



Request for Proposals (RFP)
Research-Based Revision and Update of the
SchoolWorks School Quality Criteria (SQC)

Background and Purpose

SchoolWorks conducts school quality reviews across a range of educational settings to assess the extent to which schools implement effective practices that drive student learning and growth. Central to this work is the School Quality Criteria (SQC)—a research-based framework that articulates the essential elements of quality practice across five domains:

1. Student Attainment and Development
2. Instruction
3. Student Supports
4. Educator Supports
5. Leadership and Development

The SQC provides the foundation for SchoolWorks' school quality review protocol and serves as a shared definition of excellence in teaching, learning, and governance and leadership. Since its last comprehensive revision in 2018, the field of education has continued to evolve, with new research, innovations, and insights emerging across all domains of school practice.

At this time, SchoolWorks seeks an external research partner to **review, revise, and update the SQC** to ensure alignment with **current best practices, empirical research, and emerging trends** in K–12 education. The resulting framework will continue to serve as a rigorous, evidence-based, and user-friendly tool for evaluating and supporting schools.

Scope of Work

The selected research partner will lead a process to review, (re)define, and update the **SchoolWorks School Quality Criteria (SQC)** and all associated key questions, criteria, and indicators. The work will result in an updated, evidence-based framework that reflects the latest thinking and proven practices in school improvement and performance evaluation, including a complete set of references linked to specific criteria within the SQC.

The process will include:

- **Research and Benchmarking:**
Conduct a literature review and analysis of current frameworks, standards, and empirical research that inform effective school practice. This may include resources from national and international education systems, academic journals, policy reports, and existing frameworks utilized by leading practitioners and consulting organizations.

- **Comprehensive Review:**

Examine the current SQC, including all domains, key questions, criteria, and indicators. Identify areas where the language, organization/structure, or emphasis may require updates based on recent research and evolving best practices. This process will result in the addition of added content, the deletion of outdated content, and refreshed, contemporary terminology that aligns with today's priorities and focus areas.

- **Revision and Development:**

Based on findings, update and revise the SQC to ensure that:

- Key questions, criteria, and indicators are clearly defined, measurable, and aligned with current evidence-based practices linked to quantitative and qualitative improvement in student learning and well-being.
- The framework is coherent and easily understandable to a range of stakeholders (educators, reviewers, partners, and the public).
- The language reflects the most current and inclusive understanding of high quality teaching, learning, governance and leadership, as well as student performance and development and uses practitioner-based language.

- **Documentation of Rationale and Research Base:**

For each domain, provide citations and a written summary of the research and rationale supporting any revisions or additions made to the key questions, criteria, or indicators. This documentation will form part of the final deliverable and will ensure transparency and integrity in the update process.

- **Feedback and Iteration:**

Facilitate up to three rounds of feedback and refinement in collaboration with the SchoolWorks Managing Director of Quality Reviews and supporting members of the Management Team. Each round will include structured opportunities for review, discussion, and revision to ensure that the final framework reflects both research rigor and practical applicability.

- **Final Deliverables:**

- A fully updated **School Quality Criteria document** (in Word format), including all revised domains, key questions, criteria, and indicators.
- A **Research and Rationale Summary** outlining the sources, evidence base, and justification for major updates and changes.
- All working notes, literature citations, and reference materials used during the process.
- An aligned rubric to assist project teams in identifying the level of implementation for each criterion when necessary.

All deliverables will become the sole property of SchoolWorks.

Project Goals

- Modernize the SQC Framework to reflect the latest research, best practices, and current priorities in school improvement and performance evaluation.
- Strengthen the evidence base to ensure that every domain, key question, criterion, and indicator is grounded in strong, up-to-date research and supported by documented rationale and citations.
- Improve the structure, language, and organization of the SQC so it is accessible, coherent, and practical for educators, reviewers, and partners to implement effectively.
- Update and, where necessary, redefine terminology to reflect current educational thinking, inclusive language, and practitioner-friendly concepts.

Key Assumptions

- The consultant will employ a **transparent, evidence-driven, and inclusive process** that incorporates feedback from the SchoolWorks internal team throughout.
- The process will run from **February 2026 through June 30, 2026**, with final deliverables due by **June 30, 2026**.
- SchoolWorks' mission, values, and established review methodology will remain central to all revisions.
- The final framework will be suitable for both internal use and external publication with SchoolWorks' clients and partners.
- All intellectual property—including the updated criteria, research documentation, notes, and reference lists—will become the property of SchoolWorks.
- All data, drafts, and communications will remain confidential between the selected partner and SchoolWorks.

Proposal Requirements

Interested parties are requested to submit a proposal that includes the following components:

1. Introduction

- A summary of the proposer's interest in the project and their relevant expertise in educational research, and framework development.

2. Proposed Approach

- A description of the proposed methodology for reviewing, researching, and revising the SQC, including the literature review process and approach to ensuring alignment with current best practices.

- A rationale for the proposed approach and how it aligns with SchoolWorks' goals.

3. Collaboration Plan

- A description and timeline of how the proposer will engage in the iterative feedback process with SchoolWorks' Managing Director of Quality Reviews and selected members of the Management Team.
- Identification of any pre-work or background materials to be reviewed prior to project launch.

4. Timeline

- A detailed project timeline outlining milestones and deliverables from **February through June 2026**.

5. Deliverables

- A list and description of all deliverables, including the updated SQC document and accompanying research summary.

6. Qualifications and References

- A description of the organization's or individual's qualifications and relevant experience with similar projects.
- Three references for comparable research or framework development work.
- A sample deliverable from a similar project (e.g., a research-based framework, rubric, or set of quality criteria).

7. Supplier Diversity (Optional)

- Evidence of certification as a WBE or MBE with the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office, if applicable.

8. Cost Proposal

- A detailed cost proposal that includes research, analysis, revision, and feedback-cycle facilitation. The cost proposal should indicate the total number of hours for each portion of the process.
- SchoolWorks will make all travel arrangements (if applicable) and reimburse expenses in accordance with its Expense Reimbursement Policy.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated expertise in educational research and school quality frameworks

- Depth and rigor of proposed methodology
- Understanding of the SchoolWorks' mission and approach
- Experience conducting similar framework or rubric revision projects
- Quality and relevance of sample deliverables
- Clarity of project plan and timeline
- Cost-effectiveness and value of proposed services
- References from comparable clients or projects

Submission Instructions

Interested applicants should submit their proposal electronically in PDF format to:

SchoolWorks

hello@schoolworks.org

- Proposals must be received by January 16, 2025, by 5:00 pm ET
- Questions regarding this RFP may be directed to hello@schoolworks.org by December 17, 2025.
- Proposals must not exceed 10 pages in length, excluding attachments (e.g., samples, resumes)
- SchoolWorks anticipates selecting a partner by **February 1, 2026**, with project work to begin shortly thereafter.
- SchoolWorks reserves the right to request additional information, conduct interviews with finalists, and negotiate final terms prior to selection.