Recommendation for New Contracts

AEPA 024-C Digital Resources & Instructional Materials

Solicitations rejected PRIOR to Category Committee evaluation with cause for rejection:

Xello Inc (Did not complete Part E Signature Forms, didn't initialize and didn't complete all signature fields)

Solicitations rejected DURING Category Committee evaluation with cause for rejection:

- Accelerate Learning (No discounts provided other than for 4–8 year licenses, No Sales history provided, Exception to T&C's with Indemnification)
- Imagination Station dba Istation (No discounts, increase in list prices)
- Just Right Reader (Items already awarded in 023-D School & Instructional Supplies)
- Pitsco Education LLC (Items already awarded in 023-D School & Instructional Supplies)

Methodology Used by the Committee for Determination:

_____ Low responsive and responsible Respondent(s) based on the attached price tabulation.

_____ Low responsive and responsible Respondents(s) based on the attached market basket study tabulation.

X Responsive and responsible Respondent based on specialty offerings or value.

Vendor(s) recommended with reason for recommendation:

- Complete Book and Media Supply, Inc. (Digital/Print Textbooks Subcategory) – Low when compared to other vendors in this subcategory but offering is smaller.
- Barnes & Noble Booksellers, Inc. (Digital/Print Textbooks Subcategory) – Brings value of 1 million plus titles in multiple formats.
- Mackin Book Company dba Mackin Educational Resources (Library/Media Resources & Automation Subcategory) – Only vendor in subcategory. Mackin is a one-source acquisition service providing more than 3 million titles from over 18,000 different publishers through one continuously updated online catalog.
- Bluum USA, Inc. (Instructional/Classroom Content Subcategory) - STEM-Makerspace items only, Low price for unique items offered compared to other vendors – Specialty Offering on 420 STEM Makerspace items.
- EEP-EES Holdings, LLC (Instructional/Classroom Content Subcategory) – both unique online curriculum and support learning materials (School Specialty is already reselling most all of these items at the 25% discount, we have still had questions about Net Effective Bid prices where they are not the 25% discount). – Specialty Offering in Online and hardcopy support materials.
- Flinn Scientific Inc. (Instructional/Classroom Content Subcategory) –Science items Chemicals, Biology/Life Science, Chemistry, Earth Science, Physical Science, Safety, Physics and Engineering that no other vendor in this solicitation is offering – Science Specialty offering
- Rethink Autism Inc. (Instructional/Classroom Content Subcategory) unique suite of solutions for Staff Professional Learning, MTSS & Behavior, Wellness Curricula, Academic Intervention, Data Collection/Tracking Progress – Specialty Offering
- SchoolsPLP (Instructional/Classroom Content Subcategory) provides a comprehensive PreK-12 curriculum suite that enables schools and districts to deliver full-time virtual, credit retrieval, acceleration/remediation, and blended learning programs. – Specialty Offering
- Super Duper Inc (Instructional/Classroom Content Subcategory) offers a wide variety of products for general education, special education and speech therapy – Specialty Offering.

- The OrganWise Guys Inc (Instructional/Classroom Content Subcategory) offers a wide variety of evidence-based, year-round nutrition and healthy living resources for PreK-5th grade in both digital and physical/manipulative formats. – Specialty Offering

The below responses listed deviations and/or exceptions :

- See vendor responses Part D – Questionnaire for full list of exceptions or deviations, listed below are those that could possibly impact a state's decision to award a contract or not.
- **Complete Book and Media Supply, Inc.** (Discounts & Price Changes - Our discount structure will remain the same, but list prices are subject to increase). This does not impact or recommendation for award.
- **EEP-EES Holdings, LLC** (Only Specifications in Subcategory Instructional/Classroom Content 8.2 and 7.1 would apply see Part D Questionnaire for full response, they will not discount their Professional Development and Training fees) This does not impact or recommendation for award.
    - Received explanation from EPS on how they are/were affiliated with School Specialty
        - Affiliation with School Specialty: EPS Operations, LLC is not affiliated with School Specialty any longer as of February, 2023. School Specialty's (SSL) supplemental ELA and math curriculum division has become a standalone company and operates under the name EPS Operations, LLC (EPS). We are an independent entity, and our proposal is separate from any awards or contracts that School Specialty may have received. Our recommendation for the award should not conflict with other School Specialty awards, particularly the 023-D School & Instructional Supplies, as we are no longer associated with them.
    - Received explanation from EPS When calculating the 25% off discount of list price we noticed their Net Effective Bid Price is not 25% off, it is more like 16% (as submitted in Part F Pricing Schedule EPS Operations LLC.xlsx).
        - The Net Effective Bid Price may appear to be less than the 25% discount because it factors in various components, including shipping and associated fee but only for our print curriculum, that are not included in a straightforward percentage discount calculation. The Net Effective Bid Price effectively represents a 25% discount off our list price for the products and/or services included in this solicitation. Although, after incorporating the shipping and fees I believe this percentage becomes 16%. Our standard list price does not include the shipping, handling, administrative fee and other specific state costs. As noted in the Narrative Part D of our proposal on page 37 of Narrative Part D, our pricing structure are the same for each AEPA Member Agency, shipping, handling, administrative fee and other specific state costs are added to arrive at total price offered to the Individual AEPA Member Agency. To ensure transparency and accuracy in our proposal, we provided both the list price and the net price in the spreadsheet (EPS Operations LLC.xlsx). The net price takes into account the shipping and associated fee but only for our print curriculum. It's important to note that the digital curriculum does not have a shipping and handling fee. This approach allows us to provide a clear breakdown of costs and ensure that AEPA Member Agencies have a comprehensive understanding of our pricing structure.
- **The OrganWise Guys Inc** (8.22 Vendor provides content in K-12 and most curricular areas. Most of our items are for PreK-5th grade students and their families. The year-round Foods of the Month nutrition education items that can also be used in middle/high school cafeterias.) This does not impact or recommendation for award.
- **Mackin Book Company dba Mackin Educational Resources**
    - 7.1.3 **The Vendor Partner will notify the Buyer if product ordered cannot be shipped within a 48-hour time**
        - Mackin is a value-added distributor. We order on-demand, directly from our publishers, so our customers are not limited to a specific inventory of items. We have access to over 3 million items from 18,000 publishers. Once we receive those items, Mackin will provide a number of cataloging and processing options, free of charge. Our standard turnaround time for cataloged and processed orders is 28 - 45 days after receipt of order. Digital items "ship," or are available in your Mackin VIA, in a matter of days.
    - 8.2.4 (Subcategory Instructional/Classroom Content) Does not apply
    - 8.2.6 (Subcategory Instructional/Classroom Content) Does not apply
    - 8.2.7 (Subcategory Instructional/Classroom Content) Does not apply

        - Mackin VIA, our free digital content management system, is fully accessible for those with disabilities. Mackin VIA includes text-to-speech, font options, and much more.
    - 8.3.3 - 8.3.8 **Library Automation system should be capable in design, architecture, and performance capacity of supporting all library related applications that make use of bibliographic data, including but not limited to**
        - 8.3.3 No bid - Mackin does not provide a Library Automation System
        - 8.3.5 **Content Management system (Video, Audio, Document)** Mackin VIA", our FREE multi-award-winning digital content management system, provides easy access to eBooks, read-alongs, audio books, databases, and videos. With just one login, users can view, utilize, and manage all their digital resources. Further, Mackin VIA allows simultaneous, unlimited access to multiple users and is mobile friendly. Mackin VIA is an open system that allows schools to add any existing or created original resource(s) to its personalized Mackin VIA.
    - 8.4.4-8.4.5 (Subcategory Digital or Print Textbooks) Does not apply
    - 8.5.1-8.5.8 (Subcategory Online Professional Development & Training Resources) Does not apply

Proposed Motion:

The Category Committee recommends that AEPA reject the responses from:
Accelerate Learning
Imagination Station dba Istation
Just Right Reader
Pitsco Education LLC

Proposed Motion:

The Category Committee recommends the following responses for approval by AEPA:
Complete Book and Media Supply, Inc.
Barnes & Noble Booksellers, Inc.
Bluum USA, Inc.
EEP-EES Holdings, LLC
Flinn Scientific Inc.
Rethink Autism Inc.
SchoolsPLP
Super Duper Inc
The OrganWise Guys Inc
Mackin Book Company dba Mackin Educational Resources

Committee Members

Committee Co-Chair – Name & Signature: Craig Peterson - Nebraska

Co-Chair Committee Member: Hope Hardin Borbely - Illinois

Committee Member: Patricia McKim - Massachusetts

Committee Member: Andrew Pickens - Texas