#	Vendor Questions for RFI #: 24-001	NYSED Response
1	Is the form creation capability limited to certification applications and related functions? If not, what functions would you want form creation?	From the OTI side yes, but we also house other forms that are used by the districts and third-party vendors such as the Professional Learning Plan Attestations (not connected to certification). OSPRA uses the Test Security Incident Report Form. There might be more “one-off” forms in the future. Within NYSED, we want to the ability to create forms that feed a dashboard and can be reported on. We also would like to see other abilities associated with forms such as securely attaching documents, incorporating online payments, and allowing user restrictions on the dashboard.
2	What data are you wanting to integrate from WES, can you provide examples? This appears to be student data, is student data something you wish to integrate into the teacher certification platform? If not, please explain the need for this integration.	We would like to be able to electronically receive WES evaluations and populate the applicant's TEACH account without human intervention. Currently, WES sends us the copy and we must associate it with the applicant account.
3	Can you provide more information about the secure URL and the purpose of the process? The platform is permission driven and districts and schools in state would have a portal into the system and could have access to the secure URL. Out of state employers would not have access to the platform without secure credentials. Are you looking for a secure repository for the completed employment verification forms?	We are looking for a way for out of state schools and any other employers who do not have TEACH access (this might include industry businesses verifying the experience of someone who is not related to education or a school), to receive a link to an electronic form that will be completed and immediately entered into the applicant account.
4	Is there AI functions NYSED wants or are interested in having?	Nothing specific at this time. We are, however, interested in what a vendor can offer.
5	Could you provide examples of pupil personnel services professionals?	School counselors, psychologist, social workers, attendance teachers and nurses.
6	How many types of certifications are currently issued by NYSED?	• Time limited (have an expiration date) = Supplementary, certificate extensions, Initial, Provisional, 4 levels of Teaching Assistant certificates, 5 levels of coaching licenses, Adult Ed certs, first/second reissuance, time extensions, first/second renewal, 7 variations of Transitional certificates, Internship, Residency, Statements of Continuing Eligibility, Visiting Lecturer License, Military Spouse Permit • Lifetime certificates (no expiration) = Permanent, Professional
7	How are the evaluations structured? Are they simple checklists of requirements-met or is there a more complex, nested structure?	Currently it is a check list with some nesting for particular requirements.

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8	Are there different evaluations for various certification pathways (reciprocity, institutional recommendation, coursework/exams, CTE, Alternative Route etc.) or are these paths covered in a more complex evaluation?	Each certificate type has multiple certificate types and within those types are multiple pathways. Search Certification Requirements page replicates the evaluation requirements and outlines the various certificate types and pathways: https://eservices.nysed.gov/teach/certhelp/search-cert-reqs
9	How are the results of certification evaluations recorded and stored?	All evaluations are date stamped and stored in the applicant account. Manual evaluations generate a letter to the applicant with deficiencies while no notice is generated if the application is approved, and the certificate is issued. Some information regarding the evaluation is visible to applicants and some information is not.
10	How are fingerprints and background checks currently collected? Raw file, RESTful API, etc.	FTP
11	What types of forms need to be created by end-users? What is the level of validation that is required by these dynamically created forms?	See question #1
12	Does the current system leverage dynamic forms presently or is there another tool that NYSED uses such as FormStack, Google Forms, Microsoft Forms, etc.	There are several dynamic forms, but the majority are simple. We do not utilize any tools.
13	Dynamic reporting and visualization can be a very expensive system component. In some scenarios, integrating an industry leading tool such as PowerBI, Tableau, etc. can provide maximum flexibility and cost savings to the system. Does NYSED currently leverage any such reporting/data-visualization tool?	We have several reporting tools, such as IBM Cognos, but are more interested in seeing what is offered “out of the box” for all users from each vendor responding.
14	What is the breadth of the Case Management/Document Management legal review process?	High level, we would like to see a central repository for case and matter management. We are also interested in seeing what other relevant functionality each vendor offers such as contact management, document management, case notes, assigning tasks, customizable check lists, emails/communication, and calendar events
15	Does OTI have a common SSO platform that the new system is expected to use?	Yes. There is an internal application that provides access management. However, the current TEACH system uses the Executive Branch statewide software, NY.gov ID, for access.
16	Budget Allocation: Could you provide an indicative budget range for this project to guide our solution recommendations effectively?	Not at this time. We are using the RFI to learn more about out-of-the-box solutions or custom development and the associated costs.
17	Custom vs. Off-the-Shelf Solutions: Would NYSED consider a fully custom-built web application with third-party integrations, or are you primarily seeking a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) solution?	We would consider a fully, custom built web application although utilizing a low-code platform would be preferred.
18	W/MBE Goals: Is there a Minority/Women Business Enterprise (W/MBE) subcontracting requirement or goal associated with this RFI or a potential subsequent RFP?	The statewide goals are 30%.

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19	Current System Infrastructure: Could you elaborate on the existing technical environment, including the databases, programming languages, and hosting infrastructure currently in use?	Java, Oracle database, Apache Struts 1, WebLogic, PL/SQL, hosted internally.
20	Cloud Hosting Preference: Is NYSED open to entirely cloud-hosted solutions, or are there restrictions necessitating a hybrid or on-premises architecture?	We are open to an entirely cloud-hosted solution.
21	Third-Party Integrations: Are there additional third-party tools, beyond those mentioned in the RFI (e.g., IdentoGo, Zendesk), that the new system will need to integrate with?	National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) clearing house and portal.
22	Volume and Scalability: Could you provide details on anticipated growth in system usage, including application volumes and additional user types over the next five years?	We are not providing the specific breakdown, but we anticipate volume to slightly trend upward. Annually, there are nearly 100,000 certifications issued through TEACH with nearly 135,000 new applications filed. However, please note there are myriad other services and touchpoints for users to interact with the TEACH system.
23	Security Standards: Beyond SOC 2 and FedRAMP, are there additional specific compliance or security protocols that the system must meet?	No.
24	Legacy Data Migration: Are there known challenges with the Oracle database migration, such as data integrity/quality issues, that vendors should be aware of?	There will be expected challenges as the Oracle database is 20+ years old (duplicates, formatting, incomplete data within datasets, etc.).
25	Agile Development: How does NYSED define adherence to Agile best practices? Should vendors outline a specific Agile framework in their response?	The ability to incorporate changes during the implementation process and the expectation to demonstrate workable code to stakeholders at the completion of a sprint. An example would be the continuous development process when creating and presenting screens to the subject matter experts. The only reason for discussing a Change Management process would be for large items out of scope. A specific Agile framework is not required, but there is an expectation that the Atlassian tool, Jira, be used for development backlog creation and for sprinting.
26	Implementation Timeline: Are there critical milestones or deadlines, beyond the stated RFI dates, that vendors need to factor into their project plans?	No.
27	End-User Training: What is the preferred format for user training (e.g., in-person, virtual, documentation, video tutorials)?	There is a large user volume throughout the state (all professional educators and education administrators, such as principals, use TEACH). Training would involve a combination of online manuals, online FAQs, recorded videos, planned webinars—the medium will depend on the user type. In-person would only be used for Administrator training to create a train-the-trainer landscape.

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28	Custom Dashboards and Reporting: Does NYSED require advanced analytics capabilities, such as predictive modeling, within the dashboards and reporting tools?	Not at this time; although, we are interested in seeing what offerings are available.
29	Evaluation Metrics: How will NYSED evaluate vendors' ability to deliver a user-friendly and maintainable system?	Our subject matter experts will evaluate how intuitive the design is, how logical are the workflows, and how easy it is to create new forms, approval routes, new certifications, notifications, reports, and other basic functionality.
30	Future Enhancements: Is there a vision for incorporating advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence or machine learning, into this system in the long term?	See question #4.
31	Aside from the systems listed in the RFI (see below), what other systems does the new system need to integrate to/with? • Migrating an Oracle database with 20+ years of data • Fingerprinting - IdentoGo, N.Y. State Department of Criminal Justice, U.S. Department of Justice • Application Process -National Student Clearing House, Parchment, Pearson, Education Testing Service (ETS), World Education Services (WES) • Customer Service – Zendesk • Credit card payment processing - Elavon	NASDTEC clearing house and portal and several internal systems.
32	Are there other system users besides the following? • Applicant • School Administrator • NYSED Reviewer/Approver • OSPRA Case Manager • NY State Approved Education Providers • BOCES • Admin/non-admin • Ospra clerks	There are 32 different user types. They are a combination of administrators, managers, clerks, attorneys, investigators, public users, school districts, institutions and BOCES.
33	What is the breakdown of user volume by user type?	Although the volume fluctuates, we average 3,000-4,000 unique users per day. We are not providing the breakdown by user type; See answer #22.
34	Do reports created in the system need to be compatible with any other systems or data formats?	No.
35	What are examples of "demographics" that would be used to create a distribution list for external communication?	An example would be a change to a regulation that affects a specific certification group.
36	Has any budgetary guidance been provided for this solution?	No.
37	Have any timelines been established for project start and desired completion dates?	No.

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38	Are there any explicit guidelines for appropriate contract vehicles that can be utilized for procurement purposes?	As a NYS government agency, procurement through OGS statewide contracts helps us to streamline the procurement and renewal processes for software and hardware.