MEMORANDUM

TO: Megan Aghazadian, Deputy Commissioner of Operations, Office of the Commissioner of Education

THROUGH: Melody Parrish, Deputy Commissioner of Technology, Office of Information Technology Services

THROUGH: Sandra Tate, Director of Business Operations, Office of Information Technology Services

FROM: Sharon Gaston, Director of Application Development and PMO, Office of Information Technology Services

CC: Dean Howard, Acting Director, Contracts and Purchasing Division

DATE: July 10, 2020

SUBJECT: **Award Recommendation for RFO # 701-20-014, Texas Student Data System (TSDS) Operational Data Store (ODS) 3.x Upgrade**

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to recommend approval of an award, subject to successful completion of negotiations, to **Certica Solutions, Inc.** to provide a software as a service (SaaS) solution for the Texas Student Data System (TSDS) Operational Data Store (ODS) that utilizes the Ed-Fi ODS/APIs as the primary data collection and storage mechanism for TSDS and will keep pace with the published Ed-Fi upgrades.

Solicitation Summary

The solicitation was posted on March 27, 2020, and responses were due on April 28, 2020. TEA received four responses to the above-referenced solicitation and three responses were determined to be responsive and presented to the evaluation team for review.

Evaluation Summary

The evaluation team consisted of six scoring evaluators knowledgeable of the services and requirements contained in the solicitation. The scoring evaluators were Fuat Aki, Laura Dennis, Sharon Gaston, Scott Johnson, Casey Sieverman, and Leanne Simons. All members of the evaluation team have completed the required Contract Management Training. Evaluators assessed each response using the criteria published in the solicitation. The top two scoring vendors were invited for oral presentations, after which the response submitted by **Certica Solutions, Inc.** received an average final score of 126 which was the highest score and 17 points more than the next highest scoring response. The accuracy of the final calculation of scores was verified by a third party on June 17, 2020. The evaluation criteria were as follows:

CATEGORIES	POINTS

A. GENERAL AND OVERALL RESPONSE
1. Overall quality and clarity of response. (10)
    • Overall response demonstrates a clear understanding of the services to be performed.
    • Overall response demonstrates a clear understanding of the project.
2. Rate the feature coverage of the respondent's proposed SaaS offering. (5)
3. Respondent has a reasonable approach to additional feature development necessary to fulfill the SaaS feature requirements. (5)
	20

B. MANAGEMENT COMPONENT 1. Quality of the evidence of the respondent's skills to develop and manage to a project plan that identifies product release dates and key dependencies on TEA deliverables. (5) 2. Evidence of the respondent's skills to produce a product roadmap that documents feature scope, delivery timing, and demo schedule. (5) 3. Evidence of the respondent's skills to provide input and background for TEA's planning and governance framework, including the Change Management Plan, Pilot Implementation Plan. (5) 4. Evidence that the respondent is capable of collaboration with TEA regarding ongoing product release cycles and the TEA Data Governance process. (5)	20

C. TASK, ACTIVITY, DELIVERABLE AND BUDGET PLAN 　1. Respondent's overall project plan is reasonable and aligned with project milestones. (5) 　2. Evidence that the respondent is capable of communicating the project risks with their approach and has proposed reasonable mitigation strategies. (5) 　3. Evidence of the respondent's skill and experience with requirements gathering and documentation (if existing product requires new feature development). (5) 　4. Evidence of the respondent's skill and experience with solution design and documentation (if existing product requires new feature development). (5) 　5. Evidence of the respondent's skills to produce documentation for data mappings, metrics, and business rules (if existing product requires new feature development). (5) 　6. Respondent's budget is clear and reflects a complete understanding of the SaaS product and project requirements. (5) 　7. Respondent's overall project cost is reasonable. (20) 　　• Vendor's SaaS costs are reasonable. 　　• Vendor's one-time development, management, and other activity costs are reasonable (if applicable).	50
D. TECHNICAL COMPONENT 　1. Strength and appropriateness of the proposed enterprise service integrations including the eScholar UID system, the TSDS global notification system, TEAL, and TEA central organization data. (5) 　2. Strength and appropriateness of the proposed plan of migrating the Ed-Fi ODS to align with TEDS and the Ed-Fi Data Standard v3.1. (5) 　3. Strength and appropriateness of proposed solution to implement the Ed-Fi Teacher Prep Data Model Extension. (5) 　4. Strength and appropriateness of proposed solution to implement TEA defined data model extensions. TEA will map the Texas Education Data Standard to Ed-Fi data standard version 3.1 and provide documentation outlining specific extensions that will be needed to fulfill TEA required data collections. (5) 　5. Evidence of the respondent's skills to work closely with TEA staff to implement TEA defined business rules. TEA staff will document the existing PEIMS and required collections business rules, compare to the business rule set currently provided by the respondent, and identify rules that must be added. (5) 　6. Strength and appropriateness of proposed solution to deploy sandboxes for vendors to test their API integration as they prepare to support LEAs and Educator Prep Programs in complying with the updated TSDS submission processes and standards. This includes supporting pilot LEAs in appropriately configuring API permissions for their vendors. (5)	30
E. TRAINING AND ONGOING MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT 　1. Quality of the evidence of the respondent's skills to produce training materials for ESCs and vendors on how to set-up, configure, and troubleshoot (business and technical training) the SaaS products. (5) 　2. Evidence of the respondent's skills and resources to provide customer assistance/support for the solution, including basic help desk support for simple user questions concerning the base commercial solution and any questions concerning TEA added-value components. (5) 　3. Evidence of the respondent's skills to maintain the solution including identifying and correcting defects in a timely fashion. (5) 　4. Evidence of the respondent's skills to provide tier 4 help desk support for TEA who will escalate issues from TEA internal staff, LEAs, EPPs, and LEA/EPP vendors. (5) 　5. Strength and appropriateness of proposed solution to provide quarterly enhancements designed by TEA in response to regulatory and legal data collection and reporting requirements. (5) 　6. Respondent's solutions meet FedRAMP requirements. (5)	30
Total Points	**150**

Award Recommendation

The evaluation team recommends an award to Certica Solutions, Inc. The best value offered to the state include the purchase price, the capacity for expanding and upgrading to more advanced levels of technology, and the technical support requirements for the maintenance of data across a network platform and the management of the network's hardware and software.

Certica Solutions, Inc., through the response and references left evaluators confident in the quality and reliability of goods and services, as well as their experience and demonstrated capabilities. One reference stated,

Certica Solutions has always been reliable and on time. They are always quick to respond to questions or issues we have. It is a pleasure to work with this vendor.

Another reference stated,

Certica was very responsive and adaptive to LAUSD needs. They were very flexible in supporting LAUSD needs. They were instrumental in automating a highly manual process. The resulting benefits of higher data quality were significant and prompt. Simplified reporting of data issues, made reporting easy, and made a great difference in the end results. Others were dubious about the value when initially proposed but are strong believers in the product now. Millions of dollars are estimated to have been recovered just by monitoring attendance not initially recorded.

This response took into consideration appropriate costs while also providing an affordable and easily implemented Ed-Fi-powered platform for both application interoperability and analytics. Many of the project requirements that are not currently fulfilled by functionality in either Data Connect or Certify are either already identified or are requirements that will be valuable in the broader marketplace. Because of this, Certica will not charge regular consulting fees to provide the additional functionality or implementation, integration and training services for this project.

The vendor's response includes a total contract value of $5,042,000 which includes two optional renewal periods. TEA has received delegated authority for the "not-to-exceed amount" of $5,130,000 for services through August 31, 2023.

The initial term of the contract will be from contract execution through August 31, 2021. The vendor's proposed contract value for the initial contract period is $1,965,000.

The approved FY 20 budget is $620,035, and the funds have been pre-encumbered on requisition numbers 46516 and 46538, which includes $220,035 from the MSDF fund source and $400,000 from the BMGF fund source.

When FY21 speed charts are released, the project manager intends to pre-encumber $1,744,965 for FY 21 services. The FY 21 pre-encumbrance will include $894,965 from the MSDF fund source and $850,000 from BMGF fund source.

The response recommended for award does not include alternate contract terms and conditions; however, the project manager does anticipate the need for contract negotiation of proposed services and budget related items.