



FINDING YOUR OUTSOURCED TECHNOLOGY PARTNER

EIGHT ESSENTIALS FOR CREATING
AN EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY RFP



YOU'RE AN EDUCATOR, NOT AN **RFP WRITER.**

Even though outsourcing your district's education technology and IT services may be a necessity, you likely don't have an experienced RFP writer on staff. If it falls to you to write or appoint someone to write your next solicitation, keep these eight factors in mind. Not only can they save you time and energy, but they will also help to ensure that your district's technology resources are meeting the needs of your students and teachers.

EIGHT ESSENTIALS FOR CREATING AN EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY RFP

1

START EARLY, TAKE YOUR TIME

A quality RFP takes time to put together; like a final project, the best RFPs come from months of preparation and editing. If you know that your district will need an outsourced technology provider at the beginning of the school year, a good rule of thumb is to release your RFP at the beginning of the calendar year.

Starting building your RFP, piece by piece, as soon as you can. This will help you stay ahead of schedule and give you time to collaborate with others in your district. As you bring in stakeholders, always be asking what they think your district really needs, what expectations they have, what resources can be contributed and what the budget restrictions are.

2

LEARN FROM OTHER RFPs ...

When it comes to RFPs, reinventing the wheel doesn't offer much value. That's why it's worthwhile to review requests put together by other districts. Along with helping you to organize your own RFP, this review can also help you avoid pitfalls and help you find the best outsourced technology provider for your district.

3

... BUT MAKE THE RFP YOUR OWN

While looking to other RFPs for inspiration or reference is a great way to start, following the lead of others too closely can lead to disappointing results. All too often districts make the mistake of simply copying and pasting bits and pieces of different RFPs together. This may seem like a good idea, but district names and end goals are always different, requiring additional attention to detail and editing. To avoid this mistake, work to make your RFP unique to your district.

4

MAKE YOUR END GOAL CLEAR

You know better than anyone else what your end goal is, but bidders don't. Whether you're interested in resolving your technology problems, updating your technology environment or improving your IT leadership, your objective should be apparent in each section of the solicitation. Without your end goal, vendors are unsure of what they're working toward and, in turn, are likely to provide general, non-specific responses.

5

INCLUDE VISUALS

As in the classroom, visuals can help to get your point across in a clear and concise way. Whether it's a chart, table or picture, small visuals are a great way to supplement the text you've already written. Read through your RFP to ensure that everything is clear. If it's not, don't be afraid to add in a chart that explains your district's current technology capabilities, where the gaps are and what your district needs.

ONE CAVEAT: When working with visuals, make sure to use high quality images. A low-quality image can confuse, making its use worse than no image at all.

6

CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE

When compiling your educational technology RFP, consider your audience and what you expect from them. While the bidding vendors have experience, it's important to clearly state your district's expectations so that there are no misunderstandings. Make sure that the essentials, such as timeline integration, budget specifications and the basic framework, are clear. They can take it from there.

7

BE FAIR WITH THE DEADLINE

RFP documents are often voluminous. It takes time to review an RFP and even more time to respond to it. Establish a realistic deadline that allows providers to think through their responses, ask questions as necessary and send back quality responses that meet your district's unique technology needs.

8

HOLD A MANDATORY BIDDERS' CONFERENCE

While you no doubt want to move through the RFP and bid process as quickly and efficiently as possible, take the extra time to hold a bidders' conference. Yes, it may mean devoting additional time to the RFP, but by making the bidders' conference mandatory, you can meet potential bidders and answer their questions about RFP expectations.

ONE MORE THING... at the bidders' conference, allow the bidders to submit additional questions. Afterwards, collect the questions, put together answers and send them to every bidder. This may seem like extra work, but it's the best way to ensure quality responses, and a completely fair bid process.



NOW START WRITING, THE RIGHT WAY

Writing your RFP the right way is the first step in establishing a long-lasting partnership with your technology partner.

At VARtek, we understand that RFPs are a necessary piece to the outsourced technology puzzle. We also know that it's a piece that educators and administrators often feel the least comfortable pursuing. If you still have concerns about writing your RFP, an RFP template may be just what you need to kick-start your ideas.



Get started on your outsourced technology RFP today with the help of a free template.

Call (888) 671-4459 to receive yours today!

