Items To Consider When Purchasing Software FAQs

1. **Does the software directly correlate with the curriculum and meets or supports standards?** There are thousands of programs vendors want you to buy. Consider only the best, with a direct purpose, focus, and targeting a direct curricular need.

2. **Will the vendor be in business next year?** Please choose a vendor with a history of successful business operations. New vendors should be avoided at first, no matter how innovative the product, due to how volatile and short term the industry tends to be.

3. **What warranty will be provided?** Software must have a warranty. Vendors that do not provide some sort of warranty for their product are to be avoided.

4. **Will the software integrate with other software used by the HASD Technology Department?** This is crucial. Although some software vendors may recommend new systems to run their software properly, such software should be avoided as it will result in significant additional costs and time on the HASD's support infrastructure.

5. **Is it SIF compliant?** Software in use should be SIF **(Schools Interoperability Framework)** compliant. This ensures interoperability between various software programs and systems in use by our district. Please check with the vendor to ensure their product under consideration is indeed SIF compliant.

6. **Will the software adapt to the HASD instructional systems standard?** Will the software integrate with the current systems and meet the guidelines for acceptable software in use at the district? If you are unsure of these questions, seek the assistance of the Technology Department to help you determine the answer.

7. **What flexibility will it provide?** The software should be "expandable" or easily reconfigured/ updated to meet your future needs. It should also be able to meet projected needs/ capabilities that you may have in the near future.

8. **Is the HASD current hardware compatible?** Our equipment should be able to run a very broad range of software; however, check with the vendor to ensure basic compatibility with the deployed hardware in the district.

9. **Will documentation provided be user friendly?** The software should come with solid, easy to read and understand manuals and help pages. Printed form is preferable over electronic format. Additionally, online web support is a plus.

10. **What training is offered?** Does the vendor provide on-site training or some other form of training? It is recommended by the Technology Department that any software vendor being considered should be able to provide some form of training, and that training resources be readily available.

11. **What other expenses will be incurred?** Consider the costs of additional hardware, hardware upgrades, training, licensing, ongoing maintenance and support contracts, and relicensing on a schedule prior to committing to a software product. These costs can sometimes be hidden, thus adding to the final cost for the product.

12. **Can the vendor provide modifications?** This is important if the software is "close" to meeting your needs and the vendor is acceptable under the HASD standards. The option, usually at some cost, of modifying a software program should be considered and the vendor should be questioned to ensure that modification is a possibility.

13. **Is there an upgrade planned in the near future?** If a vendor plans on a major software revision or upgrade in the near future, waiting for the next version may be something to consider. If the need is immediate, disclosure by the vendor should be made of what impact the upgrade or revision will have on training, usage, hardware requirements, and overall long-term cost.

14. **Is there a vendor help desk?** Typically, a help desk support option is the first and easiest step in acquiring support should a problem arise with a product. Make sure your vendor has adequate support available for their customers prior to any purchase.

15. **What is the vendor's reputation?** Any vendor considered by the HASD should have a good business and product reputation. Ask other users of the product and look for third party reviews to help establish the vendor's reputation prior to any purchase.

16. **How complex is the installation?** The Technology Department wishes to support all of its users in a timely fashion. Please ensure that the installation of the software is relatively standard. If not, please let the Technology Department know in advance if special actions or activities will be needed to install a particular software product. This will help the Technology Department prepare adequately and schedule accordingly.

17. **Will the vendor supply names of current users?** When reviewing the reputation and history of a vendor to determine their suitability for providing a product to the HASD, ask for a list of current users of the product. The vendor should provide this freely and without hassle. If the vendor does not provide this list, weigh their lack of cooperation accordingly.

18. **Is there a user support group(s)?** Determine if groups of users exist and how to contact them. These may range from simple online groups to complicated associations of users across the country. These are sometimes key points for acquiring support on difficult usage issues or problems, as well as good places to collect ideas for further integration of the product into your day-to-day operations.

19. **Grant money purchases:** Any software that is approved for purchase, but is using grant money must be able to cover the costs of licensing for a minimum of three (3) years.