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OSDE Releases Updated Bible RFP Requirements

Oklahoma City, Okla – At the recommendation of the Office of Management and Enterprise Services (OMES) - the state agency that manages and executes the State of Oklahoma's processes for securing state contracts - the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) will be releasing updated requirements for vendors seeking to fulfill OSDE's request for 55,000 Bibles to be provided to public school classrooms.

The new Request for Proposal (RFP) is available on the SDE website and generally includes the following updates:

- Allowing for the copies of the US Pledge of Allegiance, US Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution and U.S. Bill of Rights documents to be bound with the Bible or separately from it
- Allowing SDE to consider multiple suppliers for provision of these goods
- Adding "price" as an evaluation criteria
- Adding that the additional founding documents must also be bound in durable material
- Extended the RFP closing date from Oct 14, 2024, to Oct 21, 2024

OMES suggested these amendments to the RFP, which Superintendent Walters and SDE staff agree to, and are pleased to make.

Unfortunately, there have been false reports that have been repeated by numerous, supposedly credible, news organizations that the state's RFP was catered to one specific organization. This is not only untrue but a violation of Oklahoma law. OSDE is committed to a fair and transparent competition that protects the integrity of the purchasing process and appreciates the guidance from OMES throughout this undertaking.

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Following is a brief, but not exhaustive, summary of the structure of this specific RFP process:

- SDE submits suggested RFP language to OMES.
- OMES determines the ultimate RFP language to ensure all aspects follow state law.
- OMES gathers and responds to inquiries from various interested vendors during the open question window which is established by OMES.
- OMES gathers all vendor submissions and provides all bids to OSDE for final consideration.
- The Department of Procurement within OSDE appoints three panelists (who are yet to be determined) (We have selected our evaluators and provided their names to OMES for this RFP) to review the final proposals, as provided by OMES. The panelists choose a final vendor they believe is best equipped to deliver the service as proposed, in line with the standards outlined in the RFP.

At no time throughout the RFP process is State Superintendent Ryan Walters engaged. He is neither apprised of the vendors seeking the state contract nor the process to select finalists - that would be a violation of state law. Such standards apply to every state department head where state contracts are sought and finalized.

“It is disappointing and a disservice to the people of Oklahoma that virtually every state news outlet has dodged all accountability on such blatant misreporting of the facts surrounding this request for proposal from the state,” State Superintendent Walters said. “There are numerous Bible vendors in this country that have the capacity to fulfill this request. The purpose of the RFP process is to find a vendor that can provide the product we need, of reasonable quality, at the best value. There are numerous state employees engaged and committed to a process to determine who that best vendor will be, and I have no involvement in that process, as it should be. My number one goal is to ensure that our classrooms have copies of the Bible so that it can be utilized as an appropriate tool to properly and accurately teach Oklahoma students of its important influence in the history of our country and its secular value. Period.”

To view the full RFP, please visit <https://sde.ok.gov/ev0000555>.

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