

**DETERMINATION AND FINDING
FOR A SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT**

AGENCY: District of Columbia Public Schools, Office of Teaching and Learning
Educational Technology and Library Programs
CAPTION: ELA Collaboration Station and Professional Development
PROPOSED CONTRACTOR: Education Elements
CONTRACT NO. RQ932781

FINDINGS

1. AUTHORIZATION:

D.C. Code 2-354 and 27 DCMR, Section 1304 and 1700

2. MINIMUM NEED:

The District of Columbia Public Schools' (DCPS) Office of Educational Technology & Library Programs is seeking a vendor to provide ongoing support for schools to deepen and refine their blended learning implementation, with a focus on planning for and implementing high-impact activities for the student collaboration station in ELA classrooms. The contractor shall work with teachers and district leaders to create content for teachers to use in their classrooms to support peer to peer collaboration and provide professional development for teachers and coaches around designing and implementing high-quality student collaboration.

3. ESTIMATED COST:

The estimated total cost is \$98,000.00 from Date of Award Thru September 30, 2016

3. FACTS WHICH JUSTIFY A SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT:

a. Background and History

In 2011, DCPS had a record number of failing schools. The failing schools did not happen overnight but progressively deteriorated over the years. At the core of each failing school were students who needed a quality education and support to be successful not only in their academics but in life as well. While DCPS has made impressive gains since then, there is much work to do. A school district can support low performing schools with all the necessary personnel and resources to help enhance the school. However, if a comprehensive strategy isn't aligned to the importance of instructional practice, then the schools will continue to fail.

In order to increase student achievement, DCPS had to provide diverse and strategic supports that will enable schools to help move their students. With that keen understanding, the Office of Teaching and Learning sought a strong partner that could deliver a unique instructional model while supporting initiatives that align with the District's goals.

One of the initiatives that DCPS selected to support low performing elementary and middle schools is the **blended learning model**. The Blended Learning Instructional Framework can be defined as a formal education program in which a student learns in part through online delivery of content and instruction, and in part through classroom-based instruction.

Essentially, blended learning enables teachers to make adjustments to the way they use time, deliver content, and instruct students such that students' individual needs are met and learning is accelerated. Blended learning classroom models give teachers the ability to leverage technology to create a learning environment where students have daily opportunities for individualized learning and teachers have the time, resources, and data they need to differentiate instruction. The blended learning instructional model components accelerate student achievement because students are spending more time on task with instructional content that directly meets their instructional needs. Schools that implement blended learning increase the amount of time on task and appropriately differentiate instruction for students at varying ability levels. The Blended Learning model provides tools and structures for teachers to more effectively increase instructional time and meet students' needs.

b. The Proposed Vendor's Unique Qualifications:

Education Elements is uniquely qualified to perform services for DCPS due to its proven track record, design-thinking based approach to helping schools (including professional development), their data/software dashboard, and due to their current presence within DCPS schools.

(Proven Track Record)

Education Elements is a nationally recognized leader in Blended and Personalized Learning and has helped more schools design and implement blended learning than any other organization in the country. KIPP LA, where Education Elements helped create and design a robust blended learning model, was one of its earliest successes. Education Elements worked with two of the 16 Race to the Top District winners nationally. With Education Elements' support, thirteen organizations won Next Generation Learning Challenge grants. Education Elements launched blended learning models in 30 plus districting representing over 120 schools last year, including large district implementations such as Horry County in South Carolina Newark Public Schools in NJ, and Middletown, NY. Beyond this relevant experience, these schools and districts have had proven results. Districts using EE have seen 135% growth in reading and 119% growth in math.

Education Elements worked with two DCPS schools for school year 2013-2014; Randle-Highlands and Ketchum Elementary Schools. Garfield ES was added in 2014-15. By selecting Education Elements as the vendor for this initiative, DCPS will be able to build on the current successes, lessons learned, and the capacity of staff.

(Approach to Assisting Schools)

Education Elements' focus is to help transform schools by creating student-centered, personalized, and engaging learning environments for all students by **integrating technology into the classroom**. Education Elements assists teachers and principals by providing online and face-to-face training to develop **instructional strategies** that enable them to enhance their instructional practice. Based on its experiences with hundreds of other schools, and with a professional development staff of mostly former teachers and principals, Education Elements shares best practices, rubrics and other resources in order to develop each school's capacity to succeed as it introduces these new teaching and learning environments.

This particular vendor's model for supporting schools is grounded in the areas of professional development, building capacity, and use of cohorts; the vendor believes these main tenants are among the keys to blended learning success across a district. In the area of training, they

argue that district should invest in design process that provides comprehensive understanding of blended learning that builds on the district and classroom context. Additionally, foundational workshops allow for school leaderships, teachers, and district leaders the time to experience Blended Learning; this helps create unified and shared buy in.

In addition, building capacity is key to ensure long-term sustainability. Often times, the District solicits vendors or programs that can't be supported for years to come. We either have no funding to support outlying years, or the personnel that is charged to implement a program, model, or software, lacks the capacity to do so. Education Elements helps create sustainability by performing readiness assessments to determine what school based leaders see as strengths or areas of concern as it relates to implementation and sustainability of the blended learning model. By determining their capacity, Education Elements can better help map areas of support, professional development, and ongoing coaching that will lead to sustainability.

Finally, Education Elements believes that working with cohorts of schools helps create a shared, yet dynamic vision and mission to help students achieve in the classroom. The cohort design allows for schools to share common issues, successes, design techniques; further districts can better leverage common resources such as human capital and content software.

CERTIFICATION BY THE DCPS PROGRAM DIRECTOR:

I hereby certify that the above findings are correct and the anticipated cost to DCPS is fair and reasonable.

Date

Office of Teaching and Learning

CERTIFICATION AND DETERMINATION

Based on the above certified findings in accordance cited authority, I hereby determine that it is not feasible or practical to invoke the competitive bidding process under Section 402 or 403 of the District of Columbia Procurement Practices Reform Act of 2010 (D.C. Law 18-371; DC Code 2-354 and 27 DCMR 1304 and 1700.

Date

Chief Procurement Officer