

Executive Summary

The goal of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to secure proposals from qualified course creation companies to design and develop a full suite of asynchronous online courses for our STEM-focused Pennsylvania cyber charter school. The courses to be developed will span the core subjects of Mathematics, Science, English Language Arts, and Social Studies, with content tailored for students in Kindergarten through Grade 12. The objective is to provide high-quality, engaging, and standards-aligned courses that can be delivered fully online to meet the diverse needs of our student population.

Currently, our school purchases and utilizes pre-made asynchronous courses from a variety of K-12 content vendors. While this approach has served us to some extent, it has proven to be inefficient and sometimes results in a disjointed learning experience for our students. The inconsistency in course structure, content quality, and user experience has led to challenges in maintaining coherence across grade levels and subjects. As a result, we are seeking a vendor to create a comprehensive, unified curriculum that can be fully integrated into our learning management system (LMS), providing a seamless and consistent learning experience for all students.

Reach Cyber Charter School encourages innovative and cost-effective solutions that align with our strategic vision and operational needs. The selected partner will demonstrate expertise, reliability, and a proven track record in K-12 asynchronous course creation. Interested parties must submit their proposals by August 1st, 2025, as per the requirements outlined in this RFP. Proposals should outline the bidder's qualifications, approach, timeline, and cost estimates, and include a list of any third parties you may utilize for this work. We look forward to reviewing competitive proposals that will help us achieve our mission effectively and efficiently.

Curriculum Objectives

Reach Cyber Charter School seeks to develop a series of high-quality courses that align with our mission to promote academic growth and build curiosity through integrated STEM opportunities, K-12 personal instruction, and career exploration. These courses should be designed to engage learners, enhance their skills, and support their academic growth.

The primary objectives of the curriculum development include:

1. **Educational Excellence** – Courses are grounded in best practices for asynchronous instructional design, incorporating up-to-date research, industry trends, and relevant case studies.
2. **Learner-Centered Approach** – Content is engaging, interactive, and adaptable to diverse learning styles, utilizing multimedia elements such as videos, simulations, and interactive games.
3. **Competency-Based Learning** – Courses are structured around clearly defined learning outcomes, ensuring that learners acquire practical, applicable skills that can be measured through assessments and real-world applications.
4. **Alignment with Pennsylvania State Standards** – Course content completely aligns with applicable Pennsylvania Core and Academic Standards. Courses may also align to national or other standards, when applicable.
5. **Flexibility & Accessibility** – Courses are designed with student choice in mind (e.g., students choose from multiple application-based activities related to the same standard or skill) and compliant with accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG, ADA). Additionally, inherent in all courses is the flexibility to meet the needs of students with IEPs, GIEPs, and 504 plans, as well as English Learners.
6. **Scalability & Sustainability** – The curriculum framework allows for future expansion, updates, and modifications to maintain relevance and effectiveness over time.
7. **Integration with Existing Systems** – Courses are compatible with Canvas LMS to ensure seamless delivery and tracking of learner progress.

Proposals should detail how the vendor intends to achieve these objectives, including their approach to curriculum design, instructional strategies, and any technological solutions they propose to incorporate. Proposals should also include how courses will be designed for compatibility with a 180-day school calendar.

Curriculum Content

The selected vendor must design and develop comprehensive, engaging, and Pennsylvania standards-aligned curriculum content for English Language Arts (K-5) with only Instructional Design assistance for 6-12, Science, Math, and Social Studies. The curriculum must be designed to integrate STEM, 21st-century skills, and career readiness to prepare students for success in both higher education and the workforce. It is expected that content be aligned with current educational best practices, including the selection of instructional materials. Proposals must demonstrate how the following elements will be incorporated:

1. STEM Integration Across Subjects

- **English Language Arts:** Incorporate reading and writing tasks that analyze scientific and technical texts, support research-based writing, and explore real-world STEM topics.
- **Science:** Ensure alignment with Pennsylvania Science, Technology and Engineering, Environmental Literacy and Sustainability Standards (STEELS) and include hands-on virtual labs, data analysis activities, and problem-based learning experiences.
- **Math:** Apply mathematical concepts to real-world STEM challenges, including coding, data visualization, and financial literacy.
- **Social Studies:** Highlight the historical and societal impacts of technological advancements, engineering innovations, and scientific discoveries.

2. Integration of Science of Reading

To support literacy development across all subjects, courses must incorporate principles of Science of Reading best practices. This includes:

- **Explicit and Systematic Instruction** – Embedding direct instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies where appropriate.
- **Disciplinary Literacy** – Developing subject-specific literacy skills, such as analyzing scientific texts, interpreting mathematical word problems, and evaluating historical documents.
- **Language Development Support** – Integrating strategies for building academic vocabulary and background knowledge to enhance reading comprehension across all subjects.
- **In the Primary Grades** – Aligning with the UFLI phonics program.

3. 21st-Century Skills Development

- Curriculum must promote critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication through interactive lessons and project-based learning.
- Digital literacy and media literacy must be integrated to help students evaluate sources, analyze data, and present findings effectively.
- Opportunities for problem-solving, decision-making, and adaptability must be embedded into course activities to enhance student readiness for future challenges.

4. Career Readiness and Real-World Applications

- Courses must provide real-world scenarios, case studies, and industry-related challenges to connect academic concepts with career pathways.
- Career exploration activities should be embedded in all subjects, showcasing careers in STEM, humanities, business, and other relevant fields.

The vendor must provide detailed explanations and examples of how STEM, Science of Reading, 21st-century skills, and career readiness will be integrated into each subject area. Additionally, vendors must outline how they will ensure content is written to the appropriate reading level for the intended age group of students.

Instructional Methods

The selected vendor must design and develop K-12 asynchronous courses that align with best practices for online learning and support diverse learners in our cyber school environment. The instructional methods must adhere to the following requirements:

1. Standards Alignment

- a. All course content and instructional strategies must align with Pennsylvania Core and Academic Standards and any other applicable state or national standards.

2. Engagement and Interactivity

- a. Courses must include interactive elements such as simulations, virtual labs, discussion boards, gamified learning experiences, and adaptive learning pathways to engage students in active learning.
- b. Multimedia components (videos, animations, and interactive exercises) must be designed to enhance comprehension and retention of concepts.

3. Differentiation and Accessibility

- a. Instructional methods must incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles.
- b. Instructional methods must support different learning styles.
- c. Opportunities for personalization of instructional methods must be included.
- d. Course lessons include opportunities for enrichment and remediation.

4. Assessment and Feedback

- a. Courses must integrate a variety of formative and summative assessments, including auto-graded quizzes, written assignments, project-based assessments, and self-check activities.
- b. Automated and instructor-initiated feedback mechanisms should be included to provide students with timely, meaningful feedback.

5. Student Autonomy and Self-Paced Learning

- a. Instruction should be designed to encourage self-directed learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving.
- b. Courses must include clear navigation and pacing guides to help students stay on track.

6. Teacher Facilitation and Support

- a. While courses are asynchronous, instructional methods should include opportunities for live teacher instruction and support.
- b. Course design should facilitate teacher monitoring of student progress and intervention.

7. Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Instruction

- a. Course materials must reflect diverse perspectives and be free from bias, ensuring inclusivity and cultural relevance.
- b. Learning activities should encourage critical thinking about global and local issues, fostering a well-rounded educational experience.

8. Technology Integration and LMS Compatibility

- a. Courses must be designed for seamless integration with Canvas LMS and should be SCORM compliant.
- b. Instructional methods should leverage technology to enhance learning while maintaining a user-friendly interface for students and teachers.

9. Printed Books and Material Kits

- a. Printed books and material kits (including manipulatives) are a necessary component of certain courses and must be provided.
- b. Parents, guardians, and learning coaches must have access to high quality, course-specific resources to support their students.

The vendor must provide detailed descriptions of how their instructional methods will meet these requirements.

Assessment and Evaluation

The selected vendor shall design and integrate a comprehensive assessment and evaluation system within each K-12 asynchronous course. The system must align with Pennsylvania State Standards and any relevant national standards and be designed to measure student learning effectively. Course assessments must reflect multiple levels of student mastery.

The following assessment types must be included in all courses:

1. Formative Assessments:
 - a. embedded within lessons to provide real-time feedback
 - b. includes quizzes, interactive activities, and self-checks
 - c. adaptive or differentiated where applicable to meet diverse learner needs
2. Summative Assessments:
 - a. administered at the end of modules or courses to measure mastery
 - b. includes a variety of question types such as multiple-choice, short answer, and performance-based tasks
3. Project and Performance-Based Assessments:
 - a. includes projects, presentations, and written assignments
 - b. encourages critical thinking, creativity, and real-world application

Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms

- Rubrics, answer keys, and item banks for all assessments must be provided.
- Opportunities for student choice in how they are assessed must be included.
- Courses must include opportunities for student self-assessment and reflection.

Accessibility and Equity Considerations

- All assessments must be compliant with WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility standards.
- Alternative assessment options should be provided for students with disabilities.

Integration and Compatibility

- Assessments must integrate seamlessly with Canvas LMS.
- Assessments must be compatible with Turnitin and/or other products that check for plagiarism.
- Assessments should be designed for use in both asynchronous and synchronous environments.

The vendor shall provide a detailed plan for the development, implementation, and validation of assessments within the courseware. Proposals should include sample assessments and demonstrate alignment with best practices in educational measurement.

Deadline for submission: August 1st, 2025

Apply via email to: Andy Gribbin, Director of Teaching and Learning, agribbin@reachcyber.org