

Request for Proposals No. 2024-01

Addendum 01 – Q&A

This document is posted to capture the questions received, and agency answers provided, during the question and answer period of RFP No. 2024-01, issued August 21, 2023.

All amendments, addenda, and notifications related to this procurement will be posted on the [OSPI website](#) (if this was an open procurement) and on the Washington Electronic Business Solution ([WEBS](#)) website. Additional questions concerning this procurement must be submitted to contracts@K12.wa.us. Communication directed to other parties will be considered unofficial and non-binding on OSPI, and may result in disqualification of the Consultant.

Pre-Bid Conference Q&A:

This set of questions and answers reflect questions asked during the OSPI-hosted pre-bid conference which took place via Zoom on August 30, 2023.

1. **Question:** What grade range does this proposal apply to? (e.g. Should the cost estimate be provided assuming students in Grades 7-12?)

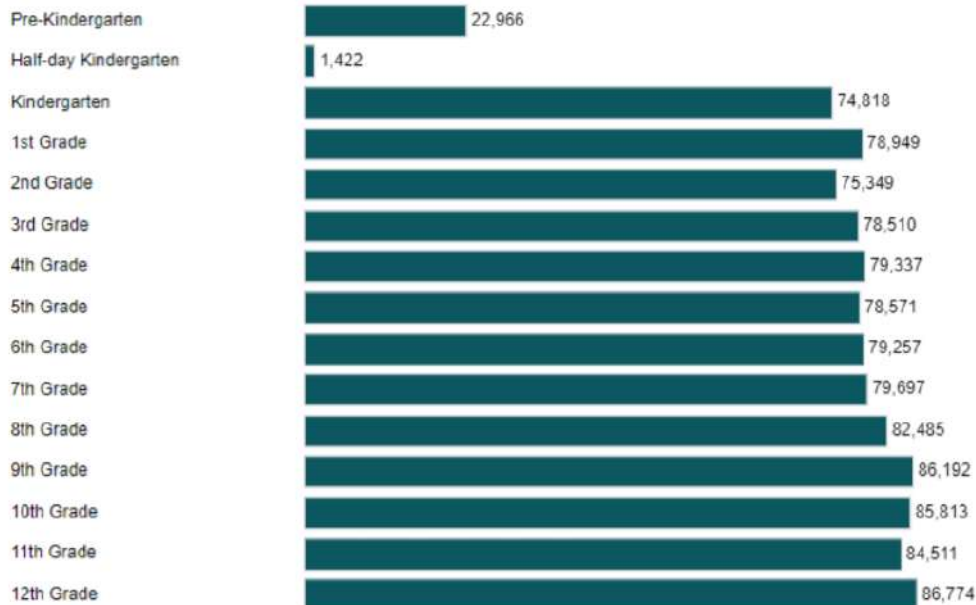
Answer: The Legislature has asked school districts to annually provide students in grades 7 through 12, and their parents or legal guardians, with comprehensive information about the graduation pathway options offered by the district, and strongly encouraged districts to begin providing this information starting in sixth grade.

2. **Question:** Approximately how many students would this proposal cover? Do you have this broken down by grade range (i.e. number of middle school and high school students)?

Answer: Recent estimate of initial students served by platform (7-12): 505,472
Recent estimate of bill identified students after full implementation (5-12): 663,740
Access the chart below by accessing the Washington State data posted on [OSPIs Report Card](#). Click on the Enrollment link in the left navigation box and then the "By Grade" tab for the 2022-23 school year to get our most recent enrollment numbers.



Washington State 2022-23



The school year begins on different days for different school districts. The first business day in October is used as the enrollment count date for all schools and districts in Washington state.

3. **Question:** Approximately how many schools would be included, and do you have a breakdown of how many middle schools and high schools that would include.

Answer: Information for this question was pulled from the National Center for Education Statistics. Only public schools were included in this table. An effort was made to make the data as readable as possible, however the table does not account for every single school's configuration of grades in Washington State due to the wide variation.

Level	Estimated Schools	Parameters
Elementary	1,173	Any combination of PK-4 AND with highest grade of 5 or 6
Middle	385	Any combination of 5 – 10 but not serving PK-4 NOR 11-12
High	520	Any combination of 9 – 12 not serving K-8
K-8	95	Any combination of PK-4 serving through 8
Jr./Sr. Combo	147	Any combination of serving 6, 7, and/or 8 AND any combination of 9-12
K-12	174	Any combination of PK-5 serving through 12

4. **Question:** What are the most common non-English languages used in Washington State that you are expecting the application to be translated for?
Answer: Twelve percent of students in Washington State participate in programs to learn English. That is over 130,000 students, representing more than 230 languages. Spanish is the primary language spoken by 55 percent of students learning English. Other common languages spoken include Russian, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, Arabic, Somali, Marshallese, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, and Punjabi
5. **Question:** Is OSPI planning to coordinate the rollout of the application to districts or will districts implement on their chosen timetable?
Answer: The legislation governing this effort states: "By October 1, 2024, the office of the superintendent of public instruction must develop an implementation plan including both an estimated timeline and updated cost... for completing full statewide implementation of the universal platform in all school districts." In developing the final implementation plan, OSPI will work with the selected vendor and districts to determine the rollout plan. All districts will have up to two years to implement the new platform.
6. **Question:** Are we looking at a solution that is managed and owned by OSPI or provided on a subscription basis?
Answer: We anticipate that most solutions offered to us will be provided on a subscription basis. We'd be open to a solution that is managed and owned by OSPI, so long as our non-functional Supportability requirement that "The system must be supported by the vendor or service provider. The vendor should provide timely support, maintenance, and updates, ensuring that the system remains secure, reliable, and functional" can be met.
7. **Question:** Did we use any external consultants to design or review the platform requirements?
Answer: We had a local external consultant examine current offerings that they discovered when this project was first floated in 2022. Those findings were considered when the legislation for 2023 was crafted and requirements were prepared for this RFP.
8. **Question:** Are you going to be required by the state to take the lowest bid?
Answer: No. Cost will be an evaluating factor, but OSPI is not required to accept the lowest bid as the Apparently Successful Bidder.
9. **Question:** Is there a statewide budget, or will this be sold district by district? If so, how much is the statewide budget?
Answer: OSPI anticipates an increased statewide budget, the size of which is as yet undetermined, to support development of the platform. Once proposals have been accepted, OSPI is to create a report to the legislature, who will consider the bids when determining a budget for fiscal year (FY) 24.

Note: the current bill language tasks OSPI and not the legislature with selecting the apparently successful vendor.

10. **Question:** Are all districts included in this RFP going to be implemented based on the award of this RFP, or do the districts also need an additional opt in?

Answer: Within two years of final platform alignment to statutory requirements, all districts will be mandated to use the universal online HSBP platform selected by OSPI.

11. **Question:** How does the state intend to provide continued support? Is it on the vendor to support individual districts or will there be a centralized ticketing system run via the state which is then escalated to the vendor?

Answer: OSPI is hiring a full-time program supervisor to facilitate the universal online platform selection and transition to a single platform, and continue providing statewide guidance, data analysis and professional development in support of equitable and high-quality high school and beyond planning practices following the bill implementation timeline.

The vendor's responsibility for support, as described in the bill and to be included in the final implementation report, will include but is not limited to providing "...technical assistance, technology updates, ongoing maintenance requirements, and adjustments to the technology funding formula". Depending on funds appropriated to support this work, OSPI is open to exploring the feasibility of a centralized ticketing system to support the provision of technical assistance with the platform.

The RFP also requires that "The system must be supported by comprehensive, synchronous and asynchronous training and training materials targeted to various user groups (i.e., high school staff, middle school staff, everyone else). OSPI is open to exploring models for training its system users once the platform is deployed, stable, and in regular use.

12. **Question:** Are all districts included in this RFP going to be implemented at the same time?

Answer: OSPI is afforded two years from the time implementation begins to migrate all schools to the selected platform. The order in which schools are migrated will be a part of the implementation planning done in partnership with the selected vendor.

13. **Question:** Is the implementation going to be centralized at the state level or school district by school district, building by building?

Answer: The implementation of a universal platform will be directed by OSPI, and we anticipate partnering with districts and Educational Service Districts [9 regional support agencies] in supporting the statewide training of users across the state.

14. **Question:** Will you allow additional features to be added at a later date?

Answer: If you are asking whether in the case of a subscription, cloud-based service, for example, can and will we accept updates over time as technology evolves, state

requirements change and the system continues to develop, the answer is definitely yes. However, any changes to an executed contract would require an amendment be negotiated and signed by both parties.

15. **Question:** Will the state offer any data support?

Answer: OSPI anticipates having access to data inherent within the platform in order to provide analysis and support for districts to maximize opportunities to best prepare students for their postsecondary goals.

16. **Question:** Will you be soliciting feedback from individual districts?

Answer: We are inviting all districts and a wide array of other stakeholders outside of OSPI to contribute to the next round of requirements gathering. We also expect to connect with districts as ongoing partners to help guide implementation, testing, and training.

17. **Question:** What is the composition of the evaluation committee?

Answer: The evaluation committee that will select the successful bidder will be comprised of OSPI staff representing multiple departments with an extensive range of expertise, including all members of our project team. Additionally, there may be representatives from the named and specified partners in the bill who support the final selection process. Specific training will be provided for those not experienced in reviewing RFP responses.

18. **Question:** Confirm that the state is looking for a solution that only covers grades 7-12?

Answer: For this current policy implementation, grades 7 through 12 are specified as the required grades during which districts must provide annual opportunities to develop and adjust the HSBP. There is a requirement in ESSB5243 to explore the option of eventually providing access to an online platform for late-elementary students, so there may be a future shift to include at least 5th and 6th grade.

19. **Question:** Will you be soliciting feedback from individual districts?

Answer: We are inviting districts and other stakeholders outside of OSPI to contribute to the process. We also expect to connect and collaborate with districts as ongoing partners to help guide implementation, testing, and training.

20. **Question:** Is there a common single sign-on system used by all of the districts?

Answer: No: The Districts all exercise local control and OSPI has no authority to require the use of a statewide student information system.

21. **Question:** What is the breakdown of schools by grade level in Washington?

Answer: Information for this question was pulled from the National Center for Education Statistics. Only public schools were included in this table. An effort was made to make

the data as readable as possible, however the table does not account for every single school's configuration of grades in Washington State due to the wide variation.

Level	Estimated Schools	Parameters
Elementary	1,173	Any combination of PK-4 AND with highest grade of 5 or 6
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K-12	174	Any combination of PK-5 serving through 12

22. **Question:** When will the Q&A be posted?

Answer: Pre-Bid Q&A will be posted on OSPI's Competitive Procurement webpage and in WEBS by September 7, 2023.

OSPI will accept additional Q&A through 9/25/23, and post a final Q&A document to WEBS and OSPI website by 9/27/23.

23. **Question:** Are all schools expected to have migrated to the selected platform by July 1, 2025?

Answer: No. OSPI is afforded two years from the time implementation begins to migrate all schools/districts to the selected platform. The order in which schools are migrated will be a part of the implementation planning done in partnership with the selected vendor. The current anticipated timeline estimates that the 2-year implementation window will begin with the 2024-25 school year.

24. **Question:** Is OSPI seeking a bespoke solution or are product options invited?

Answer: OSPI is open to proposals for COTS software. The bill language did not specify using COTS software, so the RFP was structured in a way that would allow for acceptance of COTS software or development of a new online platform.

25. **Question:** Is the RFP seeking a solution owned and managed by OSPI or a solution that is provided on a cloud and subscription basis?

Answer: We anticipate that most solutions offered to us will be provided on a subscription basis, although we'd be open to a solution that is managed and owned by OSPI, so long as our non-functional Supportability requirement that "The system must be supported by the vendor or service provider. The vendor should provide timely support, maintenance, and updates, ensuring that the system remains secure, reliable, and functional" can be met.

26. **Question:** What role is OSPI (the state) playing in this implementation and continued centralized support?
Answer: The legislation driving this work requires OSPI develop guidance and provide technical assistance and support for the facilitation of statewide professional development for school districts and partner organizations in using the universal platform.
27. **Question:** Will OSPI have access to all the data stored within this platform?
Answer: Per Chapter 39.26 RCW, the Contractor shall provide access to data generated under this Contract to the Superintendent, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, and the State Auditor at no additional cost. This includes access to all information that supports the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Contractor's reports, including computer models and methodology for those models.
28. **Question:** Is there an expectation that users will have access to the selected platform after exiting high school?
Answer: Yes, "indefinite access" is required for students to their high school beyond plan, regardless of current school affiliation or lack thereof, in both mobile and desktop applications.
29. **Question:** Will there be communication to vendors on their status of making the list submitted in the first legislative report or final selection between October 2023 and June 2024?
Answer: Yes. Any vendor that submits a proposal will receive communication and the list will be published.
30. **Question:** Is there a requirement for the platform to interact with college-based systems and credit tracking to weave into their HSBP, especially for those participating in dual credit programming?
Answer: There is no *requirement* in the legislation, which informed the requirements in the RFP, to connect with the systems used by institutions of higher education. However, according to the stakeholder feedback we have received so far, this is a request that has been raised by the community who will be interacting with the platform, and we are placing high importance on the stakeholder feedback we are receiving about what they are looking for in this tool.
31. **Question:** NOTE: THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION CONSTITUTES AS AN AMENDMENT TO THE SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS.
Why must the system be compatible with Internet Explorer 11 since Microsoft has ended support for the browser in 2022?
Answer: Good catch: we've revised our internal policies based on this feedback. Please ignore any requirement for compatibility with any version of Internet Explorer. We

continue to expect that the system will be compatible with current Edge, Chrome, Firefox, and Safari browsers.

32. **Question:** What is the budget available for this scope of work?

Answer: There is no current projection on the cost. The RFP asks for the bidder to provide a quote and those quotes will be included in the report to the legislature with the assumption that those bids will be taken into consideration by the legislature in determining that budget. The Legislature will need to appropriate funding in the next session to ensure the funding is available for the development of the platform.

33. **Question:** Has a budget for the platform been allocated and approved for this platform?

Answer: At this time funding for this project is limited to the RFP process and hiring a High School and Beyond Planning Program Supervisor. There is no funding currently dedicated in the state budget to the development and purchase of licenses for the platform. The decision to appropriate the necessary funding will be informed by the first report to the Legislature, due January 1, 2024, which includes vendor cost estimates.

34. **Question:** Will OSPI be able to help with participant recruiting to get user input as vendors develop a solution?

Answer: Yes, the incoming HSBP Program Supervisor will be managing OSPI's organizational partner outreach and the community volunteers that have already indicated interest in this process.

35. **Question:** Can a user opt out of data retention?

Answer: Completion of a HSBP is a graduation requirement for all public Local Education Agencies (LEAs) across Washington and use of the universal online HSBP platform is a statutory requirement. All data inherent within the platform will be accessible at the state to ensure the best possible implementation and support for districts and enrolled students.

36. **Question:** Who will be managing platform training and support?

Answer: The specifics will be outlined in the implementation plan created in partnership with the selected vendor. However, the selected vendor must include technical assistance, technology updates, ongoing platform maintenance requirements and adjustments to the technology funding formula, and statewide professional development in the final cost estimate. OSPI anticipates partnering with districts and regional Educational Service Districts (our 9 professional development and education support provider organizations) to provide statewide training to a wide array of potential users.

37. **Question:** Who will be managing day-to-day technical assistance for the platform?

Answer: Districts will be responsible for training its system users once the platform is deployed, stable, and in regular use. The successful vendor will be relied upon for

technical assistance with the platform when district staff are unable to problem-solve the issue.

38. **Question:** Is there a determined retention period for access to information after high school?

Answer: According to ESSB5243, students must have indefinite access to their HSBP information.

39. **Question:** Do the in-platform detailed assessment results need to be printable or just viewable?

Answer: The system must be compatible with both mobile and desktop applications, including the capability to download and print a HSBP in one document, without requiring the user to access multiple screens.

General Q&A:

1. **Question:** Our only question on it is, why does this RFP not explicitly call out COTS (commercial off the shelf) software?

Answer: OSPI is open to proposals for COTS software. The bill language funding this project did not specify using COTS software, so the RFP was structured in a way that would allow for acceptance of COTS software or development of a new online platform.

2. **Question:** Can you clarify the due date for this RFP, as both 10/1 and 10/2 were provided in the RFP?

Answer: The correct end date is Monday, October 2. This was corrected via Amendment posted to WEBS and OSPI's website on August 23.

3. **Question:** Is the RFP strictly for consulting services for a custom-built solution, or will OSPI consider utilizing a pre-existing solution?

Answer: OSPI is open to proposals for COTS software.

4. **Question:** What are OSPI's expectations of the consultant? Is the expectation that the consultant would assist in implementing a pre-existing solution?

Answer: Our expectation of the apparently successful vendor is indeed that they would assist in implementing a solution, whether pre-existing or custom. Our legislative mandate has called for OSPI and its HSBP partner to plan for "...technical assistance, technology updates, ongoing maintenance requirements, and adjustments to the technology funding formula,"