



Selecting an External Provider

Resource: Guide to Working with External Providers, 4th Edition, American Institutes for Research

Getting Started

- 1.** Know your school or LEA needs. Conduct your needs assessment with stakeholders and identify priority needs. Understand the root causes that contribute to the needs. Develop your action plan to address the needs.
- 2.** Plan your budget to support the work that needs to be done, determine your time frame and funding sources.
- 3.** Examine internal resources available to identify existing expertise and resources.
- 4.** View the landscape of external providers to identify types of providers and types of services offered.
- 5.** Review the characteristics of high-quality services:
 - Services are **aligned** with the goals established by the school or LEA.
 - Services are offered as part of a **long-term strategy** for improved student learning.
 - Services are **customized** to the unique needs of the school or LEA.
 - Services are grounded in research and are **evidence-based**.
 - Services should be delivered with a plan to **build capacity** at the school or LEA.

Create Your Selection Process

- 1.** Establish a selection team.
- 2.** Create your request for proposal by outlining your needs, budget, timeline, outcomes expected (specific student and teacher learning that will occur), services to be delivered, and selection criteria.
- 3.** Build a list of potential providers.

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Vet and Select a Provider

- 1. Conduct initial conversations with the provider to review your selection criteria, the cost of services, the outcomes you expect, and the provider's evaluation strategy to determine if your outcomes can be met.
- 2. Document the responses and compare answers between providers.
- 3. Ask for references and contact others who have worked with the provider.
- 4. Reach an agreement with your stakeholders on which provider to select.

Negotiate Your contract

- 1. Clarify the package of services provided and explore ways in which it can be further customized. Be fully aware of what materials and services are required but may not be included in the package. Identify any gaps between what is needed and what is offered.
- 2. Determine actions and support provided by the school and/or LEA.
- 3. Determine the length of the contract.
- 4. Determine outcomes and evaluation measures.

Work in Partnership

- 1. Create your implementation plan and a plan for ongoing communication with the provider.
- 2. Address common issues that arise during implementation.
- 3. Engage in ongoing evaluation of the services provided as well as the impact on student outcomes and the level of implementation.

Plan for the Future

- 1. Reshape the relationship after the end of the contract. Is additional work needed?
- 2. Sustain the work.
- 3. Terminate partnerships that do not meet expectations or address your outcomes.