

**After School Structured Program for Elementary Students, RFP
Responses to Questions**

- 1) Request for Extension to Bid Date from April 3 to April 16

Proposals Due	April 16, 2008	10:00 a.m.	Reception for Date and Time Stamp School Administration Building
---------------	----------------	------------	---

Answer: An extension is granted to April 16, 2008. The Review Committee will provide a recommendation to School Committee prior to May 1. Efforts will be made to have the School Committee award the contract by May 1, 2008 to allow the vendor time to market and confirm space available with families requiring and wanting services.

- 2) Can the proposers have the forms electronically?

Answer: Yes, the forms and a checklist will be emailed to the directors of the existing programs currently under lease and to all other potential proposers who have indicated they may respond to the RFP.

- 3) How do we get questions answered?

Answer: Number 15 on page 8 of the RFP states how questions will be received. As stated in the PreBid Conference, The RFP will be amended to include faxes at 781-863-5829, but not email.

- 4) Will the respondents be able to see the submitted proposals?

Answer: Yes, after the Review Committee has completed their work and the recommendation is presented to School Committee. The due date and time is not a public opening.

- 5) I do not agree with the minimum price being charged, can we negotiate the amount or change it?

Answer: You may not negotiate; this is a minimum price proposal meaning the amount in the RFP is the minimum the school district will accept for each location. If any respondent feels there is inequity, proposers for all locations may coordinate and "rebalance" the price as long as the price for each individual location is not less than the minimum price. The amount in the bid is 3% higher than what the current providers are paying this year, which was negotiated as part of a legal settlement.

- 6) Can we get a cost break down of how the rates were calculated? Where does the rental income go and who has control over the use of the funds?

Answer: The rates are based on the current license agreement, which states the amount paid, by the current vendors, plus 3% Cola each year. The actual cost to provide the space cannot be calculated because the current license agreement and this

After School Structured Program for Elementary Students, RFP Responses to Questions

RFP do not have a complete space utilization inventory (office and storage). The Lease must raise a minimum of \$64,000 per year to cover the costs for the Department of Public Facilities to provide the space in all buildings. The rental income will be deposited into a Town/School Rental of Facilities Account. This account is recently established under the Board of Selectmen to accept rental income and charge expenses related to providing rental space for all municipal buildings. Expenses related to this lease will be charged to this account. The School Committee will have no control over the use of these funds.

- 7) What does the Principal approve as part of this RFP? Do they dictate program and space available?

Answer: The Principal of each building determines the unidentified classroom(s) available at the beginning of each school year and the availability of any ancillary spaces (gymnasium, cafeteria, etc) if necessary through the request for building use procedures if they are not already specified. They do not dictate or approve content or offerings the programs provide as part of the vendor's curriculum.

- 8) The times and rooms are not consistent on the forms and with the intent of the RFP. Are they correct?

Answer: There is an inconsistency. In our effort to divide out the Kindergarten spaces from the After School program spaces for grades 1-5, we inadvertently left in spaces that were not going to be available to the afternoon program. Track changes has been used and we have reissued all of the forms.

- 9) How will the RFP be adjusted for Full Day Kindergarten?

Answer: No change to the RFP will be necessary. It is expected that an after school program for grade k through 5 will be offered at all locations sited in the RFP.

- 10) How will the RFP be adjusted for Half- Day Kindergarten?

Answer: No change to the RFP will be necessary. The RFP provides a mechanism for a vendor to bid on this portion of a program. Space will be made available for a kindergarten after school program somewhere in the district. Locations will not be available until after kindergarten registration is complete. Proposers may state in their response their willingness to accept and operate an after school kindergarten program (12:15 pm – 3:15pm). If there is no interest and/or space available, the vendor will not be held financially responsible for not being able to provide this portion of the program in the RFP.

The district will not take negative action against a proposer if they choose not to offer kindergarten after school program (12:15 pm – 3:15pm) at each location during this time of uncertainty.

After School Structured Program for Elementary Students, RFP Responses to Questions

This is one of the reasons for the district to prefer a single vendor. The expansion and contraction of program space can be unpredictable from one year to the next due to projected declining enrollment and/or program changes.

11) What if a vendor does not provide financial assistance to families?

Answer: It is an expectation that the providers will offer financial assistance and accept any and all vouchers or other alternative funding sources that may be presented by a family to assist in the payment of tuition. Proposers must provide their procedures for accepting/offering financial assistance (see criteria).

The district will share the eligibility status to the after school vendor from the School Department's Financial Assistance Program through the Business Office with written consent from the parent to share this information outside of the school district. This will save the director of the program the time necessary to determine eligibility. Information on how the program operates is located at <http://lps.lexingtonma.org/bus/FY2008%20Program%20Overview.pdf>

12) Page 3, 6.a - Is there a possibility that the program can maintain the mailing address that it has used for the past 27 years, and thus have our mail go to the school?

Answer: No. The School District will not assume responsibility for the mail vendors receive. We realize that mail will continue to be addressed to the program; however, all mail should be sent to a separate address from the School District and the building in which the program is located. The extended day program is a private organization and as such should have a separate address from the school district. We will not take responsibility for lost tuition checks, licensure notices, parent registrations, correspondence, or other legal notices mailed to the vendor at our school address, thus it is a requirement that an offsite address be published and used.

13) Page 3, 6.b. - How does the school anticipate handling the need for space for programs offices and storage needs? How should requests be made in the proposal? Will the precedent of current use of space be honored? Will there be an additional cost for the use of storage and/or office space, and if so, how much?

Answer: Office and Storage space **must be specified on the RFP forms** so that it may be formally incorporated into the three-year lease. The district will be making every effort to maintain the office and storage space for the length of the lease. At this point in time, office and storage space is not specified and therefore not secured as part of the agreement for space. The annual rate at or above the Town's minimum rate each proposer enters onto the price proposal form is what will be paid for all spaces listed, including office and storage space requests added by the vendors. The vendors must be aware that the School Committee can reject a proposal if they deem it financially unresponsive to the districts costs to providing the space in the RFP. In addition, we have added a section on the Price Proposal Form to include the square foot needs for office and storage. If it not completed, no space will be provided.

**After School Structured Program for Elementary Students, RFP
Responses to Questions**

- 14) Page 3, 6.c. Who do we request use of the gymnasium from, and could a request be submitted monthly instead of weekly?

Answer: Gymnasiums space will be requested through the Rental of Facility form and procedure. This procedure is currently being revised and will operate through the Department of Public Facilities. You may always request a schedule of days weekly, monthly, or longer. We hope to work on this procedure to insure a balanced use of the space. The goal is to insure that there is a fair and equitable balance of gym space among School Department, Park and Recreation, and After-School Programs.

- 15) Page 4, 6 g. Are the programs required to run vacation programs, or is it up to the discretion of each program?

Answer: No, programs are not required to operate a vacation program. However, it is highly desirable for one to be offered. The RFP presumes an additional tuition rate would be stated for vacation week programs. There is additional cost associated with operating a program that would go into effect after the proposer and the Town entered into a lease. Not all families are able to take school vacation weeks off and must find other arrangements.

This is one of the reasons for the district to prefer a single vendor. The expansion and contraction of program space is easier for a single vendor to consolidate their program to once or two building locations based on demand and needs of working families during school vacation periods.

- 16) Page 4, 8.c. What is meant by the phrase "educational, social, parental, and community involvement"? Please elaborate and clarify as to what is required to address this requirement.

Answer: Parent Advisory Boards and family social events are two examples of what "educational, social, parental, and community involvement" means.

- 17) Page 4, 8.d. What is the required documentation for a "finance plan"? Who should the program get a "letter of endorsement from any projected funding sources" from?

Answer: A finance plan could be the approved budget showing estimated income and expenses, audited financial statements, or another document providing a reader some sense that the program designed has fiscal stability and viability. A letter of endorsement may come from a state or private entity that provided grant funds or childcare subsidy to the program.

- 18) Page 4, 8.e. Can you provide more detail as to what sort of criteria are to be included in the program quality and effectiveness plan? Is this intended to be a self-evaluation plan?

**After School Structured Program for Elementary Students, RFP
Responses to Questions**

Answer: Yes, the Review Committee would like to know how the vendor's governing board evaluates the program.

- 19) Page 5, 8 I, What is meant by the statement "Should additional space become available, the proposers shall provide the number of enrolled children necessary to allow for opening another location"?

Answer: There are times when waiting lists become necessary. In order to honor the School Committees intent to support working families, space may be available to expand the After-School Program. How many students would it take to expand into another section or space?

- 20) Page 5, 8 o. We were unable to find the certificate and forms in the bid package. Could you please supply them?

Answer: Yes, the forms and a checklist will be emailed to the directors of the existing programs currently under lease and to all other potential proposers who have indicated they may respond to the RFP.

- 21) Page 6, Staff-to-child ratio: 1:13 is the license ratio required by the state. Does the school system intend to mandate a lower ratio? Can the School system align its criteria with license requirements?

Answer: No, we want the programs to align with state requirements. However, the program is allowed to modify teacher: student ratio if it chooses and complies with its license to operate.

- 22) Page 6, Why is staff arrival and departure an evaluation criteria? What is the variable that will be used as the criteria? Please specify.

Answer: Information, the RFP only states the time children are expected. We need to know staff hours to know when use of the building space is required. This is important for the health and safety of the vendor's staff, emergency response, and other building related issues that may arise whereby knowledge of the vendor's staff schedule is essential.

- 23) Page 8, 17: Can you please define what is meant by proposer in this section?

Answer: Proposer is the responder to the Request for Proposals (RFP).

- 24) Page 8. Please clarify what the School Department considers acceptable for training for Social/emotional learning programs.

After School Structured Program for Elementary Students, RFP Responses to Questions

Answer: The School Department does not have a minimum other than that program staff receive social/emotional learning and staff development for the education and enrichment of children in this age group.

- 25) Evaluation criteria – Will past experience (number of years of operation) of successful programs in Lexington Public Schools be given any weight in the evaluation?

Answer: Experience providing school age after-school programs will be given weight. Existence within a school building does not garner more weight than one outside a school building. Years of consistent and long-term program delivery is the highest weighted criteria in the evaluation. Weight to programming that has enjoyed access to clients/customers by virtue of location in a building does not determine quality of program. Years of consistent service to school age children is more of a determining factor.

- 26) Will the district assist with the required building inspections for the vendor to obtain approval and licensure from the state?

Answer: The district will assist by requesting the Department of Public Facilities respond to building related issues (e.g. repairs, painting, and lighting) that may be needed in order for vendors to receive licensure. The School Department will not pay for or request a waiver of any inspection fees associated. Any fees are the responsibility of the vendor.

- 27) Please explain the rationale behind Section 17:

The rationale for a single provider is due to the economics around the unknown preference of families to partake in the offering of an after-school program. A single provider allows the following benefits:

- 1) Expansion and contraction of services regardless of physical location within the district.
 - E.g., Bridge School does not have a site location for after-school program. Where do these students go? What happens if another school does not have space, which provider is selected to take these children?
 - A single provider can more easily respond to decrease in space due to program changes e.g., Full Day Kindergarten.
 - The school district is projecting a declining enrollment in future years. The decrease in enrollment will force the collapsing programs to fewer sites due to lack of demand or redistricting.
 - There may need to be an expansion of program due to demand or additional space available. A single provider is more adaptable to shifting program space and needs than multiple single providers.

After School Structured Program for Elementary Students, RFP
Responses to Questions

- 2) Single point of contact for changes in building infrastructure, space, health code updates, or other notices.
- 3) Consolidation of overhead functions for operating the after-school program reduces the portion of the tuition bill associated with payroll, collection of tuitions and other administrative oversight that is passed onto the parent.
- 4) Allows for maintaining a parent advisory board for each location or merged locations.
- 5) May consolidate easily for vacation week programming.