Tutoring Provider Selection Criteria Tool

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The Tutoring Provider Selection Criteria Tool is part of the Tutoring Program Selection Toolkit that helps districts/Local Education Agencies (LEAs), and State Educational Agencies (SEAs) to design a process and select tutoring providers that match their specific needs.

The Tutoring Provider Selection Criteria Tool helps districts/LEAs and SEAs craft a request for proposal (RFP) or application to select providers that adhere to high-impact tutoring standards. The example language included in this tool aligns with the seven research-based elements of effective tutoring programs:

1. **Tutor**: Students work with a consistent, trained, and supported tutor.
2. **Instruction**: Tutoring sessions include a minimum of three sessions per week in small groups. Materials used in instruction are high-quality and aligned with state standards.
3. **Learning Integration**: Tutoring is embedded in schools either during the school day or immediately before or after the school day.
4. **Data Use**: Student academic data inform tutoring sessions.
5. **Safety**: Programs ensure safety for students and their data.
6. **Cohesion**: Program elements work together to create a cohesive well-run program.
7. **Equity**: Programs are grounded in equity.

The Tutoring Provider Selection Criteria Tool has three sections that align to this Request for Proposal Template and an Appendix:

1. Section 1: Instructions and Background Information – This section provides planning and logistics guidance as well as a checklist of items to consider for your RFP.

2. Section 2: Sample Scope of Services/Work – This section details research-aligned best practices from effective tutoring programs that can be used as a starting point for a sample scope of services/work for districts and states.

3. Section 3: Proposal Submission Requirements and Evaluation Criteria Recommendations – This section provides priority and optional submission requirements and evaluation criteria recommendations. Priority requirements are most critically aligned with the research-backed characteristics of high-impact tutoring. Optional requirements, colored in gray, may apply to your particular state or district's needs.
4. Appendix
   - Request for Proposal Template
   - Example RFPs and Applications

Section 1: Instructions and Background Information

Prior to developing your RFP, understand your jurisdiction's policies and procedures for RFPs and review the [Request for Proposal Template](#) and [Example RFPs and Applications](#). Ideally, building from a template crafted by legal counsel will ensure adherence to the requirements in your jurisdiction.

The information in [Section 2: Sample Scope of Services/Work](#) and [Section 3: Proposal Submission Requirements and Evaluation Criteria Recommendations](#) serves as a starting point for information to request from a provider and use for evaluation.

This tool is not legal advice, and the exclusion of any particular item from this checklist does not mean you should exclude it from your RFP. Edit and include items to fit the context of your district and state.

The checklist below includes basic information and instructions to guide applicants and background information to consider requesting from applicants. Edit the items based on the district or state's context to provide specific guidelines for providers.

Instructions and Background Information Checklist
☐ **Official Contact:** Appoint an official contact person responsible for requests or inquiries regarding the RFP. Indicate the point person's name, address, phone number, and email address.
☐ **Description of the District/LEA, or SEA Issuing the Request for Proposal:** Provide an overview of the District/LEA or SEA and relevant needs.
☐ **Procurement Schedule:** Provide a procurement schedule similar to the one below. Fill in the dates, description, and other actions as needed.

Action	Date
RFP Release	
Deadline for Questions	
Submission Deadline	
Decision Announcement	

☐ **Submission Instructions:** Provide information on where and how to submit proposals.

☐ **General Requirements:**

☐ Format or Style Requirements: Provide a checklist of font style, font size, layout, and other conditions if a district or state requires it.

☐ Cover Page: Request the information below from vendors to include on their cover page.

- Legal Name
- FEIN
- Street Address
- City, State, and Zip Code
- Contact Person: Title, Phone Number, Email Address
- Authorized Official: Title, Signature

Note:

Develop a marketing plan early: Consider how and when to advertise the RFP. Use a variety of channels such as the district/state official website, newsletters, press releases, and social media platforms to create awareness.

Section 2: Sample Scope of Services/Work

The Sample Scope of Services/Work Section lists potential research-based requirements to include in the Scope of Work section of an RFP. Please be advised that this list serves as a starting point and it will be important to adapt this list to fit the context and needs of your district or state. The list is organized by the seven elements of high-impact tutoring.

Potential Scope of Work Requirements:

Instruction
- Renders high-impact tutoring services with a maximum ratio of 4 students to 1 tutor[1] with groups made based on students' needs and tutors' skills;
- Provides at least three tutoring sessions a week during the school day with ample time (usually a minimum of 30 minutes per session) for each student;
- Strategically pairs students with a consistent tutor and offers supporting systems to build robust, positive relationships between students and tutors;
- Ensures consistent lesson structure, set instructional strategies, and standard procedures to maximize student learning;

Tutor
- Establishes a system to recruit and select tutors with skills to meet the needs of students at your district/state;
- Conducts rigorous background checks required by federal, state, and local laws for all tutors and manages tutors and employees;
- Ensures all tutors receive appropriate training and ongoing coaching and leverages high-quality instructional materials;

Learning Integration
- Maintains communication and collaboration with teachers, school leaders, parents, and caregivers;

Data
- Uses data to inform program effectiveness and improvement, and formative assessment and progress measure data to inform instruction of future sessions;

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[1] Research suggests a tutor to student ratio as close to one-to-one is most effective. However, ratios of up to 4 students to 1 tutor have been shown to be beneficial for students, even though smaller ratios tend to be more effective.

Equity

- Prioritizes students who need tutoring the most and has a clear approach to enroll and retain students;

Safety

- Maintains student safety with health, physical safety, and emergency management protocols in place;
- Operates reasonable data security infrastructure and data privacy policies and practices in place in order to keep student information safe; and

Cohesion

- Meets the needs of the community it serves and provides support to leaders to implement their roles with fidelity.

Section 3: Proposal Submission Requirements and Evaluation Criteria Recommendations

This section provides example language for priority and optional (colored in gray) proposal submission requirements and evaluation criteria to include in an RFP. The submission requirements and evaluation criteria recommendations are written as general recommendations to be tailored to fit your needs.

NSSA acknowledges that more information will be important for the evaluation process. Districts and states should incorporate this additional information according to their local contexts and policies.

As a reminder, this tool is not legal advice, and the exclusion of any particular item from this checklist does not mean you should exclude it from your RFP.

NSSA recommends assessing each provider across four key categories. For more in-depth insights into these categories and specific details, please refer to the District Playbook - Partnering with a Provider: Issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP). The requirements and recommendations are categorized as follows:

1. **General Fit/Experience in Identified Focus Area:** to identify whether the potential provider has the skills and capacity to meet your needs.
2. **Impact and Elements of High-Impact Tutoring:** to assess whether the potential provider's model is likely to be effective.
3. **Level of Alignment with the District:** to assess the degree to which a provider's pedagogy, instructional strategies, technology, etc. are aligned with or compatible with your district's. Existing alignment is not as critical if the district and provider develop an effective plan to address compatibility. Pre-existing provider alignment with a district should be a tiebreaker, not a dealbreaker.
4. **Logistical and Operational Requirements:** to identify the logistical and operational potential of a provider's program operating well in your local context.

Terminology Note
The Proposal Submission Requirements column refers to tutoring providers as vendors. This reference is to ease the work for districts and states to pull the exact language and paste it into an RFP. Whereas, the Evaluation Criteria Recommendations column uses tutoring programs, in lieu of vendors, for a broader audience who may use the tool to evaluate internal or current partnered programs or select vendors.

Submission Requirements and Evaluation Criteria Recommendations

General Fit/Experience in Identified Focus Area Identifies whether the vendor has the skills and capacity to meet your needs.	
Proposal Submission Requirements	*Evaluation Criteria Recommendations*
Program Design: A written description of a vendor's program model design addressing the following: • Mission and vision • Theory of change • Financial standing • Organizational goals • Service (content area, grade level, modality (in-person, virtual, etc.)) • Type (i.e., non-profit, for-profit, etc.)	Defined mission, vision, and organizational goals Student-focused mission and vision that speaks to student growth Sufficient financial resources to meet obligations Clear theory of change Demonstration of quality such as through the NSSA Program Design Badge
Program Design: Provide a budget narrative addressing costs for services, expenses, etc.	Budget aligned with an effective tutoring program Cost per student aligned with estimated budget (budget estimate tool)
Equity: Describe how the vendor ensures the program serves students who need the most support and meets the needs of the school and community.	Student selection strategy that aligns with district needs and prioritizes students in need Strategy that addresses community-specific needs (e.g., bilingualism, English language learners) Data systems that analyze student progress across student subgroups
Experience and Demonstrated Success: Describe prior experience in which the vendor delivered tutoring services to a client similar to the school/district's demographics and population including:	Demonstrated success in executing similar services including number of students served, similar demographics, etc. Verification that the tutoring provider can

- Duration of engagement - Description of engagement - Number of students served per year - Artifacts or reports on program effectiveness - Names of any agencies that terminated their contracts	operate in your state or district (a district or state may request a certificate of good standing) Explanation of any terminated contracts that does not imply risk for the proposed engagement

Impact and Elements of High-Impact Tutoring Assesses whether the potential provider's model is likely to be effective.	
Proposal Submission Requirements	*Evaluation Criteria Recommendations*
Overall Model Design: Vendors with an NSSA Program Design Badge have demonstrated that their model is aligned with basic high-impact tutoring standards.	
Has your tutoring program participated in NSSA's Program Design Badging Program? If yes, did your program earn a Program Design Badge?	Has earned an NSSA Program Design Badge

Tutor: Vendors aligned with high-impact tutoring standards have a clear recruitment and selection process, high-quality onboarding and preservice training, and ongoing tutor coaching and feedback that focus on academic content and relationship-building.	
Tutor Types: Identify and list the tutor types (i.e., paraprofessionals, retired teachers, college students) that a vendor would recruit and provide to a district. Explain tutors' credentials or minimum requirements to be hired.	Meets the needs of the tutoring program's focus area and students being tutored, including needs of MLLs and/or students with IEPs Meets the district or state's funding or policy requirements. Some states or districts may require tutors to be certified teachers Reflect the background/demographics of the students served
Training, Coaching & Feedback: Explain the structure or processes in place to train and coach new and existing tutors. - Include information on the training schedule, frequency, method of delivery, content topic, etc. - Provide prior successes in pre-service and in-service training materials.	Equity-related topics embedded throughout training in a way that is research and/or evidence-based. Clear and engaging materials Includes role expectations, research and/or evidence-based instructional strategies, relationship building, social-emotional learning, strategies for meeting the needs of diverse learners (including ELLs and special

	education services students), and cultural competence
	Ongoing support for tutors through observations, coaching, and two-way feedback between the tutor and their coach.
	Consistent coaches
Equity Considerations in Recruitment & Selection: Describe how equity factors into the tutor recruitment and selection process.	Recruitment strategy intentionally designed to develop a diverse applicant pool
Recruitment & Selection: Explain the recruitment and selection process. Include any approaches used to recruit tutors with specific skills, such as fluency in another language, experience working with students with learning differences, or other community-specific competencies.	Clear and comprehensive recruitment and selection process that is focused on the skills and mindsets necessary to be successful in the district or state's specific program and on selecting tutors who reflect the diversity of the target student population

Clear recruitment timeline, including metrics and set deadlines, that aligns with the district or state's timeline

Clear tutor job description that identifies the attributes and qualities necessary for tutors to be effective in the district or state's program |
| **Tutor Coaching and Feedback:** Describe plans or approaches to coordinate training for different tutor types who have a diverse depth of knowledge in instructional strategies. | Differentiated tutor training based on the tutor's incoming skill set and experience |
| **Tutor Coaching and Feedback:** Describe how in-service training and coaching are responsive to evaluations, feedback, and student performance data. | Structured process to reflect on evaluations, feedback, and student performance and make both short-term and long-term training, coaching, and instruction adjustments based on data

Some of these processes may include:

- *Opportunities for tutors to provide regular feedback on coaching support.* |

	● *Allocating time during training or coaching to review student progress and performance.*
Tutor Coaching and Feedback: Explain the coaching process for tutors, including how the vendor ensures that the coaching process improves implementation.	Detailed process for coaching sessions *The ongoing support through observations, coaching, and two-way communication may include:* ● *A time for the tutor's reflection on an overall session;* ● *A discussion of specific student work or mastery data;* ● *A tutor's plan for an upcoming lesson;* ● *A demonstration of a coaching strategy; and* ● *Surveys, discussions, or other opportunities to allow tutors to voice their thoughts on the program's coaching to enhance quality and meet the tutors' needs.*
Tutor Coaching and Feedback: Explain how training modules incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy and inform lesson modifications to meet students' needs.	Ongoing coaching in culturally relevant instructional practices and cultural competency Specific training and planning protocols to support tutors in modifying lessons to meet students' needs *When students are able to make connections between what they learn in tutoring and their culture, language, or life experiences, they can better access key ideas, develop higher-level understanding, and see the value of their learning in their daily lives.*

Data Use: Vendors aligned with high-impact tutoring standards use data to inform and improve tutoring sessions and to identify opportunities for continuous improvement.	
Program Effectiveness and Improvement: Explain systems in place to continuously improve program effectiveness. Please include: ● Name of the progress monitoring tool used ● Frequency of progress monitoring ● Standardized procedures of progress monitoring ● Process of using data to inform instruction and the overall tutoring program	Data-driven program improvement process Identified set of metrics, including student achievement and program implementation metrics (e.g., unit assessments, MAP growth, student attendance) Clearly defined, timebound performance benchmarks aligned with the assessment being used (iReady, NWEA, Renaissance, etc.)
Student Progress Measure: Explain tools and systems to measure and use student progress and experiences. Describe: ● Process for review of student progress and experiences ● How data is leveraged to provide individualized support ● Process for responding to the results	Clearly defined student performance measures, including student achievement, growth, adaptive indicators (i.e., student engagement, student confidence), and program implementation measures Process for monitoring student progress and using data to inform tutoring sessions
Data Privacy: Describe how data is handled appropriately to protect the privacy of student information.	Clear guidance on handling student information appropriately and safely *The guidance may include [confidentiality and security guidance](#).*
Equity: Describe processes in place for collecting data that can be disaggregated by race, gender, IEP statutes, home language, and other important factors to ensure equity of services.	Data collection processes include student demographics such as race, gender, IEP statutes, etc., to enable progress and outcome analysis by student group *See page 8 of the [Racial Equity Toolkit](#) to see how this information can inform decisions.*

Instruction: Vendors aligned with high-impact tutoring standards ensure sessions occur multiple times per week using high-quality instructional materials.	
Student Grouping: Describe any strategies or systems in place to make appropriate student and tutor pairings or groupings.	Data driven process to develop student groupings
Tutor Consistency: Explain the approach for students to meet with a consistent tutor.	Consistent tutors
High-Quality Instructional Materials: Describe instructional materials used during tutoring sessions.	Aligned with classroom materials if they are high-quality, otherwise aligned with state standards, based on learning science, user-friendly (including formative assessment), and culturally responsive
Routines and Structures: Describe the structure of a tutoring session, including routines in place for students.	Includes key components: ● Relationship building ● Instructional delivery (modeling, demonstrations, etc.) ● Guided practice ● Independent practice ● Formative assessment (exit ticket, performance task, etc.) Clearly defined lesson structure and routines aligned to learning science and developmentally appropriate Comprehensive curriculum Example tutoring session structure
Dosage: Indicate the frequency and duration of tutoring sessions.	Minimum of three times per week Age-appropriate duration (30 minutes although can be shorter for younger students and longer for older students)
Ratio: Indicate student to tutor ratio.	Ratio does not exceed 4:1 *Multiple studies suggest that 1:1 tutoring has*

	a greater impact on student achievement than any other grouping. Some considerations when defining the student-tutor ratio are cost, resources, and tutor type.
Student Grouping: Describe protocols or approaches in place to understand students' needs and adjust student and tutor pairings and student groupings.	Clear protocols and processes for setting student goals, collecting, analyzing, and responding to progress against goals Policy to minimize student grouping adjustments
Student-Tutor Relationship: Describe what strategies, training, or support systems are in place for tutors to build strong positive relationships with students. Explain how positive relationships are monitored and responsive to students' needs and overall well-being.	Clear, shared commitment to building strong and positive relationships between students and tutors Explicit training and coaching for tutors include how to build relationships with students, fostering high expectations, and encouraging a growth mindset. System for monitoring and responding to ongoing student-tutor relationship dynamics
Routines and Structures: Describe the ways the vendor ensures a focus and learning goal for each tutoring session.	Comprehensive curriculum Training and ongoing coaching in goal-setting and ensuring activities students engage in are aligned to the stated or implied learning goal(s), are addressing prior knowledge deficiencies, well-sequenced, and build on each other and to move students toward mastery

Learning Integration: Vendors aligned with the high-impact tutoring standards embed tutoring in schools either during the school day or immediately before or after the school day.	
Setting: Describe when tutoring sessions will happen and mode of instruction (i.e. in-person, virtual, asynchronous, etc.).	Mode of Delivery Meets the needs of the students
Integration with School Schedule: Explain how decisions regarding tutoring integration with school schedules maximize student learning.	Integrated into the school day without replacing Tier 1 instruction, lunch, or recess. *Studies on tutoring programs find that the effects of programs conducted during the school day are roughly twice as large as those conducted outside of school. However, out-of-school tutoring programs can be effective if the necessary structures and systems, such as transportation, strict attendance data collection, outreach to absent students, and insistence on make-up sessions, are in place to ensure student participation and engagement.* System for communicating program logistics with the school
Family and Caregiver Engagement: Describe systems and/or accommodations in place to engage with families and caregivers. Please include: • Process of communication and collaboration through which communication channel • Information about topics/updates tutoring vendor shares with parents and caregivers	Parent and caregiver communication process that accommodates language and communication preferences/needs *For more information about types of updates to share and how to effectively communicate could be found [here](#).*
School and Teacher Engagement: Describe systems to engage with the school community, such as school leaders and teachers. Please include: • Frequency of engagement with school community;	Process for engaging school leaders and teachers to build understanding on instructional alignment and student progress and need *Successful programs suggest that strong tutor-teacher communication may improve tutors' understanding of students and, as a*

● Process of communication and collaboration; and ● Information about topics/updates tutors and teachers share.	*result, the effectiveness of tutoring. More information on the continual updates between teachers and tutors is [here](#).*
Student Enrollment and Retention: Describe strategies to enroll and retain students.	Clear approach to enrolling and retaining students While enrollment/retention is not the sole responsibility of vendors, vendors should collaborate strategically with districts Strategy to identify and address barriers to student participation (i.e., transportation, meals, engagement)
Out-of-School Time Student Attendance: Describe any approaches to increase student attendance when tutoring is offered before or after school or during summer.	Process or system to increase student attendance for out-of-school time and out-of-school-term Ongoing attendance monitoring to address attendance barriers through the use of proactive communications and ongoing collaboration with caregivers

Safety: Vendors aligned with the high-impact tutoring standards ensure the safety of the students and their data including following local, state, and federal laws.	
Tutor: Describe pre-service safety training sessions tutors must complete.	Clear health, physical safety, and emergency management protocols and training Safety-related protocols and related training are in place and documented. Including: ● Health protocols informed by local guidance ● Robust background check process ● Training on mandatory reporting laws ● Data privacy policies and practices, and ● Security infrastructure to keep
Tutor: Explain procedures in place for tutors and students to report safety concerns.	Reporting process for safety incidents
Data Use: Explain necessary protocols to keep students' data safe and how the vendor implements those protocols with fidelity.	Data security infrastructure and privacy policies and practices in place to keep student information safe Training and process to ensure safety policies and practices are implemented with fidelity

Level of Alignment with the District
Assesses the degree to which a provider's pedagogy, instructional strategies, technology, etc. are aligned with or compatible with your district's. Existing alignment is not as critical if the district and provider develop an effective plan to address compatibility. Pre-existing provider alignment with a district should be a tiebreaker, not a dealbreaker.

Proposal Submission Requirements	*Evaluation Criteria Recommendations*
Alignment with Existing Initiatives: Detail how the vendor aligns its program with existing academic and funding district initiatives	Process to identify and align with existing initiatives within the school/district
Curriculum Alignment: Describe how the curriculum is aligned with state and/or district standards and to what extent the vendor relies on contracted and in-house instructional materials.	Aligned with classroom materials if they are high-quality, otherwise aligned with state standards, based on learning science, user-friendly (including formative assessment), and culturally responsive System to support tutors in making connections across curricula and tutoring
Formative Assessment: Describe how formative assessments are used.	Clear system to regularly use formative assessments to provide tutors with data to drive individualized instruction Structures (including protocols and set meeting times) to support tutors with collecting, analyzing, and responding to formative data
Baseline and Growth Assessments: Describe any data tracking or monitoring in place to inform school teachers on students' learning progress, including the frequency of progress monitoring.	Set timeline and process for measuring and reporting progress against individual student goals to teachers
Formative Assessments: Describe systems or approaches to leverage school formative assessments to allow tutors to tailor tutoring sessions.	Process for effective and safe communication of student progress between the school and tutors Regular process for student data analysis to inform instruction of future sessions

Instructional Practices: Provide examples of instructional practices tutors demonstrate in tutoring sessions.	Example instructional practices may include: ● Tutors consistently convey high expectations for all students. These expectations are regularly reinforced throughout the lesson, as the tutor insists on hard work from all students. ● Tutors give opportunities for students to elevate their voice. Students have ample opportunity to respond to questions throughout the lesson. In responding to questions, students regularly cite evidence. Students generate their own questions that lead to further inquiry and self-directed learning. ● Tutors are asking varied, high-quality questions and promoting student engagement and mastery. The tutor calls on volunteers and non-volunteers, and allows appropriate wait time. ● Tutors provide a variety of forms of timely feedback on student responses that are accurate, specific, and advance learning. The tutor effectively addresses individual student misconceptions and misunderstandings both from previous sessions and in the moment.
Instructional Practices: Describe how a vendor supports tutors with instructional practices, such as lesson pacing, modeling, and strong questioning.	Explicit training, modeling, and coaching related to the use of effective instructional strategies (e.g., strong questioning, lesson pacing, and modeling) Observation and coaching that ensures

	implementation of effective instructional strategies
Technology Requirement: Describe technology requirements that need to be in place in a district.	Clearly identified technology requirements that the district or state has the capacity to meet

Logistical and Operational Requirements
Identifies the logistical and operational potential of a provider's program operating well in your local context.

Proposal Submission Requirements	*Evaluation Criteria Recommendations*
Logistical Requirements: Describe logistical requirements for running the tutoring program in the district. Some of the requirements may include: ● Physical space ● Lead time required before implementation	Clearly defined logistical requirements that meet the district/LEA or SEA 's needs
Capacity: Indicate the capacity needed from the central district and school staff members to support the implementation of tutoring. Indicate the number of tutors a vendor would provide to a district/LEA or SEA.	Clearly defined capacity needs that the district/LEA or SEA is able to provide Clear commitment to providing adequate number of tutors
Website: Share the organization's website URL.	Website with clear vision and mission for parents, teachers, and other stakeholders to learn more about the program
Leader Professional Development: Explain the types and frequency of professional development that organization leaders (i.e., site managers, program managers) are expected to complete.	Regular schedule and structure for leaders to engage in high-quality professional development training or meetings
Organizational Culture: Describe a process to consistently inform and update leaders and staff on the mission, vision, and goals of the vendor.	Regular process for updating stakeholders about high-level organizational progress

Request for Proposal Template

This RFP template does not serve as legal guidance and should be tailored to your LEA/SEA's needs.

Request for Proposal High-Impact Tutoring for **[LEA/SEA Name]**'s Students	
Issued by: **[LEA/SEA Name]**	Date: **[Insert]**
Instructions and Background Information	
(Insert Instructions and background information here]	
Scope of Services/Work	
[Provide a list of scope of services/work a vendor is expected to meet and perform]	
Proposal Submission Requirements	
[Provide a list of submission requirements]	
Evaluation Criteria	
[Describe the evaluation criteria]	

Example RFPs and Applications

Below are examples of state-issued applications and district-issued RFPs. Although the proposals and applications will look different for each state and district, we encourage you to explore the examples below to gain insights into different approaches.

- Arkansas - Grant application
- Colorado - Request for Applications
- Connecticut
- Little Egg Harbor District (Little Egg Harbor, New Jersey)
- Uplift Education (Dallas, Texas)