

## Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring Request for Proposals (RFP)—Information for Districts

In 2019, the department will post a Request for Proposals (RFP) to initiate a new universal screening and progress monitoring process. Decision making regarding intervention implementation is high-stakes because these decisions ultimately impact districts' Child Find obligations. For this reason, ensuring that districts are aware of the strongest tools for universal screening and progress monitoring is a priority for the department. Entering into a contract with approved vendors at the state level will eliminate the need for districts to complete their own RFPs and contract negotiations.

### Why is the department completing a Request for Proposals for universal screening and progress monitoring tools?

- Department contracts with vendors expire in July 2019, which would require districts to individually contract with vendors.
- District feedback about universal screening and progress monitoring tools indicated the need for a new RFP that would provide additional options.
- Measures from vendors on the department-approved list have changed since the initial RFP in 2014.
- Since 2014, vendors that were not on the approved list may have refined and improved their measures, allowing them to meet technical requirements of the RFP.
- New vendors may exist that wish to submit proposals for review.

### What is the projected timeline of the RFP and what does it entail?

The department anticipates that the RFP process will be completed by May 2019. Development of the RFP has included extensive research completed by nationally recognized organizations and leaders in the field of RTI<sup>2</sup> implementation, as well as feedback from key department and district stakeholders. The evaluation of proposals will be completed by a cross-divisional department team with expertise in assessment, Tennessee's academic standards, strong technical qualities of universal screening and progress monitoring tools, and the use of these assessments in evaluation for specific learning disabilities.

Evaluation of proposals will identify a list of vendors that meet technical requirements for universal screening and/or progress monitoring tools. The department will negotiate contracts with the approved vendors that will outline cost of the products and professional development. Districts will be notified and provided guidance around the updated department-approved list of vendors for universal screening and progress monitoring tools in May 2019.

### How will the RFP impact districts?

- **Selection of Universal Screening Tools:** The list of vendors meeting state criteria may be different than in 2014. Though districts are in no way required to select a vendor or product from the list, they may need to determine whether they wish to continue contracting with

previous vendors or select a new vendor from the approved list.

- **Supplemental IDEA Progress Monitoring Funds:** Supplemental funding will continue to be available to school districts in order to offset the costs of progress monitoring students with disabilities. However, grant applications for this funding will not be available in ePlan until completion of the RFP process. Application availability will be communicated through the *Commissioner's Update for Directors* and the *Special Education Director's Update*.
- **Budgeting of Resources:** Choosing a new universal screening and/or progress monitoring vendor will necessitate professional development for relevant staff prior to the first universal screening benchmark period. Districts should plan to allocate time and financial resources for professional development prior to the first benchmarking window.

With additional questions about the universal screener and progress monitoring RFP, please reach out to [Karen.Jensen@tn.gov](mailto:Karen.Jensen@tn.gov).