TITLE: **SMU STEM SCHOOL EXTERNAL EVALUATOR RFP – Q&A**

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1. What is the correct due date for responses to the RFP?

   a. **July 9 by 3:00 PM CST.**

2. On pages 2 and 4 of the Statement of Work section of the RFP, it states that SMU CORE will be responsible for both primary and extant data collection. Is SMU open to the vendor collecting primary data that might not already be part of ongoing evaluation efforts, such as student, teacher, or parent surveys (e.g., for measures of SEL), or focus groups or interviews with key stakeholders? Or must ALL primary data collection be conducted by SMU CORE and others within Simmons?

   a. **Yes we welcome external evaluators to propose additional primary data collection if it contributes to the overall aim of the evaluation and the vendor's proposed measurement plan. The aim in communicating CORE's role in data collection was to ensure that applicants knew they would not be responsible for all data collection and could plan activities and budget accordingly. Two routes for data collection are possible: (1) the external evaluator may propose to collect the data personally or (2) CORE staff/other Simmons staff and faculty may collect the data on the evaluator(s)' behalf and share deidentified data with the evaluation team (e.g., if the vendor proposes to add evaluation-specific survey items to an existing pre-planned annual survey).**

3. (Continuation of Question #2) If all data collection must go through SMU CORE and their partners, should our proposal refrain from proposing new data collections, or are you interested to see what we might propose, regardless of who is collecting it?

   a. **See above. Proposals for additional data collection are welcome.**

4. Has SMU CORE and their partners identified the outcomes of interest for the impact study? If so, what are they?

   a. **The WDSS partnership developed an initial logic model that includes short-, mid- and long-term outcomes for students, and range of outcomes for adults—school staff, non-profit service providers, and parents/community members. For students, outcomes of interest include epistemic, cognitive, and social learning goals - 21st century skills in service of the overall project goal of college and career readiness. The specific outcomes will continue to be specified in alignment with the STEM-focused, inquiry-based curriculum.**

5. What type of data is being collected about the wraparound services that will be provided through the West Dallas STEM School? If these data are being collected, will the research team have access to them?

   a. **Data being collected will likely include: individual-level student enrollment and attendance (which WDSS students are attending each service, duration, frequency); content and quality of services provided, incoming family needs assessment, and regular surveys from non-profit service providers. Yes, an evaluator will have access to these, de-identified but linked to other incoming data –and to any data collected on the project.**

6. Will there be possible comparison groups for the current identified treatment groups? Could there be matching of groups, etc etc? We think yes.

   a. **Yes. All student-level extant data pulled from the school district will be available for a comparison group of students as well. Comparison data for primary data collection could be explored.**

7. Is the funding for this initiative coming from federal, state, local or foundation funds?

   a. **Currently all direct funding is from Foundations. The Local Education Agency is making substantive in-kind contributions. We anticipate that grant funding will grow over time to include state and federal funding as well.**

8. Section 3.5.1-We would have one lead person assigned and then 3 or 4 additional statisticians, data analysts and highly experienced evaluators. We would like to include all in the resume section.

   a. **We welcome the inclusion of additional project personnel CVs/resumes within the application. Please limit CV/resumes to 1-page max for project personnel beyond the project lead and two additional key personnel.**

9. Is this proposal a double or single spaced submission? Or does it matter?

   a. **Single spaced. Suggested page number is a recommended maximum, not a required length.**

10. Does SMU's data sharing agreement with Dallas ISD allow for tracking outcomes of students who complete grades 7 and 8 at WDSS?

    a. **The Dallas ISD data sharing agreement would allow tracking outcomes of students who graduate from WDSS if they remain in the district. At present, we are exploring pathways to continue tracking graduates outside of Dallas ISD and into post-secondary pursuits.**

11. <u>Will SMU's IRB be used for the project? Or does SMU want the external evaluator to get IRB approval? If so, will SMU's IRB designate the external evaluator's IRB as the IRB of record?</u>

   a. **SMU's IRB will be used for this project. The approval is designed to cover broad process and outcome evaluation questions. New proposed questions that may not fit under this current approval can be submitted as an amendment to the approved protocol. However, the evaluator will need to submit a research proposal to Dallas ISD and execute an independent data sharing agreement with the district. That submission can draw heavily from the existing, approved SMU research proposal which takes into account the types of evaluation questions and extant data that would be used for external evaluation.**

12. <u>Is SMU interested in collaborating with the external evaluator on measuring and documenting implementation?</u>

   a. **Yes. While the evaluation will primarily focus on outcomes and impact, we are also interested in collaboration around monitoring implementation and other process evaluation.**

13. <u>How will students be selected to participate in WDSS? Is demand for spaces in the school expected to exceed supply?</u>

   a. **Eventually, demand is expected to exceed supply. The school has a hybrid mechanism for selection. Seventh and eighth grades represent a neighborhood school; there is no lottery – if students live in the area zoned for the school, they can enroll. For PreK-6th grades the school is a 50-50 priority lottery. This means**
      i. **students are selected through lottery; there is an application process but no admittance criteria (this is not a magnet school)**
      ii. **students living in West Dallas will be given priority and will be selected first out of that lottery and**
      iii. **the lottery will target having 50% economically disadvantaged students, 50% not.**

14. <u>What data can be tracked through the data system and dashboard created during the planning grant (Referenced in Section 1.1 of the RFP)?</u>

   a. **Currently the dashboard includes extant data from Dallas ISD. There are plans to expand the dashboard to include additional data elements in the future. Applicants should be able to utilize flat files to receive data in the event that all project data are not yet housed on the dashboard. Note: the dashboard does not currently have an export function, csv or other data files will be provided to the external evaluator by CORE or by other Simmons project staff.**

15. <u>Can you share the logic model that was previously created (Referenced in Exhibit A, Page 2)?</u>

a. **The logic model is in interim format and not ready to share.**

16. How do you anticipate the external evaluator collaborating with CORE to ensure that formative data needed to provide context for the outcomes are available to the external evaluator?

    a. **There will be a process of onboarding the awarded vendor for this project. During that time, CORE will make available data collection documents that specify all incoming data and facilitate discussion between the external evaluator and other Simmons project staff and faculty to determine additional data collection needs and available resources.**

17. Are there key academic outcomes that you are most interesting in studying through this evaluation?

    a. **Eventual outcomes for the project will relate to STEM learning and college and career readiness. In the next three years, performance assessments, 21ˢᵗ century skills, and other proximal outcomes will be of most interest.**

18. Can the bullets in section 3.3 be addressed through a separate document or should they be addressed through the CV and statement of work?

    a. **Vendor experience in these areas should be addressed explicitly in the CV, Statement of Work, and short descriptions of evaluation work performed (section 3.4).**

19. Can you provide a list of all student data the external evaluator will have access to? The RFP mentions STAAR data, but will other extant student data be available?

    a. **All standard Extant Data – Attendance, Discipline, Course Grades, Etc.**

20. We understand that STAAR data (and other student data) will be de-identified. Will that be done such that the external evaluator can link student records (a) across years, (b) to other types of student data (e.g., demographics and eligibility for support services, measures of college and career readiness, student aspirations), (c) to teacher data, and (d) to community partner data?

    a. **Yes, either a dummy variable will be provided or SMU core will link these files for the external evaluator and provide the requested data sets.**

21. What data related to teacher background, preparation, preparedness, professional development, and instructional practice will be available? Will these be de-identified, and, if so, will the external evaluator be able to link across time points?

    a. **Extant data regularly dept by school districts about teachers will be collected. Additional primary data will also be collected from teachers (TBD).**