

IT. IT'S PERSONAL



**FINDING
THE RIGHT
IT STRATEGIC
PARTNER**

YOU'RE AN EDUCATOR, NOT AN RFP WRITER.

Even though outsourcing your school's education technology and IT services may be necessary, you likely don't have an experienced RFP writer on staff. If it falls to you to write or ask someone to write your next proposal request, keep these eight factors in mind. Not only can they save you time and energy, but they will help to ensure that your technology resources meet 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 school will need an outsourced technology provider at the beginning of the school year, 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. As you bring in stakeholders, always ask what they think your school really needs, what expectations they have, what resources can be contributed, and what the budget restrictions are.

FINDING THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY PARTNER starts with the right RFP template. Call Vartek at 800-954-2524. We will give you a free template that asks questions that help you find a partner that delivers proven outcomes and support you can depend on.

2

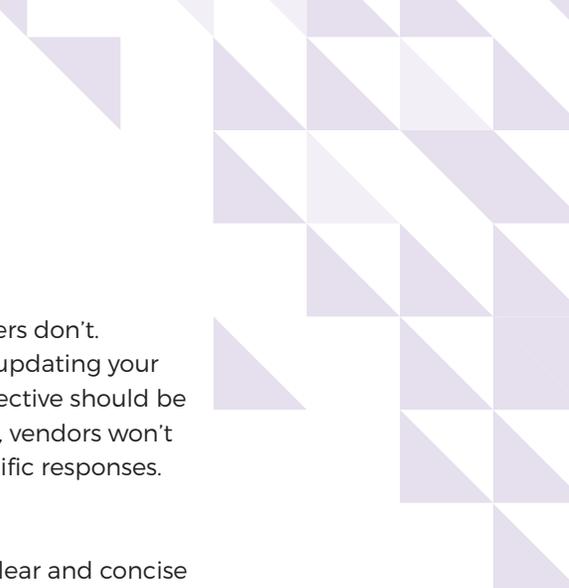
LEARN FROM OTHER RFPS ...

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 schools. Along with helping you organize your own RFP, this review can also help you avoid pitfalls and help you find the best outsourced technology provider for your school.

3

... BUT MAKE THE RFP YOUR OWN.

While you should definitely use other RFPs for inspiration and reference, following the lead of others too closely can lead to disappointing results. All too often school leaders make the mistake of simply copying and pasting bits and pieces of other requests. This may seem like a good idea, but school names and end goals are always different, requiring additional attention to detail and editing. To avoid this mistake, make your RFP unique to your school.



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 won't know what they're bidding on and will likely give general, nonspecific responses.

5

INCLUDE VISUALS

As in the classroom, visuals can help to get your point across in a clear and concise way. Whether they are charts, tables, or pictures, small visuals are a great way to supplement the text. Read your RFP to ensure that everything is clear. If it's not, don't be afraid to add a graphic that explains your school's technology capabilities, where the gaps are, and what your school needs.

USE HIGH-QUALITY IMAGES. A low-quality image diminishes the visual effect of your document.

6

CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE

Think about your proposers and what you expect from them. While the bidding vendors have experience, it's important to clearly state your 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. Set a realistic deadline that allows bidders to think through their responses, ask questions, and send back quality responses that meet your school's technology needs.

8

HOLD A MANDATORY BIDDERS' CONFERENCE

While you 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—which will make the quality of the proposals much higher.

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.

We can help.

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