ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Request for Proposal

RFP ALSDE 2024-08

ALABAMA LEARNING EXCHANGE WEBSITE REDESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

Alabama State Department of Education

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Note: FAXED OR E-MAILED PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Inquiries and response submissions related to this RFP are to be addressed to:

Cindy Gillespie

Office of Operations

Alabama State Department of Education

50 N. Ripley Street, Room P305

Gordon Persons Building

Montgomery, AL 36104

Email: cgillespie@alsde.edu

Deadline:

Proposals must be received no later than 4:00 **pm on May 13, 2024.**
It is required that each vendor clearly mark the envelope RFP ALSDE 2024-08 in the lower left corner of the envelope (Response packages that are not marked will be rejected).

The proposal package must contain the following:

1. Original proposal plus five copies with original signatures (The proposal must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the vendor to the information provided). One (1) electronic copy on a USB flash drive in MS Word format.

2. Must be currently registered with The Alabama Department of Finance, Division of Procurement as a State Vendor and provide vendor number. http://www.purchasing.alabama.gov

3. The vendor must complete the affidavit for business entity/employer/vendor. Verification of enrollment in E-verify should be presented on the form found in Appendix A.

Non-Public RFP Proposal Opening
May 14, 2024
9:00 am
Gordon Persons Building, Zeke Kimbrough
50 North Ripley Street
Montgomery, AL 36104

Request for Proposal (RFP)
RFP ALSDE 2024-08
Alabama State Department of Education,
Educational Technology

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Section 1.00 Administrative Overview

1.1   **Purpose and Background**

Purpose:
The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) invites qualified and experienced vendors to submit a proposal for developing services to update the Alabama Learning Exchange (ALEX) Learning Object Repository (LOR).

In using this method of solicitation, we are requesting your best effort in seeking the best value for the requirements as indicated in this RFP.

The purpose of this repository is to enable educators to curate, create, and vet high-quality instructional materials aligned with Alabama content standards, utilizing the Competencies and Academic Standards Exchange® (CASE®) framework. The Alabama content standards are the foundation of the repository and are fundamental to the proper organization and overall function of the site. The content standards serve as the link between resources and ensure consistency and interoperability among the diverse resource collections. Because the content standards are the cornerstone of the repository, content standard data must be accurate, easily accessible, and current on the site. By implementing the CASE® framework, it is possible to electronically exchange content standards in an open, machine-readable format so various applications and platforms can access the data in real time. Current Alabama Course of Study Content Standards are published in the CASE® digital format on the alabamastandards.org platform. Therefore, the ALEX LOR must be developed as a CASE® consumer to easily retrieve the content standard data, and proposals submitted should clearly indicate the ability to deliver an intuitive, engaging user experience that seamlessly integrates with the CASE® framework.

The objective of this Request for Proposal is to locate a qualified and experienced developer to assess the current state of the ALEX LOR, create a comprehensive project plan, and execute necessary updates, developments, and deployment within an accelerated timeframe. While price remains a significant consideration, additional criteria will also play a crucial role in our award decision. These criteria are outlined in the proposal evaluation, design specifications, and other contract requirements detailed in this RFP.

Background:
ALEX is a foundational tool for educators in our state, and we aim to enhance its user experience, accessibility, and interoperability. Our goals, objectives, and strategies are focused on improving the overall appearance and functionality of the LOR to fully support the Alabama Department of Education's Alabama Achieves strategic plan. In addition, an intuitive platform will enhance opportunities to share resources with a variety of stakeholders for the improvement of education practices for all stakeholders.

Vision: Build a robust infrastructure for learning by curating and sharing digital learning content accessible to all users.

Goal: Design a Learning Object Repository (LOR) of high-quality instructional materials aligned to the Alabama Course of Study standards to support engaging and empowering learning experiences for every child, every chance, every day.

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Objective: Redesign the existing ALEX repository to produce collections of targeted educational resources correlated to the Alabama content standards for Alabama educators.

Strategy 1: Update content, refresh layouts, and improve navigation for better conversions and site performance.

- Migrate existing data and content.
- Utilize APIs to retrieve CASE-formatted academic standards from alabamastandards.org CASE publishing tool to tag resources to Alabama content standards.
  - Content must be aligned to standards using the CASE-based identifiers.

Strategy 2: Create a resource builder for teachers to curate and develop high-quality, standards-based learning activities, lessons, and unit plans.
- Create a collaborative environment for content authoring, approval workflows, and publishing.

Strategy 3: Apply 1EdTech standards to integrate digital curriculum resources from the ALEX repository with other ALSDE systems, enhancing the effectiveness of the digital learning environment.
- Build an open, trusted, and innovative digital learning ecosystem correlated to the Alabama Course of Study Standards.

- Create a "one-stop" shop for ALSDE instructional resources.
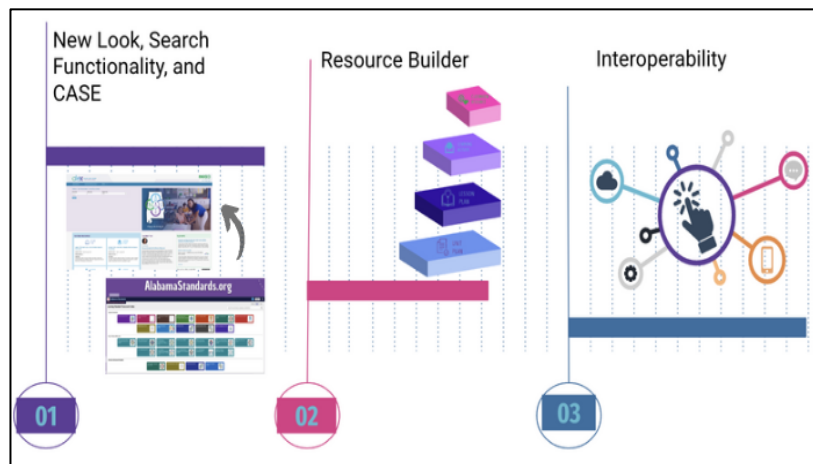
The Alabama Learning Exchange's (ALEX) mission to "provide educators with high-quality instructional materials and content knowledge addressing the needs of all learners in the application of academic standards" establishes the foundation for the program. ALEX is dedicated to fostering a thriving educational ecosystem that facilitates the discovery, creation, and exchange of high-quality instructional materials, innovative teaching practices, and transformative ideas. By providing a comprehensive and accessible repository of standards-based open educational materials, professional development opportunities, and intuitive technology, we aim to support educators in enhancing student engagement, promoting lifelong learning, and achieving academic excellence.

Current Website:
Version 2 - https://alex.alsde.edu
Launch: Version 1 - 2000, Version 2 - 2022
Platform: Version 1 - PHP Version 5.4.16, MySQL Version 5.5.60-MariaDB

- Custom-built database that has evolved over 20+ years of service

Version 2 - Drupal 9, MySQL-Maria DB

- Database built from a Drupal baseline and structured to work with Drupal 9+.
- **CODE REPOSITORY -** The Code repository stored configuration changes and code changes that encompassed YAML synchronization files, CSS modifications, updates to page layouts via TWIG files, as well as base level .htaccess permissions, among others.

Integrations: No
Host: Alabama State Department of Education

The ALEX application was originally developed and launched in the early 2000s. Many of the components on which ALEX was developed were quickly reaching end-of-life including the database version, the PHP source code version, and many of its libraries. In September 2021, the ALEX application was transitioned to a Drupal CMS in an attempt to expand its features, add additional data sources, and implement new functionalities. Although all current LOR data is stored in the Drupal CMS, it was determined that this platform was not conducive to the desired user experience for the ALEX LOR.

Existing functionalities:

- ALEX provides a centralized repository of open educational resources (OER), including classroom resources, learning activities, lessons, and unit plans, all aligned to the Alabama content standards.
- Educators can search for openly licensed educational resources based on grade level, subject area, content standards, and keywords, making it easy to find materials suitable for their needs. All resources are associated with an Alabama content standard.
- The platform provides a user "workspace" and review portal for Alabama teachers to curate, create, and share their collections of standards based OERs, learning activities, lessons, and unit plans. A rigorous quality assurance process is in place to review and assess these learning objects before they are made available to the public.
- Current user roles and permissions on Version 1 and Version 2.
  - Public - Any user can view published content without a user account including content standards, classroom resources, learning activities, lesson, and unit plans.
  - Author - Authenticated users can develop and publish resources.
  - Reviewer - Assigned reviewers have access to view and approve content before publishing.
  - Alex Admin - Assign ability to Add, Edit, Delete, Approve, Review, and publish resources. User management capabilities.
- Alabama content standards are published in CASE on the alabamstandards.org Satchel platform.

Target audience/User base:
- The primary users of ALEX are educators, including teachers, curriculum developers, and instructional designers, across various grade levels and subjects within Alabama and nationwide.
- School administrators and district-level personnel also use ALEX to support professional development initiatives and curriculum planning.
- Students can indirectly benefit from the platform through the high-quality instructional materials and engaging lesson plans that educators access and implement.

Desired improvements and enhancements for the redesigned platform:
- Streamline Navigation: introducing new features to facilitate seamless content discovery and implementing an advanced search system to enable efficient exploration of educational materials.
  - The site will meet Accessibility Standards as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Continuous Content Updates: regularly updating the platform's content to reflect evolving educational standards and pedagogical approaches.
  - Retrieving Alabama content standards from https://alabamastandards.org via API to receive real-time data updates.
  - Implementing a robust monitoring and tracking system that regularly scans the repository for changes, identifying any broken links or changes in tagged content standards.
  - Content updates should be easily managed by the assigned ALSDE staff.
- Improved Resource Builder: providing a workspace for teachers to develop high-quality, standards-based learning objects following instructional design best practices.
  - Creating, collecting, and remixing learning objects to create activities, lessons, and units aligned to the Alabama content standards.
    - Personalization: introducing features that allow educators to customize resources to suit their teaching styles and students' needs.
    - Enhanced Collaboration: incorporating features that promote real-time collaboration among educators, such as commenting/suggesting tools to improve instructional design practices.
- Analytics and Insights: providing educators with data and support on effective resource implementation, as well as its impact on student learning.
- Mobile-Friendly Interface: ensuring that the platform is accessible and user-friendly across all devices and operating systems.
- Interoperability: utilizing 1EdTech standards such as Common Cartridge, CASE, and LTI Resource Search, to facilitate the exchange of data between the ALEX platform and other educational systems to develop a cohesive digital learning ecosystem.
  - Integration with Learning Management Systems (LMS): allowing seamless integration with popular LMS platforms used by schools to simplify resource sharing and assignment distribution.
  - Exchange of resources with CASE Certified Consumers/Providers

ALSDE anticipates the redesign of the existing ALEX repository may be conducted over a period of two years. It is anticipated that during Year 1, the vendor will work with the ALEX Leadership Team to conduct a comprehensive audit of the existing content strategy and information architecture

on the current repository, design and develop the new repository, and deploy the redesigned application for use by the target audience. Then, the vendor will add interoperability features to integrate with LMS and other ALSDE educational products ensuring a more cohesive and effective digital learning ecosystem in Year 2. Upon completion of the implementation phases, the vendor will establish a post-launch support plan that includes monitoring the platform for issues, addressing user feedback, and providing ongoing support to ensure the smooth operation of the new repository.

1.2   <u>**Anticipated Time Table**</u>

May 1, 2024	Question Submission Deadline
May 2, 2024	Question Responses Due
May 13, 2024	Proposal Deadline—Due no later than 4:00 PM CST.

1.3   <u>**Proposal Evaluation**</u>

An Evaluation Team will review the proposals and make a recommendation. The criteria listed below will be used to evaluate the proposals for the purpose of ranking them in relative position based on how fully each proposal meets the requirements of this RFP.

<u>Evaluation Criteria:</u>

- Executive Summary   5 points
- Vendor Qualifications and Experience   35 points
- Proposed Project Plan and Approach   40 points
- Cost Proposal   20 points

Best and Final Offers:
The ALSDE may either accept a vendor's initial proposal by award of a contract or enter into discussions with vendors whose proposals are deemed to be reasonably acceptable consideration for award. After discussions are concluded, a vendor may be allowed to submit a "Best and Final Offer" for consideration in a manner and method prescribed by the ALSDE. By submitting a proposal each vendor accepts and agrees to all conditions and requirements herein.

The ALSDE will make all decisions regarding evaluation of the proposal. The ALSDE reserves the right to judge and determine whether a request is compliant with and has satisfactorily met the requirements of the RFP. The ALSDE reserves the right to waive technical and other defects if, in its judgment, the interest of the ALSDE so requires. Any further information disclosed about the RFP during this process will be provided to all vendors in the manner and method prescribed by the ALSDE.

Rejection of Proposal:
ALSDE reserves the right to reject any or all proposals which are deemed to be non-responsive, late in submission, or unsatisfactory in any way. ALSDE shall have no obligation to award a contract for work, goods and/or services as a result of this RFP.

Qualified bidders aggrieved in connection with the solicitation of a contract may protest to the Chief Procurement Officer. See generally State of Alabama Department of Finance *Administrative Code* Regulations at https://finance.alabama.gov/media/rnii4ga1/administrative-code-355-4-1-01-thru-06.pdf.

Confidentiality:
All information contained in the RFP is considered to be the exclusive property of the ALSDE. Recipients of this RFP are not to disclose any information contained within the RFP unless such information is publicly available. This RFP is provided for the sole purpose of allowing Vendors to respond to these specifications.

Selection Process:
The ALSDE will select the vendor that provides the most technically sound and cost-effective proposal that best fits the needs of the ALSDE. Final selection of the successful vendor will not be based solely on cost. The vendor product will be evaluated primarily on the scope of the activities linked to associated costs as detailed in the RFP. RFPs will be reviewed to ascertain that minimum requirements have been met. The ALSDE reserves the right to conduct discussions with potential vendors in order to clarify information contained in their proposals, but the ALSDE has no obligation to do so. The vendor will provide notice to the ALSDE any partnership with another firm to provide parts of the solution; however, the vendor must provide management of the partner and is responsible for all project performance. Any subcontractor or partner will be subject to the same vetting process as the vendor, and the vendor is responsible for ensuring that each subcontractor acknowledges and is contractually bound by the staffing plan and other commitments listed in this RFP.

Unless provided by law, nothing in this RFP shall be construed to create any legal obligation on the part of ALSDE or any respondents. ALSDE reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to amend, suspend, terminate, or reissue the RFP in whole or in part, at any stage. In no event shall ALSDE be liable to respondents for any cost or damages incurred in connection with the RFP process, including, but not limited to, any and all costs of preparing a response to this RFP or any other costs incurred in reliance on this RFP. No respondent shall be entitled to repayment from ALSDE for any costs, expenses, or fees related to the RFP. All supporting documentation submitted in response to the RFP will become the property of the ALSDE. Respondents may also withdraw their interest in the RFP, in writing, at any point in time, as more information becomes known. If, within the confines of this RFP, the vendor provides intellectual property be it understood that all RFP contents are subject to Open Records Act laws and thus are subsequently in the public domain.

Intent to Award:
Division of Procurement will send out an intent to award to participating suppliers, defining the protest period. The CPO, Chief Procurement Officer, is the awarding authority and as such is a signatory to the agreement/contract.

Disclaimer Notice:
The ALSDE shall not be liable for any costs associated with the preparation of proposals or negotiations of a contract incurred by any party.

Availability of Funds:
It is expressly understood and agreed that the obligations of the ALSDE to proceed are conditioned upon the continued availability of funds that may be expended for these purposes.

1.4   <u>**Conditions and Terms**</u>

Contract Terms:
The initial contract for this RFP may be for two years and may be renewable for up to three (3) additional years pending written agreement of the vendor and the ALSDE, dependent upon required state approvals, availability of funds, performance evaluations of the project, at the full discretion of the ALSDE. The contract will commence pending CPO signature, Legislative Review Committee approval and Governor's signature.

The vendor shall be fully prepared to commence work after full execution of the contract by parties and the receipt of required governmental approvals.

Proposals should reference each element in the RFP by number on the cover of each copy and be arranged in the same sequence. All fees and costs are to be stated in United States currency. Vendors must reply to each element of the RFP.

<u>Section 2.00 Scope</u>

2.1   <u>**Scope of Vendor's Work and Responsibilities**</u>
This section specifies the tasks that the vendor shall perform.

Goal: Design a Learning Object Repository (LOR) of high-quality instructional materials aligned to the Alabama Course of Study standards to support engaging and empowering learning experiences for every child, every chance, every day.

Objective: Redesign and development of the existing ALEX repository to produce collections of targeted educational resources correlated to the Alabama content standards for Alabama educators.

A website redesign is a complex project that typically involves several phases to ensure a systematic and successful overhaul of the existing website. While the specific phases may vary based on project requirements and methodologies, the following are recognized milestones in this redesign:

PHASE 1: New look and search functionality of the public-facing pages; Content Management System (CMS); Data migration (updates)
Strategy 1: Update content, refresh layouts, and improve navigation for better conversions and site performance of the public-facing pages.
- Design and implement a user-friendly CMS that is intuitive, sustainable, and easily managed by assigned ALSDE staff.
- Migrate existing content and data to a new platform.
- Utilize APIs to retrieve CASE-formatted academic standards from alabamastandards.org CASE publishing tool to associate resources with Alabama content standards.
- Design and functionality will be ADA and W3C-compliant.

Task	Objective(s)	Project Deliverable(s)
Discovery and Planning	1. Assess the current state of the ALEX repository and overall program goals. 2. Define project goals. 3. Establish a roadmap for the redesign.	● Project Plan and Timeline including project scope, objectives, and KPIs
Research and Analysis	4. Gather data about user behavior, preferences, and industry trends to inform the redesign strategy.	● Site audit findings ● SWOT ● 1 EdTech Certification
Content Management System (CMS)	5. Determine the best CMS based on the website's goals and objectives, features, functionalities, scalability, and future growth.	● Review of potential CMS options ● Selection of best CMS to achieve project objectives
Information Architecture and Wireframing	6. Define the structure and layout of the redesigned repository, focusing on user experience and navigation. 7. Assess the current ALEX Information Architecture and devise a data/content migration plan.	● Site maps ● Wireframes ● Content/data structure ● Content strategy (plan for creating, updating, and migrating data/content)
Design	8. Develop the visual elements and aesthetics of the website, aligning with the brand and user experience goals.	● Design mockups ● Responsive design

PHASE 2: Resource Builder (Updates and new functionality of the ALEX Workspace)
Strategy 2: Update/create a resource builder for teachers to curate and develop high-quality, standards-based learning activities, lessons, and unit plans aligned to the Alabama content standards.

- Create a collaborative environment for content authoring, approval workflows, and publishing learning objects.
- Add a "suggesting/commenting" mode to the resource development workflow.
- Enable a "remix" option to select and update content created by other users.
- Add a review and payment portal.

Task	Objective(s)	Deliverable(s)
Development	9. Build the repository implementing the technical and functional aspects of the designed components.	● Interactive prototypes
Content Migration	10. Transfer existing content to the new repository, ensuring accuracy and optimization.	● Content strategy (plan for creating, updating, and migrating data/content)

Testing	11. Identify and resolve any issues on the website before launch.	• User testing plan
Training	12. Train key stakeholders on the operation and management of the new website.	• Training materials for content creators and administrators • Documentation for any new features or tools
Launch	13. Deploy the redesigned repository to the live environment and make it publicly accessible.	• Post-Launch Evaluation (Plan that includes monitoring the platform for issues, addressing user feedback, and providing ongoing support to ensure the smooth operation of the new repository.)

PHASE 3: Interoperability (New)

Strategy 3: Utilize 1Edtech standards to ensure the digital curriculum products and tools offered through the ALEX repository function seamlessly with other ALSDE digital learning tools, ensuring a more cohesive and effective digital learning ecosystem.

- Build an open, trusted, and innovative digital learning ecosystem correlated to the Alabama Course of Study Standards.
- Integrate ALSDE Programs and EdTech Platforms - Sharing content standards using CASE data.

Task	Objective(s)	Deliverable(s)
Development	14. Implementing the technical and functional aspects of the designed components.	• Interactive prototypes
Testing	15. Identify and resolve any issues or bugs.	• User testing plan
Training	16. Train relevant stakeholders in how to use and manage.	• Training materials for content creators and administrators • Documentation for any new features or tools
Launch	17. Deploy the interoperability components to the live environment. [OBJ]	• Post-Launch Evaluation
Maintenance Plan	18. Develop a plan for ongoing maintenance, update, and support for the ALSDE to manage the repository.	• Maintenance plan documentation

Each phase of a redesign is interconnected, and successful completion of one phase sets the foundation for the next. It is essential to involve key stakeholders throughout the process and maintain open communication to ensure alignment with project goals and expectations. Additionally, flexibility and adaptability are crucial, as adjustments may be needed based on feedback and evolving requirements. The proposal must address how the applicant intends to collaborate with ALSDE staff in carrying out the above tasks.

Schedule of Deliverables

Deliverables that successfully meet all requirements outlined in the RFP shall be provided by the dates reasonable and mutually agreed upon by both parties. Any changes to delivery dates must have the ALEX Program Manager's prior written approval. All deliverables must be submitted in a format approved by the ALEX Program Manager. The ALEX Program Manager has the sole responsibility of determining the completeness of the selected vendor's work. The ALEX Program Manager will complete a review of each submitted deliverable within a mutually agreed-upon timeframe from the date of receipt. In the event the ALEX Program Manager does not approve a deliverable, the selected vendor will be notified with the specific reasons. The selected vendor will have up to five (5) business days to correct the unaccepted deliverable. Selected vendor shall correct any latent defects identified after the acceptance of a deliverable (where appropriate) at no additional charge to the ALSDE.

Required Features of the ALEX LOR

- Content Management System (CMS)
  - CMS capabilities include content creation and editing, customization, permissions and roles, sustainable architecture, and robust security features

  - CMS handles substantial amounts of data and traffic
- Updated visual appearance
  - Modern design concept with cohesive branding style
  - Organized, intuitive content layout
  - Easily readable typography that is ADA and W3C compliant following WCAG 2.1
  - High-quality images and graphics that align with the brand's visual identity
  - Interactive, dynamic design elements to enhance user experience
  - Quick and smooth loading speed and performance
- Improved search functionality
  - Prominent and consistent search bar placement
  - Centralized search feature for entire resource repository
    - Search for learning objects by metadata tags, keywords, and other attributes.
  - Clear, organized search result page with relevant filters for search results
  - Sorting options to order search results based on user-selected criteria
  - Quick and responsive search result speed
- Improved site navigation
  - Navigation that allows users to easily locate resources and content standards
  - Navigation aids such as dropdown menus, checkboxes, sticky headers, and navigation bars
- Responsive design
  - Website adapts well to different screen sizes and devices

- Essential LOR Elements
  - Content for public-facing pages
    - Homepage
      - Dynamic with news, collection of popular resources, and articles
    - Course of Study Standards
      -
        _____ by subject area
      - Associate unpacked content to each standard
      - Associate NAEP, ACT, and ACAP (Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program) items specs/resources to each standard
      - Provide links to view learning resources aligned to each standard
    - Learning Resource pages with print-friendly views
      - Classroom Resources
      - Learning Activities
      - Lesson Plans
      - Unit Plans
  - User Account Management
    - Site administrators can create, delete, and edit user account information
    - Site administrators can assign user roles and workflow
    - Single sign-on capabilities
  - Content Management Automation
    - System detects outdated learning objects and creates an administrator report
    - System detects inactive URLs and creates an administrator report
    - System detects top-rated learning resources to designate as "featured resources"
  - Resource Builder - Learning Resource Authoring Tool (Update)
    - Authors create and submit learning resources: Classroom Resources, Learning Activities, Lessons, and Unit Plans aligned to Alabama content standards
      - Authors "build" a lesson from a collection of activities
      - Authors "build" a unit from a collection of lessons
      - Authors "remix" learning resources submitted by others
    - Learning Resource authoring revision history
  - Learning Resource Review Portal (Update)
    - Collaborative author and review workflows
      - Commenting/suggesting features
    - Two-tier review workflow occurs entirely within the ALEX platform
      - Review tracking and notifications
  - Author/Reviewer Payment Tracking
    - Ability to track author and reviewer payments within the ALEX platform

- ○ Customizable User Dashboard
  - ■ Tagging and categorization for efficient resource discovery, organization, and storage
  - ■ Seamless integration with Learning Management Systems
- ○ Collections of ALSDE curricular resources providing one location for distribution

Interoperability

ALSDE is committed to a standards-based, interoperable teaching and learning technology ecosystem. Therefore, the ALEX LOR content must be aligned to academic standards using the Competency and Academic Standards Exchange CASE-based identifiers (GUIDs). The interoperability additions may also require the support of Common Cartridge and LTI Resource Search. The selected vendor will be required to obtain 1 EdTech certification for these standards: Common Cartridge, CASE, and LTI Resource Search.

Required Skills

Creating a Learning Object Repository (LOR) involves a combination of technical and educational skills. These are the required skills needed to redesign and add functionality to the LOR:

Technical Skills:

- Programming Languages: Proficiency in programming languages such as Java and PHP.
- Web Development: Understanding of web development technologies (HTML, CSS, JavaScript) for creating a user-friendly and responsive interface.
- Database Management: Knowledge of database management systems (e.g., MySQL) for storing and retrieving learning objects efficiently.
- Data Migration: Expertise in data migration, mapping, and transformation to ensure seamless transfer between the previous and newly developed content management systems.
- API Integration: Ability to integrate with external systems and services through APIs to enhance functionality.
- Version Control: Experience with version control systems (e.g., Git) for tracking changes in the codebase.

Educational/Instructional Design Skills:

- Pedagogical Knowledge: Understanding of educational principles and learning theories to design effective learning objects.
- Learning Object Metadata: Familiarity with standards such as SCORM (Sharable Content Object Reference Model) and xAPI (Experience API) for structuring and describing learning content.
- Metadata Tagging: Ability to implement metadata tagging to facilitate easy search and retrieval of learning objects.
- Curriculum Design: Basic knowledge of curriculum design to align learning objects with educational objectives.

User Experience (UX) Design:
- UI/UX Design: Basic skills in user interface (UI) and user experience (UX) design for creating an intuitive and user-friendly repository interface.
- Information Architecture: Understanding of information architecture principles to organize and categorize learning objects effectively.

Security and Privacy:
- Security Awareness: Awareness of security best practices to safeguard user data and prevent unauthorized access.
- Data Privacy: Understanding of data privacy regulations and the implementation of privacy features within the repository.

Project Management:
- Project Planning: Ability to plan and manage the development process, including setting milestones and timelines.
- Communication Skills: Effective communication skills to collaborate with stakeholders and gather requirements.

Testing and Quality Assurance:
- Testing Skills: Knowledge of testing methodologies to ensure the repository functions correctly and is free of bugs.
- Quality Assurance: Implementing quality assurance measures to guarantee the reliability of learning objects.

Change Control Procedures:
- Change Control Procedures: Procedures to define how changes are requested, evaluated, approved, and implemented to ensure that approved changes are addressed promptly.

Project Timeline

The redesigned ALEX LOR is essential in meeting the needs of the teaching and learning communities of our state. An expedited project timeline is crucial to ensure educators are accessing accurate content and data to fully support the Alabama Department of Education's Alabama Achieves strategic plan. To meet the accelerated requirements, we have developed the following project timeline.

- Project Start Date: June 2024 (Dependent upon contract award date)
- Completion of Phase 1: Beta Launch of public-facing pages
- Completion of Phase 2: Beta Launch of Resource Builder and Review Portal
- Completion of Phase 3

Once the supplier has been awarded an approved contract the supplier must be prepared to meet ALSDE timelines.

Communication and Collaboration Plan

Meetings may be scheduled via videoconference or in person as mutually agreed upon between the ALEX Team and the selected vendor. Ad hoc meetings may occur, as necessary. The selected vendor must maintain communications to address issues that arise between meetings or progress reports.

The selected vendor is required to provide reports in the format and manner prescribed by the ALEX Program Manager and designated ALSDE staff throughout the life of the project including:
- Bi-weekly project status updates as determined by the project plan;
- Project demo and presentation to ALEX and ALSDE leadership teams prior to publication of the repository;
- Ongoing access to analytics on use, adoption, and functionality, and
- Ongoing access to the content management system and all content data.

Ownership and Copyrights

All ownership rights to the programming and application development services for both the new and existing ALEX LOR in accordance with the awarded contract and identified herein shall remain solely with ALSDE. All elements of all deliverables shall be exclusively owned by the ALSDE and shall be considered works made for hire by selected vendor for the ALSDE. Selected vendor acknowledges and agrees that any and all Work Product that may qualify as "work made for hire" as defined in the Copyright Act of 1976 (17 U.S.C. § 101) is hereby deemed "work made for hire" for ALSDE and all copyrights and intellectual property rights therein shall automatically and immediately vest in ALSDE.

2.2 **Scope of Alabama State Department of Education's Work and Responsibilities**
The ALEX Team and ALSDE staff will work collaboratively with the selected vendor to:

- Create and adhere to a Service Level Agreement.
- Review and test changes in a timely manner.
- Collect and organize information.
- Provide developer with background information about the program and repository.
- Collaborate with the developer in the needs assessment and organization of the repository.
- Provide feedback on data collection tools.
- Notify the developer of program changes.
- Specify information to be included in the report(s).
- Assist in the planning stages of the development.
- Collect and distribute materials.
- Provide technical assistance to LEAs (local education agencies), as needed.

The ALEX Team and ALSDE staff are responsible for:
- Monitoring Service Level Agreement.
- Initiating contracts.
- Monitoring the contract and timelines.
- Processing and paying invoices.
- Articulating deadlines.
- Evaluating the deliverables.

Section 3.00 General Requirements

3.1   **Requirements of Proposal**

The vendor must provide the following mandatory information. **Failure to provide this information may be cause for the proposal to be rejected.** Qualifications, experience, and cost will be evaluated for a contract award. The proposal may be submitted under the same cover with Vendor Requirements and Cost Proposal in two distinct sections. E-Verify information is required to be submitted for all employees to include contractors of the vendors if necessary and applicable.

Written Proposal

Part I
Signed Cover Letter
The cover letter shall serve as the first page of the vendor's proposal. The vendor shall complete the cover letter and attach it to the proposal in response to the RFP. The cover letter must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the vendor. It will state that the vendor is a legal entity that will meet the specifications. The cover letter must accompany the submitted proposal. The letter accompanying the proposal must have original signatures and must include contact numbers and e-mail addresses for the authorized official signing the letters.

Part II - Executive Summary
An executive summary is required. This summary will condense and highlight the contents of the vendor's proposal. The executive summary should demonstrate an understanding and needs of the project, including:

       a.   Comprehensive Understanding: Vendor's understanding of the goals and specific requirements for the LOR.
       b.   Scope of Work: Vendor's clear understanding of the scope of the project as outlined in the RFP.
       c.   Proposed Solution: A brief overview of the proposed solution that identifies potential challenges and demonstrates the qualifications of the vendor/staff to complete the project.

Part III - Vendor Qualifications and Experience
Provide satisfactory evidence of the vendor's capability to coordinate the types of activities needed to redesign the ALEX LOR. The discussion shall include a description of the vendor's background and relevant experience as related to the required activities in the RFP in particular:

       ●   Relevance and depth of experience in website redesign and educational repository projects.
       ●   Expertise in migrating and transforming data from one CMS to another.
       ●   Experience working with educational content and data.

Proposed Personnel
Provide an overview of the project staffing including the work tasks to be assigned to each staff member as well as their qualifications regarding practical experience relating to the required skills as described in Section 2.1: Scope of Vendor's Work, Deliverables, and Responsibilities. The complete CVs of proposed staff must be submitted.

Vendor Comparable Clients and Work Samples

Provide a list of the vendor's comparable clients including contact name, telephone number, website location, services provided, and length of service. Also include a portfolio of previous work, illustrating experience in producing similar projects related to educational resource repositories demonstrating competency in the required skills listed in Section 2.1: Scope of Vendor's Work, Deliverables, and Responsibilities.

Vendor Organization

Describe your organizational structure and explain how your organization qualifies to be responsive to the requirements of this RFP. Particular attention must be given to the technical support component of your organizational structure and specific methods for addressing critical issues that may arise. (i.e., response time, availability, communication channels, escalation process)

Preferred Qualifications

Include an overview of the Vendor's qualification in working in the educational industry. Provide documentation of 1EdTech certification or willingness to complete 1EdTech certification process for these standards: Common Cartridge, CASE, and LTI Resource Search. Also, state if vendor has basic knowledge of curriculum design to align learning objects with educational objectives.

Part IV - Proposed Project Plan and Approach

Submit an outline of a Proposed Project Plan and Approach summarizing the milestones from project initiation to implementation meeting all phases as described in Section 2.1: Scope of Vendor's Work, Deliverables, and Responsibilities. In addition, indicate measures the vendor will take to produce the deliverables within an expedited project timeline.

Design Samples:

The proposal should contain design examples that showcase the vendor's capacity for innovation and creativity in improving the educational resource repository.

Part IV - Cost Proposal

Vendor shall include the fee structure and pricing for the proposed project. The vendor shall submit a cost proposal in addition to other required information.

Provide a detailed cost proposal, enumerating all project-related charges, potential extra expenses, and optional services. This proposal should be structured around a two-year completion period, with provisions for possible extensions. Include a fee structure that meets the key features and milestones of the project.

Flat rates for half and/or whole day training sessions should be inclusive of travel and/or supplies and materials costs and identify if the training is in person or virtual, and the proposed number of participants. Flat rates for consulting, coaching, and/or professional services should stipulate the cost per hour and the proposed number of hours. Project costs must include all proposed necessary charges to be made by the grantee in accomplishing the objectives of the grant during the specified grant period (initial grants are generally for a one-year period unless otherwise noted).

Subcontractor Disclosure

If the execution of work to be performed requires the hiring of Subcontractors, **you must clearly state this in the bid proposal and provide qualifications for such individuals.** Sub-Contractors must be identified and the services they will provide or work they will perform must be clearly defined. The ALSDE will not refuse a proposal based upon use of a Sub-Contractor; however, the ALSDE reserves the right to refuse the Sub- contractor you have selected. Contractor and associated personnel shall remain solely responsible for the performance of all work, including work that may be sub-contracted.

Describe your rationale for utilizing Subcontractors including relevant past experience partnering with stated Subcontractor(s). Documents for E-verification of subcontractors are the sole responsibility of the contractor and must be available upon request to ensure compliance.

Section 4.00 General Terms and Conditions

4.1 Governance

This RFP and its terms shall be governed and construed according to the laws of the State of Alabama. Any dispute arising out of this RFP shall be brought in the State of Alabama, with venue in Montgomery County, Alabama. Vendors agree to comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

4.2 Immigration

The proposal must contain a statement that the firm is aware of and in compliance with the requirements of the Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act; a statement that the vendor is enrolled in the E-Verify as required by Section 31-13-9 (b), Code of Alabama 1975, as amended:

BEASON -HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTIO N ACT

COMPLIANCE

The Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act **(31-13-1 et seq,** *Code of Alabama, 1975* **as amended by Act 2012-491) regulates illegal immigration in the State of Alabama. All contracts with the State or political subdivision thereof must fully comply with each provision as provided by law.**

A proposal must include a statement that the vendor has knowledge of this law and is in compliance. Before a contract is signed, the vendor awarded the contract must submit a Certificate of Compliance using the form at Appendix A. E-Verify enrollment can be accomplished at the website of the United States Department of Homeland Security at http ://www.uscis.gov.

See Section 10 for additional language required by Section 10(k) of the Act to be included in the contract.

Rev.5-24-13

4.3 **Conflict of Interest**

The vendor attests that no employee, officer, or agent of the vendor shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract if a real or apparent conflict of interest may be involved. A conflict would arise when the employee, officer, agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein has a financial or other interest in the organization selected for an award. The officers, employees, and agents of the vendor, if selected as the career planning system vendor, shall neither award nor offer gratuities, favors, nor anything of monetary value from vendors or subcontractors.

4.4 **Discrimination**

Alabama Non-Discrimination Statement:

No person shall be denied employment, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of disability, gender, race, religion, national origin, color, age, genetic information, or any other category protected under the law. Ref: Sec. 1983, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C.; Title VI and VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Sec. 504; Age Discrimination in Employment Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008; Equal Pay Act of 1963; Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972; Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008. Title IX Coordinator, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101 or call (334) 694-4717.

APPENDIX A

State of _____)
County of _____)

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT (ACT 2011-535, as amended by ACT 2012-491)

DATE: _____

RE Contract/Grant/Incentive (describe by number or subject):

_____ by and between
_____ (Contractor/Grantee) and
_____ (State Agency, Department or Public Entity

The undersigned hereby certifies to the State of Alabama as follows:

1. The undersigned holds the position of _____ with the Contractor/Grantee named above, and is authorized to provide representations set out in this Certificate as the official and binding act of that entity, and has knowledge of the provisions of THE BEASON-HAMMON ALABAMA TAXPAYER AND CITIZEN PROTECTION ACT (ACT 2011-535 of the Alabama Legislature, as amended by ACT 2012-491) which is described herein as "the Act."

2. Using the following definitions from Section 3 of the Act, select and initial either (a) or (b), below, to describe the Contractor/Grantee's business structure.

    BUSINESS ENTITY. Any person or group of persons employing one or more persons performing or engaging in any activity, enterprise, profession, or occupation for gain, benefit, advantage, or livelihood, whether for profit or not for profit.

    a. Self-employed individuals, business entities filing articles of incorporation, partnerships, limited partnerships, limited liability companies, foreign corporations, foreign limited partnerships, and foreign limited liability companies authorized to transact business in this state, business trusts, and any business entity that registers with the Secretary of State.

    b. Any business entity that possesses a business license, permit, certificate, approval, registration, charter, or similar form of authorization issued by the state, any business entity that is exempt by law from obtaining such a business license, and any business entity that is operating unlawfully without a business license.

    EMPLOYER. Any person, firm, corporation, partnership, joint stock association, agent, manager, representative, foreman, or other person having control or custody of any employment, place of employment, or of any employee, including any person or entity employing any person for hire within the State of Alabama, including a public employer. This term shall not include the occupant of a household contracting with another person to perform casual domestic labor within the household.

    _____ (a) The Contractor/Grantee is a business entity or employer as those terms are defined in Section 3 of the Act.

    _____ (b) The Contractor/Grantee is not a business entity or employer as those terms are defined in Section 3 of the Act.

3. As of the date of this Certificate, the Contractor/Grantee does not knowingly employ an unauthorized alien within the State of Alabama and hereafter it will not knowingly employ, hire for employment, or continue to employ an unauthorized alien within the State of Alabama;

4. The Contractor/Grantee is enrolled in E-Verify unless it is not eligible to enroll because of the rules of that program or other factors beyond its control.

Certified this _____ day of _____ 20____ .

_____
Name of Contractor/Grantee/Recipient

By: _____

Its _____

The above Certification was signed in my presence by the person whose name appears above, on
this _____ day of _____ 20_____ .

WITNESS: _____

_____

APPENDIX B

Written Proposal Template

The vendor must provide the following information in a binder with clearly labeled tabs and the coversheet provided for each section.

Table of Contents

Part I - Signed Cover Letter

The cover letter shall serve as the first page of the vendor's proposal. The vendor shall complete the cover letter and attach it to the proposal in response to the RFP. The cover letter must be signed by an official authorized to legally bind the vendor. It will state that the vendor is a legal entity that will meet the specifications. The cover letter must accompany the submitted proposal. The letter accompanying the proposal must have original signatures and must include contact numbers and e-mail addresses for the authorized official signing the letters.

Part II - Executive Summary

An executive summary is required. This summary will condense and highlight the contents of the vendor's proposal. The executive summary should demonstrate an understanding of and needs of the project, including:

- Comprehensive Understanding: Vendor's understanding of the goals and specific requirements for the LOR.
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