades/age bands. A student will be provided with an intervention any time it is deemed necessary by analysis of multiple data points by core literacy teams.
29. If the Striving Readers program is using a tiered approach, how are the tiers defined? How do the interventions vary by tier?  
Tiers are defined based on time, intensity and explicitness.
30. Are there variations to the Striving Readers intervention model for particular demographic groups, such as English language learners or students with disabilities?  
FCPS uses Achieve3000 specifically for English Learners.
31. How many schools/buildings are involved in Striving Readers grant? Approximately how many students? How many staff?  
60 schools, approximately 40,000 students, and 1,050 teachers will be involved in the Striving Readers grant.
32. Please provide estimates of the number of schools, classrooms and children/students (by grade: pre-K and K-12)?
- See question 31, above, for number of schools and teachers.
  - PK: 285 students
  - Grades K-12: 39,715 students
33. How many pre-school/day care organizations and day care providers may be involved in the grant?  
This is difficult to determine because participation by private preschools, day care organizations and family day care providers is optional. For planning purposes, assume a total of 15 private organizations will participate in the Striving Readers project.
34. Has there been an alignment study to enable longitudinal comparisons between the MSA and PARCC?  
This is not relevant to the Striving Readers project.
35. What measures other than PARCC and the Early Learning Assessment, if any, are already used in Frederick County Public Schools that might be used to assess interim milestones? Do all Frederick County Public Schools use these same measures for a given grade? Will these data be made available to the evaluator?  
See question 15, above. All FCPS schools use the measures for a given grade. Data will be made available to the evaluator, as appropriate to the Striving Readers project.
36. Would outcome data be available to the vendor at the school or student level?  
Data would be available at the school and student level.
37. Would outcome data include interim/formative assessment of literacy progress by subgroup?  
Yes.

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### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:**

38. What other process and impact data related to student literacy and staff development in literacy does Frederick County Public Schools routinely collect? What data will be made available to the evaluator?  
See question 15, above. FCPS also collects survey data on professional learning that occurs in grant-funded projects.
39. Will the district assist the chosen evaluator to secure student outcome data?  
Yes.
40. Are students opting out from state testing? If so, to what extent? How much do the proportions opting out vary by school and by grade level?  
This is not relevant to the Striving Readers project; very few FCPS students opt out of state testing.
41. How commonly is the Early Learning Assessment administered?  
The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (see question 15, above) will be administered to the seven schools participating in Striving Readers' birth to five activities. It will be administered as a representative sample (about one-third of all students) in the remaining schools.
42. What is the process for submitting LEA data to MSDE?  
For purposes of the Striving Readers' project, this has not yet been determined by MSDE.
43. Is there a statewide evaluator? If so, how should the evaluation focus be differentiated between state and local evaluators?  
We have asked MSDE this question and have not yet received a response.
44. Should vendor build in the one-year renewal (Year 3) into the proposed budget?  
Yes. The Revised Form of Proposal includes a location to price year three. However, only years one and two will be included in the cost evaluation scoring.
45. Should the cost proposal include only costs for the initial contract period (2 years)?  
See 44 above.
46. Do you have a cap on indirect costs, and if so, what is the cap?  
No indirect costs may be charged to this project.
47. Can FCPS share the proposed activities of the SRCL grant?  
The FCPS Striving Readers' grant application and draft Comprehensive Literacy Plan are included in this addendum.
48. Can FCPS share the benchmarks proposed for the SRCL grant?  
The FCPS Striving Readers' grant application and draft Comprehensive Literacy Plan are included in this addendum.

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### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:**

49. Please clarify the grant term. The RFP indicates “the initial contract term shall coincide with the second two years of the grant.” Is the first year of the 3-year grant the period from May 2018-September 2018?

The first year of the grant is from July 2018 – September 2018. No evaluation activities were included in Year 1 of the FCPS Striving Readers project.

50. Please confirm that the bid package may be submitted by Fed Ex.

Yes. As long as it is received prior to the bid opening date/time.

51. Under 'Additional Contract Terms' (4.a.) it states "Federal grant dollars may not be used to subcontract any portions of the evaluation." On the Technical Questionnaire (I.4.), it also requires an acknowledgement that no portion of the contract will be sub-contracted. Can you clarify as to whether this excludes two companies, one prime and one subcontractor, from teaming together to support this work?

Yes, this does exclude two companies from working together. No portion of the evaluation can be sub-contracted.

52. In the MSDE application, it was required that funding was broken down as follows: 15% for birth to age 5, 40% for grades K-5, 20% for 6-8, and 20% for 9-12. Does this mean that the remaining 5% is dedicated to all other grant administration activities and the evaluation?

The program evaluation is not included in the grant administration activities. Rather, the evaluation is broken out among the Striving Readers’ age span activities.

53. Are there page limits for the technical proposal?

No, however the submission of marketing type materials about the company would be considered extraneous and slow down the evaluation process.

54. Will the project narrative be available?

The FCPS Striving Readers’ grant application and draft Comprehensive Literacy Plan are included in this addendum.

55. How will the external evaluator access the data?

The external evaluator will access project data in coordinator with the project director and the FCPS System Accountability Team. Access to data will be an easy process as FCPS readily reports data in many configurations to a variety of internal stakeholders. The evaluator will not have access to FCPS student data files.

56. What is the anticipated or planned level of effort annually? That is, is there a maximum budget the district anticipates spending to evaluate the effectiveness of its Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) grant?

Bidders are expected to offer pricing that is consistent with the requirements as set forth in the bid solicitation package and further explained in this addendum. A budget estimate for the grant evaluator portion will not be shared.

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57. At what stage of development and/or implementation are the SRCL programs that will be evaluated? That is, has implementation already begun and is implementation district-wide or at specific schools?

Project implementation began in August 2018 but is limited to purchasing instructional materials and hiring staff. Some professional learning will occur in late August and early September, but is limited in nature.

58. Does the district expect a minimum or maximum page length for the proposal and appendices (such as references)?

No, however, only responses and supporting documents that relate directly to the information we are soliciting should be included. For example, extraneous marketing type materials about the company's history or achievements, or responses that have been cut and pasted from other grant proposals would be considered extraneous, slow down the evaluation process, and result in a deduction of some points.

59. Does the district expect the Technical Questionnaire to follow the format for the proposal?

Yes.

60. Are there any limitations on appendices?

Appendices should support/respond to the questions listed on the Technical Questionnaire and follow the numbering format. See #58 above.

61. Are sub-contractors permitted as part of the team? P. 24 of the proposal package states, "Federal grant dollars may not be used to subcontract any portions of the evaluation;" however, p. 14 of the Contract Assignment permits the use of subcontractors.

- Sub-contractors are not permitted as part of the team.
- Section II. Specific Terms and Conditions on pages 23-28 supersede Section I. General Terms and Conditions on pages 8-22 if there are conflicting terms and conditions.

62. Are families or daycare providers the primary point of intervention for this evaluation? That is, are families being served as participants in daycare programs or are they being served in addition to daycare programs?

Families or daycare providers are not the primary point of intervention for this evaluation.

63. How many daycare programs will be served and do all of these programs "feed" into the district's schools?

This is difficult to determine because participation by private preschools, day care organizations and family day care providers is optional. For planning purposes, assume a total of 15 private organizations will participate in the Striving Readers project. Assume that all of these programs "feed" into FCPS schools.

64. Will there be the ability to track students/families over time as they "graduate" into ECE within the district?

Yes, there will be an ability to track students over time as they "graduate" into ECE within the district.

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### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:**

65. Can the district confirm when the Striving Readers program was/will be launched?  
Project implementation began in August 2018 but is limited to purchasing instructional materials and hiring staff. Some professional learning will occur in late August and early September, but is limited in nature.
66. How are families and daycare providers being chosen for participation in the intervention?  
See question 63, above.
67. Will it be rolled out to any participating schools within the district?  
In the Striving Readers' birth to five activities, the geographic areas include those in the attendance areas of the following schools: Butterfly Ridge, Hillcrest, Lincoln, Monocacy, North Frederick, Orchard Grove and Waverley Elementary Schools. In grades K through 12, all FCPS schools will participate in Striving Readers.
68. How many students are currently engaged with/benefiting from the program?  
No students are currently engaged in this program.
69. Are there various cohorts for the Striving Readers intervention? If so, what is the timing for the various cohorts to be introduced to the treatment?  
See the implementation plan in the FCPS Striving Readers' grant application.
70. What level of rigor is the district interested in for the evaluation? For example, is the district interested in a Randomized Control Trial and if so, is random assignment of students or groups of students (or daycare providers or families) feasible for this evaluation?  
This will be decided upon by FCPS leadership at a later date.
71. What are the main strategies being deployed by Frederick County in relation to the Striving Readers program? For example, can you tell us:
- What curricular/instructional interventions are being deployed with the daycares and/or with families?
  - Which K-12 grade levels will be directly impacted (i.e., will receive interventions) through Striving Readers?
  - What interventions will be implemented in K-12 and on what timeline?
- See the implementation plan in the FCPS Striving Readers' grant application.
72. Are there professional development requirements being deployed by the district (in addition to those being deployed by the state)?  
There are significant professional development requirements deployed by FCPS as part of the Striving Readers project. These requirements will be evaluated through surveys and focus groups.
73. Are there/will there be instructional coaching for teachers?  
There will be instructional coaching for teachers, but not in a systemized manner as part of this project. Instructional coaching will be done on a school-by-school basis.
74. Will there be any home visits or other interventions for families?  
Not as a part of Striving Readers grant activities.

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75. Section 9.c.i on page 25 of the RFP states “Do not include the cost proposal on the flash drive,” but a flash drive is not referenced elsewhere in the RFP. Does a flash drive need to be submitted for the technical proposal and/or cost proposal?

A flash drive should be submitted for the technical proposal only. Please add this requirement to page 25, Section 9.c.i.

76. Section 10.d on page 26 of the RFP states that a supplier is scored and is either approved or not approved as one from whom to procure materials or services. On what basis is an applicant approved or not approved?

Technical Proposal Part II will be scored based on the categories referenced in 10.c. The proposals are then ranked from high to low based on this score. Based on the total number of proposals and the results of the scoring, FCPS retains the right to determine which cost proposals will be opened.

77. Section 10.g on page 26 of the RFP states that cost proposals will be evaluated on a weighted basis. How will the cost proposals be weighted?

- The cost of year one and year two will be used to evaluate the Cost Proposal.
- The quoted services for developing and implementing the evaluation plan shall be inclusive of all related expenses (for labor, administrative fees, insurance, workmen’s compensation, license fees, travel, mileage, report writing, and incidentals).
- 40 total points will be awarded with the maximum points given for the lowest overall calculated costs.
- The Revised Form of Proposal also includes pricing for year 3 and other optional costs.
- Add 10.j. to read: FCPS reserves the right to request a best and final offer (BAFO) from finalists.

78. Under 'Insurance' (IV) a certificate of insurance (COI) is requested, but under 'Insurance (Modified)' (12) it states to have insurance at least ten calendar days within receipt of notice of award. Can you clarify which is correct?

- Both are correct. Page 30, Technical Questionnaire, Section IV allows the bidder to provide a “sample” certificate of insurance that provides evidence that they carry the required categories of insurance. Upon award of the solicitation, only the awarded vendor is required to submit an official Certificate of Insurance with the Board of Education of Frederick County named as additional insured.
- Page 28, #12.j., Delete the reference to the Frederick County Government and other entities.

79. Please clarify the insurance requirements for a bidder operating as an individual/sole proprietor LLC. Specifically, what documents does FCPS require to evidence the bidder's ability and commitment to obtain the required types and levels of insurance within 10 days of the grant award?

As an individual/sole provider, an awarded bidder is only required to have automobile liability insurance and professional liability insurance. If they do not currently have professional liability insurance, they should contact their insurance provider prior to submitting their bid to find out the cost to them of obtaining such insurance, and then indicate on the Technical Proposal that they will obtain such insurance if they are awarded the contract.

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### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:**

80. Would you consider amending the evaluation criteria to include points for an MBE?  
FCPS abides by the same MBE regulations as the State of Maryland which only apply to Public School Construction contracts. The evaluation criteria will not be changed.
81. Page 29 presents the Technical Questionnaire. Is this the format that you would like us to use for the technical proposal?  
Yes.
82. On page 11, the proposal package references a “proposal sheet.” Is this another attachment? We did not see this in the package materials.
- A Revised Form of Proposal, included in this addendum, replaces the page 31 of the original proposal package.
  - If there are conflicting terms and conditions, be advised that Section II. Specific Terms and Conditions on pages 23-28, the Technical Questionnaire, Pages 29-30, and the Revised Cost Proposal, enclosed, supersede Section I. General Terms and Conditions on pages 8-22.