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Craig P. Orgeron, CPM, Ph.D., Executive Director

Notice of Intent to Certify Sole Source

To: Interested Parties

From: Craig P. Orgeron, CPM, Ph.D.

CC: ITS Project Number 49536 Initial
CPD

Date: April 21, 2026

Re: Sole Source Certification Number 4756 to provide a web-based student retention analytics system subscription for the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB).

Contact Name: Denetta Durr

Contact Phone Number: 601-432-8022

Contact E-mail Address: Denetta.Durr@its.ms.gov

Sole Source Certification Award Details

Regarding Information Technology Services (ITS) Sole Source Certification Number 4756 for the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB), please be advised that ITS intends to award AspirEDU, Inc. as the sole source provider of a web-based student retention analytics system subscription through June 30, 2029, in an amount not to exceed \$997,500.00. Please be advised that ITS will determine if additional products or services are within scope during the certification period and may increase the spending authority accordingly. Should AspirEDU, Inc. change their name during this certification period, then ITS will determine if a recertification is necessary. For an explanation regarding Mississippi state law, policy and procedures for sole source procurements, refer to Attachment B: Sole Source Procurement Overview.

Sole Source Criteria

1. The product or services being purchased must perform a function for which no other product or source of services exist:

Dropout Detective is a student retention platform that provides analytics on student performance, and is only available from AspirEDU, Inc. It integrates with the Canvas learning management system and processes student performance data nightly. The solution includes a feature that provides each school's staff with a personalized dashboard showing only their assigned students. This feature is highly beneficial for academic advisors, deans, program directors, sports coaches, and additional support personnel. Dropout Detective continues to be the only fully automated solution on the market that can automatically identify students that are at risk of dropping out of or failing courses. This integration requires no support from the school's Information Technology (IT) team, only the cooperation of the LMS

administrator. There is no other solution on the market that can complete technical integration and be ready for use by a school within one week of executing a contract.

2. The purchaser must be able to show specific business objectives that can be met only through the unique product or services:

The solution includes reporting and archiving capabilities that are not available through a third-party provider. Only AspirEDU provides the capability to export data from Dropout Detective, and the data is not shared with any third-party systems. Dropout Detective is fully integrated with Canvas. No competing solution has built-in integration into the Canvas learning management system for daily data retrieval and analysis and can support Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) integration back into Canvas for dashboard display. Other student retention solutions depend on integration with the Student Information System (SIS), which provides only periodic rather than daily grade updates. AspirEDU, Inc. has developed several MCCB-specific features, including functionality that allows users to view the performance of students who are enrolled at one school but taking one or more courses at another. Several MCCB schools already maintain individual subscriptions to Dropout Detective.

3. The product or services must be available only from the manufacturer and not through resellers who could submit competitive pricing for the product or services:

The Dropout Detective solution for student retention analytics is a single-source product, sold and distributed only by AspirEDU, Inc. The solution must be purchased directly by institutions from AspirEDU, Inc. The Vendor’s sole source certification letter is included as Attachment A.

Schedule

Task	Date
First Advertisement Date	04/21/26
Second Advertisement Date	04/28/26
Response Deadline From Objectors	05/06/26 at 3:00 P.M. Central Time
Notice of Award/No Award Posted	Not before 05/07/2026

Project Details

In 2014, on behalf of the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB), ITS certified the web-based student retention analytics system subscription as a sole source using then approved sole source procedures. In June 2015, a contract amendment was executed to add reporting features and to purchase Instructor Insight. In 2017, ITS issued Notice of Intent to Certify Sole Source Number 3978 through May 2020. On May 31, 2019, the agreement was terminated. In January 2023, ITS issued Notice of Intent to Certify Sole Source Number 4510. No objections have been received to date. The existing Software License and ASP Agreement between the State and AspirEDU, Inc. expires June 30, 2026. Since 2014, MCCB has spent \$1,743,425.00 on these products.

Submission Instructions and Format of Response from Objecting Parties

Interested parties who have reason to believe that the web-based student retention analytics system subscription not be certified as a sole source should provide information in the following

format for the state to use in determining whether or not to proceed with awarding the Sole Source contract to AspirEDU, Inc.

1.1 Interested Party Information

1.1.1 Contact Name, Phone Number and email address

1.1.2 Company Website URL, if applicable

1.2 Objection to Sole Source Certification

1.2.1 Interested parties must present specific objections to the Sole Source certification using the criteria listed above.

1.2.2 A statement regarding the Interested Party's capabilities as related to this Sole Source Certification Request.

1.3 Comments will be accepted at any time prior to Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time) to Denetta Durr at Denetta.Durr@its.ms.gov or at the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services, 3771 Eastwood Drive, Jackson, Mississippi 39211. Responses may be delivered by hand, via regular mail, overnight delivery, e-mail or by fax. Fax number is (601) 713-6380. ITS WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR DELAYS IN THE DELIVERY OF RESPONSES. It is solely the responsibility of the Interested Parties that responses reach ITS on time. Interested Parties may contact Denetta Durr to verify the receipt of their Responses. Responses received after the deadline will be rejected.

1.4 Interested Party responses should include the following information:

**SUBMITTED IN RESPONSE TO
Sole Source Certification No. 4756-49536
Accepted until May 6, 2026 @ 3:00 p.m.,
ATTENTION: Denetta Durr**

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Denetta Durr at 601-432-8022 or via email at Denetta.Durr@its.ms.gov.

Attachment A: Vendor Correspondence

Attachment B: Sole Source Procurement Overview

Attachment A



March 15, 2026

RE: Sole Source Provider

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to confirm that the Dropout Detective™ solution for student retention analytics is a single-source product, sold and distributed only by AspirEDU, Inc. This solution must be purchased directly by institutions from AspirEDU, Inc.

Dropout Detective continues to be the only fully automated solution in the market that can automatically identify students that are at risk of dropping out of or failing courses. No other product has built integration to the Canvas learning management system for daily data retrieval & analysis and can support LTI integration back into Canvas for dashboard display. To our knowledge, other student retention solutions rely on integration with the SIS, which provides only periodic (not daily) updates on grades. Those other solutions also rely on the manual flagging of at-risk students by instructors. Dropout Detective automatically identifies those students.

Additionally, the reporting and archiving features that we have proposed are not available from a third-party solution. Only AspirEDU offers the ability to export data from Dropout Detective; we do not expose the data via any third parties.

Finally, there is no other similar solution that can complete a technical integration and be ready to use by a school within one week of executing a contract. For this integration, no IT support is required from the school – only the cooperation of the LMS administrator. This is another significant differentiator for us.



If you desire additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us at (774) 473-8246 any time or visit our web site at www.AspirEDU.com. Thank you for your interest in our analytics solutions!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kimberley Munzo'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kimberley Munzo
President & CEO
AspirEDU, Inc.

Attachment B

The acquisition of information technology for all state agencies and institutions of higher learning (IHLs) is within the scope of the ITS law, found in Mississippi Code Section 25-53-1, et seq., and the policies and procedures established in accordance with this statute, found in the ITS Procurement Handbook posted on the ITS website (www.its.ms.gov).

ITS enabling legislation requires that information technology hardware, software and services be acquired in a manner that insures the maximum of competition among all manufacturers and suppliers of such equipment and services. Accordingly, ITS promotes full and open competition through the issuance of open specifications and the objective evaluation of Interested Party proposals to determine the lowest and best offering to meet an agency's or public university's business requirements. True competition protects the integrity and credibility of purchasing in the public sector and is essential in providing best value and adequate contractual protection for the purchasing entity. In certain limited situations, information technology acquisitions may be sole-sourced.

ITS utilizes the provisions of Public Purchasing Law for Sole Source and Emergency procurements of information technology. Mississippi Public Purchasing Law (Mississippi Code Section 31-7-13) specifies that noncompetitive items available from one source only be exempted from bid requirements (sole-sourced). ITS statute, in Section 25-53-5 (p), permits ITS to utilize provisions in Public Purchasing Law or regulations, when applicable.

Per Public Purchasing law, acquisitions must meet the following criteria to be authorized as sole source:

1. The product or services being purchased must perform a function for which no other product or source of services exists,
2. The purchaser must be able to show specific business objectives that can be met only through the unique product or services, AND
3. The product or services must be available only from the manufacturer and NOT through resellers who could submit competitive pricing for the product or services. The vendor's correspondence regarding this criterion for this project is included as Attachment A.

By policy as documented in the ITS Procurement Handbook, acquisitions of IT services must include the following information to be authorized as sole source:

1. An explanation about why the amount to be expended is reasonable, and
2. An explanation regarding the efforts by the purchaser to obtain the best possible price.

For state agencies, approval of all technology purchases with a lifecycle cost of \$5,000 or less, including sole source purchases, has been delegated to the agency. The ITS Procurement Limits Policies for Agencies (a section in the ITS Procurement Handbook) require a minimum of two competitive written bids or proposals for technology purchases with a lifecycle cost over \$5,000 but not over \$75,000 (not over \$25,000 for projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act). Since, for single source items, the procuring agency will be unable to obtain two written bids, ITS must certify all sole source acquisitions of information technology with a lifecycle cost greater than \$5,000.

Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) or public universities have been delegated the authority to certify sole source procurements up to \$250,000 lifecycle cost under the ITS Procurement Limits Policies for IHLs (a section in the ITS Procurement Handbook). For the certification of sole source procurements delegated to the CIOs at public universities, the public university must follow ITS' Sole Source Procedure, including advertisement of the intent to award as sole source. Institutions certifying a sole source purchase must ensure the criteria listed above are met and documented in writing by the institution and the Interested Party prior to certifying a product or service as sole source. Sole source documentation must be reviewed and approved by the IHL's CIO for any sole-source certification above \$5,000. All sole source documentation should be retained in the public university's procurement file. Sole source requests above \$250,000 lifecycle cost require ITS approval.

Other than the delegations outlined above, all sole source technology procurements must be certified by ITS.

ITS thoroughly reviews Sole Source Certification Requests, determining if competing products and/or services exist. If so, ITS conducts a competitive procurement. If ITS' review confirms the sole source, then a Sole Source advertisement is issued, giving other Interested Parties an opportunity to identify competing products and/or services. Based upon the results of the Sole Source advertisement, ITS will either certify the request as a sole source or conduct a competitive procurement.