Henry County Schools

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

School Design Support for Personalized Learning

RFP # 20140708

DATE OF ISSUE: July 8, 2014

RESPONSES DUE: July 18, 2014

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1. Henry County Schools Overview

The Henry County School System, located approximately 30 miles south of Atlanta, serves a predominately suburban community that experienced rapid growth over the past decade. While keeping pace with such growth has been a significant and constant challenge, the school system’s mission, vision and goals have remained focused on continuous improvement in student achievement. Henry County Schools is committed to the belief that all students will learn at high levels. Henry County Schools values its stakeholders - students, employees, and parent and community partners - and believes that student success occurs when all stakeholders consistently support high expectations for student, school, and Henry County Schools performance.

Significantly impacted by the economic throes of the 2000’s, Henry County once enjoyed a major boom as one of Atlanta’s fastest growing “bedroom communities.” New student enrollment necessitated building twenty-five schools over a ten-year period. During the economic and enrollment boom, Henry County Schools’ leadership focused on building these much-needed physical school facilities in order to house the new students. Out of necessity, leadership also focused on recruiting, hiring, and retaining teachers to staff both existing and newly built schools. Maintaining and expanding a school system to provide student seats took practical precedence over other areas of administration: curriculum planning, development, and revision; professional learning and evaluation; innovative programming and stakeholder involvement; and cutting-edge technological advances, though direly needed. Time constraints and financial prudence relegated these areas of instructional need to lesser priority. During the boom period, Henry County Schools maintained a solid level of instruction while meeting the challenge of supplying facilities for the 1200 new students enrolling annually. Recently, growth has stabilized, allowing the district to focus on strategic planning for long-term school improvement based on the district vision for personalized learning.

Since September 2013, Henry County Schools has been working in conjunction with The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation through the Next Generation System Initiative for Personalized Learning. HCS applied for and has been granted two grants for the purpose of developing district- and school-level visions and strategic plans for operationalizing personalized learning. The district-level vision and strategic plan have been developed and the district-level work is underway. Six high-capacity schools are now engaged in the process of redesigning and preparing for launch in August 2015 based on the district vision of personalized learning.
2. District Vision for Personalized Learning

For the past several years, HCS has worked to personalize the learning of its students by creating additional school options for them. The adoption of personalized learning-intensive instructional models is the next step in this multi-year effort to increase the number of educational options available to students. Whereas recent work has focused on giving students access to new schools and programs, HCS’ PL initiative focuses on dramatically increasing the options open to students within its existing school portfolio.

Ultimately, the goal is to better prepare all HCS students for college and career success. The district’s Personalized Learning initiatives will do this by:

- Establishing a learning environment in which students chart their own academic path with flexibility in place, time and pace, based upon mastery of core competencies.
- Adopting a broader definition of “college and career readiness,” inclusive of both academic and behavioral skills that increase student engagement, ensure all students are challenged and supported within a rigorous framework, and require students to take ownership of their learning. To that end, the district will focus on and measure the 21st Century skills of communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking as overarching areas of competencies for all students.
- Inspiring a culture of creators and achievers who synthesize information from many sources while engaging in real-world problem-solving through project-based learning.
- Preparing students to be self-regulated, lifelong learners by giving them more freedom to chart their own academic path as they progress toward post-secondary goals.
- Charging school and district staff to redesign the school experience and the day-to-day practices of a school system to better meet the diverse needs of our students by maximizing the impact of
our teachers. Schools will offer flexibility for students to progress based on mastery, not master
schedules bound by seat time and calendar days.

Realizing this vision will require change on the part of all Henry County stakeholders.

Elements of Personalized Learning

In practice, the adoption of Personalized Learning will require many changes from the way Henry County
currently operates. The following points describe what “personalized learning” will look like in Henry
County once it has been fully implemented by the 2024-25 school year, organized along four dimensions
The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation uses to define personalized learning: Learner Profiles, Personal
Learning Plans, Individual Mastery, and Flexible Environments.

Learner profiles

- The primary purposes of the Learner Profile is to help chart individual students’ personal
  learning pathways, and to measure progress along that path
- Every student throughout the district will have a Learner Profile uniting data related to...
  - Formative and summative assessments (e.g., district, state, ACT, etc.)
  - “Learning path” to the present (e.g., course enrollments and grades)
  - 21st Century skill assessment (e.g., communication, collaboration, creativity, critical
    thinking)
  - Behavior record (e.g., attendance, disciplinary actions)
  - College-going behaviors (e.g., application, completion of FAFSA, etc.)
  - Personal interests and goals (both academic and non-academic)
  - Personal learning style (e.g., preferred learning style(s), disabilities, etc.)

- Everyone involved in a student’s academic life will have access to their Learner Profile, including
  teachers, parents/guardians, school counselors and administrators, and, most importantly, the
  student themselves. In principle, the Learner Profiles will be as transparent as possible, though
  not everyone will have access to all types of data.
- We envision learner profiles as the tool that connects the team of people who support students
  through their educational experience, as well as the guiding tool in decision-making for
  students, parents and educators.

Personal Learning Plans

- As part of their Learner Profile, every student will have a Personal Learning Plan, co-created by
  students, their families, and HCS staff; that includes long-term learning goals, an anticipated
  route to reach those goals, and a record of the paths the student has taken on their learning
  journey thus far.
- Students will have the autonomy to define their learning plan at multiple levels:
Students will have the option of enrolling in their assigned community school, a district-run virtual school (Impact Academy), a centralized career academy (Academy of Advanced Studies), or any combination of the three.

Within their chosen school, students will have the ability to set their own “Learning Path” by choosing their program (e.g., academy), courses, and routes within courses to accomplish specific competencies.

- Learning pathways will have “competency checkpoints” that assess mastery of competencies. Many checkpoints are unique to specific courses, but some – such as those around communication, creativity, collaboration and critical thinking – will be universal, and required of all Henry County Schools students.

Individual Mastery

- Administratively, the “course” will remain the fundamental unit of academic study and credit, though courses will be redefined as collections of competencies. This definition will change over the next five years. Course credit will be awarded once a student has demonstrated mastery of all of the course’s competencies.
- Assessments will correspond to specific competencies and will be performance-based. Competencies and related assessment rubrics will be standardized throughout the district, designed by teacher leaders, with input from central district administration. Evidence of competency will be judged against a common rubric.
- Students will be able to choose from multiple types of assessment for most competencies, though some competencies may allow for only a single assessment type. Collectively, the district’s teacher leaders will determine what assessment forms are acceptable for a given competency. Students should be allowed multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery using varying forms of assessment. Courses will have pacing guidelines, but students may proceed at their own pace, taking assessments when they are prepared to, and advancing only once they have demonstrated mastery.

Flexible Environments

- Over the course of their Henry County career, all students will receive a mix of face-to-face and digitally-enabled instruction. While the proportion of each will vary from student to student, all students will receive a minimum amount of instruction in each mode to ensure facility in both.
- Henry County Schools will create an infrastructure and framework of credit to support anywhere, anytime learning for its students and employees.
- Course pacing will be flexible, and may be completed in less or more than a given school year, but students will be counseled towards timely graduation. Students who are not making sufficient progress toward graduation will receive required intervention and support.
- Henry County Schools will establish a framework wherein student progress is based upon mastery of content, not by time and place.
Our vision of personalized learning maximizes the best instructional practices teachers currently employ and marries them with innovative structures for time on task, curriculum delivery models, with a focus on 21st century skills. These transitions mean we move away from a focus on standardized multiple-choice testing as primary measures of progress and towards authentic performance assessments as measures of competency and mastery, which represents a significant change from current practice in Henry County Schools.
3. District Personalized Learning Implementation Plan Overview

Henry County Schools’ plan to realize its vision for personalized learning consists of three interrelated initiatives:

1. **Launch** individual schools that are ready, willing, and able to implement PL in a school-led two-year instructional model design and implementation process, starting with secondary schools

2. **Develop** district-level supports that enable or ease school-level PL implementation at schools that have not yet adopted PL-intensive instructional models

3. **Build** community awareness, demand and readiness for PL among the broader HCS community

This transformation is to provide appropriate guardrails for that autonomy, targeted resources that are most cost efficient at scale, and access to support and technical guidance to design and implement a meaningful plan to fundamentally change the mindset around the purpose and core actions of school. In short, school design will not be prescribed by the district; rather schools will be guided and supported by the district in their redesign process.

The overall PL implementation process is expected to last 10 years, with successive waves of 4-6 schools starting their two-year design and implementation process each year, beginning with the 2014-15 school year. Secondary schools will lead the way, building on the district’s early PL efforts; elementary schools will implement components of PL but will fully implement once the district has better defined and identified an elementary-level digital learning platform. By the start of the 2024-25 school year, every...
HCS school will be using an instructional model that exemplifies the district’s Personalized Learning vision. Engaging and leveraging community stakeholders and resources is an integral part of all phases of the HCS PL implementation plan. HCS has already laid groundwork with local businesses, post-secondary education institutions, state-level entities, and the community at large to open the dialog about PL and enable the operationalization of PL in HCS.

To jump-start the process, HCS has asked for and been granted funding from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to partially support its initial cohort of design schools. As the number of schools that have implemented PL grows, the expense and effort required by the design process is expected to fall, enabling the district to cover the cost through a combination of internal resource reallocation and additional financial support from the Henry County community.

The core of Henry County Schools’ Personalized Learning transformation process is the two-year individual school design processes each of its 51 school communities will undertake within the coming decade, which aims to overcome the pull of centuries-old educational habits by including purposeful professional learning, granting meaningful autonomy to make design decisions, and producing distinct school-wide visions for what success looks like.

Those school design processes are led by School Design Teams (SDTs) consisting of 6-12 administrators, teachers, students and other community members. SDTs will engage whole school communities to develop a school-level vision for personalized learning that is uniquely tailored to the needs of their students and the characteristics of their community. Throughout the process, they will periodically gather with other SDTs in the district to learn, challenge each other’s thinking, and share best practices as a professional learning community.

Though each cohort’s School Design Teams will benefit from collaboratively engaging in the productive struggle, excitement, and ultimate success of the design process together, the expectation is that their focus on developing a model that works for their particular staff, community, and students will create a diverse set of PL-intensive school models within the district.

A high-level overview of school design process activities can be found below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Help school design teams launch new PL-intensive models (1/2)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Objectives</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Implement PL-intensive models at additional schools</td>
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<td>- Involve entire school communities in the PL design process</td>
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<td>- Create models other HCS school communities can learn from and emulate</td>
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<td>- Evaluate new school models to determine what works best for HCS students</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Refine new PL models</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Inform future design teams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Activities** |
| - HCS leaders run annual competitive selection processes to determine which schools will participate in each cohort |
| - School communities form SDTs to prepare applications and, if selected, drive their school’s PL design effort |
| - HCS supports schools through the design process by… |
| - Providing a district-level PL implementation manager |
| - Bringing SDTs together to learn from each other |
| - Offering learning resources, such as PL-focused PD |
| - Evaluating PL programs and promoting what works |
| - Participating schools… |
| - Develop community-wide vision for future PL model |
| - Create PL implementation plans that describe: overall vision, goals, tech requirements, staffing, training, budget, timeline, community engagement strategy, etc. |
| - Launch new PL-intensive models |
| - Open their doors to and share their materials with other HCS educators and schools |
The full strategic plan and additional information related to the district vision for personalized learning can be found at: www.henry.k12.ga.us/personalizedlearning

Based on this strategic plan, its focus areas, and strategic goals, the district has developed a specific vision related to school design support as identified below.

**Specific Vision Related to this Request for Proposals:**

Henry County Schools has already selected six high-capacity schools to engage in the redesign process.

- Hampton High School
- Hampton Middle School
- Luella High School
- Luella Middle School
- Locust Grove Middle School
- Henry County Middle School

As part of the initial cohort of schools, each school design team has agreed to undertake the challenge of writing and presenting thorough plans for launch to both the district and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in order to receive additional funding for launch in August 2015. The selected schools are currently in the process of visioning, researching models and beginning to formulate plans for redesign. While the district has provided supports to the schools as they have begun planning, the district believes the schools will benefit from additional support from experts who are experienced in helping schools plan strategically. Technical assistance to the schools will include: refining existing school visions, model research, needs assessment, change management, professional development, and stakeholder engagement planning, and ultimately, development of a strategic plan to launch. Most importantly, technical assistance will facilitate conversations within school design teams to help schools realize the school-level implementation of the district vision for PL. School models may have similar particular elements, but the schools may develop into different models of personalized learning, based on unique school community and student needs.

Each school going through the design process will submit a ‘school readiness proposal’, including a narrative of no more than 15 pages outlining the school plan; a narrated PowerPoint presentation (of no more than 10 slides and no more than 30 minutes) describing the school’s academic model in detail and provides evidence of community support; and a financial model and accompanying budget narrative using the BMGF provided template.
5. Technical Assistance Requirements:

- Be on site for a minimum of 34 days between August 1 and November 1, 2014 (32 at the schools and 2 at the district level for planning purposes)
- Be available to schools and district via phone and email for consultation as needed for the duration of the project
- Facilitate visioning workshops with school design teams as needed, related to all five district tenets of personalized learning
- Facilitate planning sessions with each school related to model design based on the five district tenets of personalized learning
- Assist schools in writing a strategic plan that meets school readiness criteria set forth by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as well as district criteria for readiness.
- Assist the district in the development of a design process for future cohorts of schools
- Deliverables include:
  - Six school implementation plans (one for each of the six design schools). The initial draft of plan is due October 27, 2014, and final plan is due by November 12, 2014.
  - Co-developed district level plan for supporting future cohorts of schools through the design process, to be completed by November 14, 2014
  - Weekly progress updates on each school provided to the district project manager electronically in a format mutually agreed upon by TA provider and project manager.
  - A generalizable template for HENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS school redesign process to be utilized by future PL cohorts

Period of Engagement:

- Work with the district will begin as soon as August 1, 2014
- Deliverables must be completed by dates indicated above.
6. Request for Proposals Procedures

The Point of Contact for Henry County Schools will be Karen Perry (karen.perry@henry.k12.ga.us). Please refer questions via email to Ms. Perry regarding this RFP. DO NOT contact schools directly.

- **Timelines**
  - RFP issued on July 8, 2014
  - Responses due by 5:00 p.m. on July 18, 2014

- **Number of copies and format:**
  - One electronic copy submitted to Karen Perry at Karen.perry@henry.k12.ga.us
  - Specifications:
    - 8 ½” x 11”
    - Not to exceed 50 consecutively numbered pages, including support materials and tables. Some information may be submitted as addendum if needed.

- A selection committee, including the Assistant Superintendent of Learning and Leadership, the district Project Manager for Personalized Learning and other members of the System Design Team for Personalized Learning will review all proposals to determine which are in the best interests of HCS and score and rank them accordingly. From the evaluation scores, the selected vendor will be identified and all who submit proposals will be notified.
7. Response Format

The vendor’s RFP Response must be organized in the following manner, with all pages numbered consecutively:

Cover Letter

- Vendor must provide complete contact information
- Letter must be signed by person authorized to represent the Vendor

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Section 1: Executive Summary

The executive summary should discuss, at a very high level, the vendor’s understanding of HENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS’s vision as stated above. The vendor will give a brief overview as to why the vendor’s services are the best solution to further HENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS’ goals. HENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS expects the vendor’s narrative and other materials in the ensuing sections of the vendor’s response to go into the appropriate detail.

Section 2: Vendor Information

This section should include the following at a minimum:

- Vendor History (brief)
- Proposed Staff and their relevant experience
- References - Vendors shall list at least three (3) K-12 district references.
  - Reference information should include:
    - Contact name and contact information
    - District size
    - Information on contract start/end dates as well as a scope of services.
- At least one reference should be similar in size to HENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS.

Vendors should expect HENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS to ask extensive questions from these references. HENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS reserves the right to make on-site visits to these references upon invitation from that district.

Section 3: Professional Services Description

The vendor may include in this section a description of the services to be provided.

Section 4: Pricing

Understanding that Henry County Schools is not requesting a proposal for purchase and is requesting information to inform potential purchase decisions, the vendor’s response should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Estimated Pricing
- Pricing Assumptions

Section 5: Other Vendor Materials

Vendors should use this section to provide HENRY COUNTY SCHOOLS any other relevant information concerning the vendor’s offerings, awards or other recognitions, or other relevant information.