

RFP Questions and Clarifications Memorandum

To: Vendors Responding to RFP Number 3692 for the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB)

From: Craig P. Orgeron, Ph.D.

Date: September 21, 2012

Subject: Responses to Questions Submitted and Clarifications to Specifications

Contact Name: Donna Hamilton

Contact Phone Number: 601-432-8114

Contact E-mail Address: Donna.Hamilton@its.ms.gov

The following questions were submitted to ITS and are being presented as they were submitted, except to remove references to a specific vendor and extraneous text before and/or after questions. This information should assist you in formulating your response.

Question 1: Section VII, Technical Specifications, 3. General Overview and Background, 3.2 Structure of MCCB states in part: "Total enrollment throughout the state is around 80,000 students each semester with an FTE around 70,000. The MSVCC is the consortium made up of these fifteen colleges to provide online courses for the students enrolled in these institutions. Total enrollment for online courses is around 30,000 students each semester with an FTE around 12,000."

Which FTE should we use for pricing purposes?

Response: **Across the 15 colleges, all courses (traditional, hybrid and online) have shells within the LMS that faculty use to provide instructional and additional learning resources for students. The extent of usage varies from placing a syllabus in a shell to a full online course. The breadth and depth is challenging in terms of being able to provide a final FTE count. 30,000 students use the platform for fully online courses, while usage for all 70,000 will vary depending on instructor and student.**

Question 2: Section VII, Technical Specifications, 8. Functional Requirements 8.1 states: "MANDATORY: The Vendor must provide access to a sandbox environment for use by evaluation team members during the evaluation period to demonstrate the proposed solution. MCCB will provide a course for the Vendors to use for demonstration."

To set up a sandbox environment, we need to create an administrator's account using a name and a valid email address. Whose name and associated email address should we use?

Response: **Vendors may use Christian Pruett for the name and lmsevaladmin@mccb.edu as a valid email address that has been established for the sandbox testing.**

Question 3: Are all requirements listed surrounding Multi-tenancy mandatory?

Response: **Yes, each of the requirements listed as part of 10.2 Architecture are mandatory, including 10.2.1 through 10.2.11. Each college has autonomy in instruction, branding, college-level system administration, and messaging.**

Question 4: Are separate URLs for each college a mandatory requirement to achieve the Multi-tenancy goals, or could a provider propose alternative methods to achieve those goals?

Response: **Each institution requires a uniquely branded, separate portal that allows flexibility in look, design, messaging and administration. If there are alternative ways to accomplish this, those may be considered.**

Question 5: What are the most widely used ebook platforms?

Response: **Varies depending on partnerships with individual colleges.**

Question 6: Will stand alone community groups stretch across all campuses, be limited to individual colleges or a combination of both?

Response: **The stand alone community groups will be a combination of both individual colleges and all campuses.**

Question 7: How are outcomes and objective management tracked? Is there an external software used as a part of the process or is desired to be internal to the LMS? If the software is external, does it accept certain types of file imports?

Response: **Each college uses their own data collection methods in terms of ensuring adherence with accreditation and internal standards. External software programs vary in terms of functionality and import capability. An internal system within the LMS is desired.**

Question 8: Section VII, Item 8.2.3:
Must the proposed solution also provide assessment and grade book linkages from Blogs, Journals and Wikis?

Response: Yes.

Question 9: Section VII, Item 8.2.6:
Must the proposed solution allow instructors to manually add columns to the grade book?

Response: Yes.

Question 10: Section VII, Item 8.3.2:

- Are you looking for specific options available for creating and delivering tests to students?
- Must the proposed solution provide the ability to deliver 1 question at a time?
- Must the proposed solution allow for students to upload files when responding to quiz questions?

Response:

- **The State is asking vendors to explain all provided options for test delivery.**
- **This solution is desired.**
- **This solution is desired.**

Question 11: Section VII, Item 8.3.6:
Must the proposed solution provide the ability to release content to individual students (e.g., to accommodate students with a disability)?

Response: Yes.

Question 12: Section VII, Item 8.3.9:

- Must the proposed solution provide questions and question banks that are linked to the application? (e.g., if you edit the question in the question bank, will it update everywhere else it is posted across the application?)
- Must the proposed solution provide the ability to automatically regrade a question after students submit responses? (e.g., all submissions will be automatically regraded after the instructor edits the original question)

Response:

- **The State would prefer the option to have this functionality.**
- **The State would prefer the option to have this functionality.**

Question 13: Section VII, Item 8.5.2:
Must the proposed solution include a data warehouse from which to run reports?

Response: The delivery and storage of data is up to the vendor. The key for the State is the ability for faculty, administrators and other users to be able to run performance, grade, and other reports.

Question 14: Section VII, Item 8.5.4:

Must the proposed solution offer pre-built reports on performance management and learning outcomes?

Response: No, as long as there are sufficient reporting options available to gather data on student progress and system utilization.

Question 15: Section VII, Item 8.5.5:

Must the proposed Learning Analytics solution include a pre-built integration with the learning application as well as the student information system?

Response: Preferable, however, a customized application can be utilized.

Question 16: Section VII, Item 8.6.1:

In addition to a description of capabilities of the mobile applications, would it be helpful to provide references of other mobile clients that you can download and evaluate? Maybe even cite examples from other specific schools in our responses?

Response: Yes.

Question 17: Section VII, Item 8.6.6:

We need clarification if delivering the mobile service is native experience or hybrid app of native and mobile web features

Response: The State is asking the Vendor to explain whether the user is able to display a mobile version of the application via the web or whether the user must download software to access the application.

Question 18: Section VII, Item 8.7:

On accessibility:

- Do you want to know how the vendor engages with the accessibility community for continued improvement?
- Do you want to know what type of instruction and support is provided outside of technical accessibility of the application to better enable the overall experience and help teach best practice for accessibility? (e.g., resources for instructors on how to deliver customized instruction based on a student's specific needs due to a disability)
- Do you want to know about the accessibility of the help materials offered to end users?

- Do you want to know about the types of help materials offered to end users on how to effectively use assistive technology with the application (e.g., JAWS)?
- Do you want to know about how the vendor supports the accessibility of the extensions to the product (3rd party applications)?

Response: **In the RFP, the Vendor is asked to explain how their product is in compliance. As a general rule, we ask that you be as specific as possible given the critical importance of serving all students.**

Question 19: Section VII, Item 10.2.4:

On Multi-Domain Architecture:

- Reporting: Must the vendor provide the ability to export Reporting data into multiple formats? (html, PDF, Excel)
- Branding and Themes: Must the vendor provide the ability to display different information to different people (based on their role) as they enter the application?

Response: **See the response to Question 3 above.**

- Yes.
- Yes.

Question 20: Section VII, Item 10.2.6:

Do you want the vendor to specify and describe their data management capabilities?

Response: **Yes. See the response to Question 3 above.**

Question 21: What are the ERP systems for each college (we need SIS, FA, Finance, HR and Advancement) (if they have one)?

Response: **The State will work with the selected Vendor during Requirements Analysis and System Design to identify ancillary systems at each college. The type of ERP used varies across the colleges. Examples include, but are not limited to, Banner, PeopleSoft, Jenzabar, Access, Datatel, and 5150 (local system).**

Question 22: What database are they utilizing? PS and Banner only utilize Oracle but Datatel utilizes Unidata, Oracle or SQL Server.

Response: **The State will work with the selected Vendor during Requirements Analysis and System Design to identify ancillary systems at each college. The databases used at each college will depend on the ERP.**

Question 23: What tools are they using in terms of Reporting/Data Warehousing/BI/Analytics for Learn and for the entire institution?

Response: The State will work with the selected Vendor during Requirements Analysis and System Design to identify ancillary systems at each college. The tools used are specific to each college.

Question 24: If they are a Datatel client, do they have the ODS? Where are they in terms of getting the information they need?

Response: The answer to this question will vary depending on the institution.

Question 25: If they are Banner, do they have the ODS and/or the EDW? Where are they in terms of getting the information they need?

Response: The answer to this question will vary depending on the institution.

Question 26: If they are Peoplesoft, do they have EPM, OBIEE, Hyperion? Where are they in terms of getting the information they need?

Response: The answer to this question will vary depending on the institution.

Question 27: If they are using a Jenzabar ERP, what product is it and what is their database? For example, Jenzabar now also owns POISE.

Response: The answer to this question will vary depending on the institution.

Question 28: If they are using Access (I am not familiar with it unless it is Microsoft Access) or a homegrown ERP, what is their database.

Response: The answer to this question will vary depending on the institution.

Question 29: Section II, item 7 of the RFP states: “ITS reserves the right to waive any defect or irregularity in any proposal procedure”.

<Vendor> respectfully and formally requests either:

1. ITS exercise their right under Section II, item 7 of the RFP to waive the mandatory requirement of any vendors attendance of the Mandatory Vendor Web Conference, in order to ensure that MCCB can evaluate the best eLearning technology and value options available in the market; or
2. ITS exercise their right to clarify the requirements of the RFP and provide an option for the Mandatory Vendor Conference, via a published and public manner, to allow inclusion of other Vendors which may be in the best interest of MCCB .

Response: The requirement for the Mandatory Vendor Conference cannot be waived or clarified. Vendor’s reference to Section II, Item 7 does not apply to the requirement for attendance at the Mandatory Vendor’s Web Conference.

Section II, Item 7 typically deals with irregularities in the proposal submission process (e.g., only submitting 8 proposals when 10 are required).

Question 30: Will all colleges in MCCB be mandated to migrate the selected LMS? Or is the use of the selected LMS within MCCB optional for individual institutions?

Response: **The end goal of this project is to find the right platform to meet the tactical and strategic objectives of Mississippi's Community and Junior Colleges.**

Question 31: Will all participating colleges be converting/migrating to the selected LMS simultaneously for online courses? Or will the migration/conversion happen in phases? Please provide information on the timeline for each college moving its online courses to the selected LMS?

Response: **The project will call for a timeline to be developed over a three to five month period so that all course, user and other data migration can be completed prior to initial launch.**

Question 32: What is the desired/anticipated "go live" date for the overall system and for each individual college in implementation of the selected LMS?

Response: **Summer semester, 2013.**

Question 33: Can MCCB please provide the following details for each of the 15 colleges:

- Incumbent LMS Vendor
- LMS product & version number
- Student Information System (SIS)
 - Current integration method with LMS for SIS: Batch or Real-time
- Desired authentication integration: SSO with Portal, CAS, LDAP/AD, etc.
- # of FTE Students
- Head count #
- # of Faculty
- # of Staff
- # of active courses in LMS

Response: **We currently utilize Blackboard 9.1 and Desire2Learn 9. SIS information will vary depending on the college as each college has their own administrative software solution. A batch process is being used to input data into the LMS from each institution's SIS, as well as a statewide enrollment application. FTE and headcount information is listed above. We currently have approximately 1,500 online instructors, with courses spread across the 15 colleges.**

Question 34: Please describe how LMS help desk support for each of the 15 colleges is currently handled? Is there centralized support provided through MCCB or does each college handle its own Tier 1 support?

Response: The MSVCC currently utilizes Presidium for Tier I support. Tier II and III support is provided by each LMS vendor.

Question 35: Per section 10.2.3, page 51, MCCB states the requirement for Vendor ability to integrate with 15 separate Student Information Systems to automate registration and course shell creation. Subsequently, MCCB states in section 10.15, page 54, it requires student accounts to be provisioned once across the entire system. Can MCCB please clarify how it envisions the student account provisioning to work for students enrolled in separate institutions, with separate accounts across multiple SISs?

Response: Student information is created by each SIS. Given that MCCB uses a host-provider model, the host college sends user information to the LMS. The statewide enrollment tool links online course enrollments to the unique host ID number for each student.

Question 36: Per section 9.4 (page 50), MCCB asks whether the proposed solution provides interoperability with other LMS solutions to offer additional functionality. Could MCCB please further clarify the intent of this request?

Response: The intent of this requirement is to provide the ability to import course or other content developed in one LMS into another LMS.

Question 37: Notification of the Mandatory Vendors Web Conference was issued on September 5th, requiring confirmation by 3:00pm September 6th. However the RFP was not posted until September 12th. Could ITS/MCCB please clarify:

1. Why the Mandatory Vendors Web Conference was scheduled prior to the posting of the RFP?
2. Why was only 1 day provided for confirmation of participation in the Mandatory Vendors Web Conference?
3. Where within the final posted RFP or subsequent addendum(s) are the material elements discussed during the Mandatory Vendors Web Conference presented?

Response: The statement above regarding Notification of the Mandatory Vendor Web Conference is incorrect. A chronology of events to-date for this RFP is outlined as follows. The request to issue RFP No. 3692-39877 was presented and approved during the ITS Board Meeting on Thursday, July 19, 2012. Agendas and minutes from ITS Board Meetings are posted on the ITS website at <http://www.its.ms.gov/About/Pages/Board-Meetings.aspx>. The July Board Meeting Agenda was posted on July 13, 2012. Advertisements for RFP No. 3692 were posted in the Clarion-Ledger on two consecutive weeks; Tuesday, August 28, 2012, and Tuesday, September 4, 2012, and contained notification of the Mandatory Vendor Web Conference. A copy of the ad is provided below:

*“Proposals in response to **RFP 3692** are due on Tuesday, September 28, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. for the acquisition of a hosted Learning Management System for the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB). A mandatory vendor web conference will be conducted Friday, September 7, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. Central Time. Vendor must contact the state contact listed on the RFP cover sheet no later than 3:00 p.m. Central Time, September 6, 2012, to receive instructions for entering the conference.”*

The advertisement was also posted on the ITS website beginning August 28, 2012. In addition, the State sent a courtesy notification to known Vendors on September 5, 2012, as a reminder of the Mandatory Vendor Web Conference and to inform them that a Memorandum regarding RFP No. 3692 was available on the ITS website at <http://www.its.ms.gov/procurement/pages/3692.aspx>. The memorandum included instructions regarding the Mandatory Vendor Web Conference and a general overview of RFP No. 3692.

On September 10, 2012, ITS posted conference attendees, in a document labeled Mandatory Vendor Conference Attendees.

1. The Mandatory Vendor Web Conference was conducted as early as possible to give Vendors information as they began preparing their responses. The information covered during the conference was both project and procurement procedural in nature, and did not require a thorough review of the RFP as a prerequisite.
2. Vendors were able to register for participation in the Mandatory Vendor Conference beginning August 28, 2012, until 3:00 p.m. CST the day before the conference (September 6, 2012). The deadline for confirmation is to allow Vendors the most time possible to register and give the State enough time to prepare for the conference.
3. A copy of the Microsoft Power Point presentation from the Mandatory Vendor Web Conference is included as an Attachment to this document.

RFP responses are due September 28, 2012, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time).

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Donna Hamilton at 601-432-8114 or via email at Donna.Hamilton@its.ms.gov.

Attachment: RFP 3692 LMS Vendor Conference
cc: ITS Project File Number 39877

Mississippi Community College Board

Request for Proposal No. 3692
Learning Management System

RFP 3692

The Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB) is seeking a web-based, Commercial-Off-the-Shelf (COTS) Learning Management System for the Mississippi Virtual Community College (MSVCC) consortium.

Attendance

- Roll Call
- Please email your business card to Donna Hamilton
(Donna.Hamilton@its.ms.gov)
- Attendees will be posted on the ITS website
(www.its.ms.gov)

Agenda

- Project Overview – Christian Pruett, MCCB
- Procurement Guidelines – Donna Hamilton, ITS
- Questions/Answers

RFP Response

- 1 original, 10 copies, electronic copy on CD
- Proposal Bond, Section IV, Item 36
- Performance Bond, Section IV, Item 37
- Proposal Exceptions, Section V – not able to take exceptions after the fact
- Point by point response to Section VII

Upcoming Dates

- Deadline for Vendor's Written Questions – September 14, 2012
- Deadline for Questions Answered and Posted – September 21, 2012
- Proposal Due Date – September 28, 2012

Cost Information Submission

- Section VIII
- Costs must be submitted using the format provided in Tables 1 – 5
- Vendors cannot update costs after the proposal are opened
- Project Budget data is not available

Standard Contract

- Exhibit A, Software License and Application Service Provider Agreement
- Review and take exception if necessary

Additional Information

- Communication with the State, see Section II, Item 13. The State's contact person is Donna Hamilton, donna.hamilton@its.ms.gov
- Answers to Questions posed during the vendor conference are not official unless submitted in writing
- Continue to check the ITS website for updates related to the RFP (www.its.ms.gov)