

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

## District PK–12 Unified Mass Communication System

Auburn-Washburn Unified School District #437

Communications Department

RFP # 2026-COMMS-1

<b>RFP SUMMARY:</b> Auburn-Washburn Unified School District seeks a PK–12 mass communication platform.	
<b>RFP ISSUE DATE</b>	May 13, 2026
<b>PROPOSAL DUE DATE</b>	May 29, 2026 – 3:00 p.m. (Central Time)
<b>INTERVIEW DATE</b>	Vendors are asked to participate in a 45-minute interview with the district’s Evaluation Committee, if necessary. Interviews will be conducted on Thursday, June 4.
<b>DEADLINE FOR QUESTIONS</b>	The deadline for questions is May 15, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. CST. Questions and/ or inquiries must be submitted in writing to Jessica Roberts ( <a href="mailto:roberjes@usd437.net">roberjes@usd437.net</a> )
<b>PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PROCESS</b>	Submit proposals via email to <a href="mailto:roberjes@usd437.net">roberjes@usd437.net</a> by the deadline indicated above.
<b>RFP WEBSITE</b>	Updates, addenda, and responses to questions will be published on the district website at <a href="https://usd437.net/requests-for-proposal">https://usd437.net/requests-for-proposal</a>
<b>RFP OFFICIAL CONTACT</b>	Jessica Roberts Director of Communications Auburn- Washburn Unified School District 437 <a href="mailto:roberjes@usd437.net">roberjes@usd437.net</a>

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## 1. The Opportunity

### 1.1 Summary

Auburn-Washburn Unified School District (“USD 437”) seeks a unified PK–12 mass communication platform to consolidate multiple existing school- and activity-level tools into a single, accessible, secure, and highly reliable system. The solution must support districtwide mass notifications, emergency alerts, classroom and activity messaging, newsletters, and family engagement, all within one multilingual, accessible platform integrated with Infinite Campus.

### 1.2 Background

USD 437 serves a diverse PK–12 student population in Shawnee County, Kansas and surrounding areas. For more than a decade, the district has relied on Infinite Campus for mass notifications, while individual schools and programs use a variety of tools such as Remind, ClassDojo, GroupMe, Slack, and others for classroom and activities communication. This fragmented environment creates an uneven experience for families, inconsistent accessibility and language support, redundant work for staff, and challenges in ensuring secure, trackable, and compliant communication.

The district has conducted an inventory of current tools and desired features. The goal is to procure a single, districtwide platform that meets the needs of all stakeholders while ensuring accessibility, reliability, and compliance with new legislative requirements.

### 1.3 Outcome Goals

- Provide a unified communication experience for families, staff, and students through one primary platform.
- Ensure all communications are accessible, meeting or exceeding ADA, Section 504, and WCAG 2.2 AA standards, with compatibility for screen readers, braille devices, and other assistive technologies.
- Deliver highly reliable emergency communication capabilities with high availability, redundancy, and a defined Service Level Agreement (SLA).
- Increase family engagement via intuitive tools, multilingual two-way messaging, and meaningful analytics.
- Support compliance with Kansas Sub for HB 2299 and district policies governing electronic communications between staff and students through administrative oversight, message retention, parent visibility options, and approved communication channel controls.
- Improve operational efficiency by integrating with Infinite Campus and reducing reliance on multiple apps.

### 1.4 Award Terms

The initial contract term is anticipated to run from contract execution (July 2026) through June 30, 2028, with up to three (3) additional one-year renewal options, subject to mutual agreement and annual appropriation by the Auburn-Washburn Board of

Education in accordance with Kansas law. Any resulting contract will be subject to the State of Kansas DA-146a Mandatory Contractual Provisions.

## 2. Scope of Work

### 2.1 Services to be Provided

The selected vendor will design, configure, implement, host (or support hosting of), and provide ongoing support for a PK–12 unified communication platform, including at minimum:

- Mass notifications and emergency alerts (voice, SMS, email, app push, and web postings).
- Multilingual, two-way communication with live automated translation so senders and receivers can each communicate in their preferred language in real time.
- Mobile applications for iOS and Android and web-based access for staff, students, and families.
- Family engagement tools such as secure messaging, forms, surveys, RSVPs, and parent-teacher scheduling.
- Newsletter and marketing tools for district and school communications.
- Role-based and audience-based messaging for district, school, classroom, activity, and athletics programs.
- Integration with Infinite Campus and other district systems via secure APIs and/or standard interfaces.
- Security, privacy, and compliance features consistent with applicable laws and regulations.
- Communication governance tools that support district compliance with Kansas laws and district policy governing electronic communications between employees, volunteers, and students, including:
  - retention and archiving of communications;
  - administrative search and audit capabilities;
  - parent/guardian visibility or participation options;
  - monitoring and reporting tools;
  - role-based communication permissions;
  - preservation of records in accordance with district retention schedules and Kansas Open Records Act requirements;
  - controls to discourage or prevent use of unapproved communication channels.
- Accessibility features that support ADA and Section 504 compliance and WCAG 2.2 AA standards, including compatibility with assistive technologies

and braille transcription devices.

### **Service Requirements (Feature & Functionality)**

Vendors must complete the separate Excel workbook titled “[USD437 Mass Communication System – Vendor Response Workbook](#),” which contains the Feature & Functionality Response Matrix. For each requirement, vendors must indicate their level of compliance and provide explanatory notes where required.

### **General Requirements**

- Comply with all applicable federal and Kansas laws, including but not limited to FERPA, COPPA, CIPA, HIPAA (if applicable), ADA, Section 504, and state and local records and privacy laws.
- Provide the ability to retain, archive, search, and export communications in accordance with district records retention practices and applicable Kansas law.
- Provide administrative oversight features including audit trails, communication history review, reporting tools, and role-based supervisory access.
- Support parent/guardian transparency through optional message copying, observer accounts, parent inclusion in communication threads, or similar functionality.
- Allow the district to define and enforce approved communication pathways between staff, volunteers, students, and families.
- Ensure all user-facing interfaces meet or exceed WCAG 2.2 AA accessibility standards and support screen readers, keyboard navigation, captions, and other assistive technologies.
- Provide robust security controls, including role-based access control, audit logging, strong authentication, and encryption in transit and at rest.
- Provide data export capabilities in open, machine-readable formats (e.g., CSV, JSON, accessible via API) to support reporting, backups, and possible future migration.
- Provide configuration, integration, and testing support for Infinite Campus and other district systems.
- Deliver comprehensive training and documentation for district-level administrators, building staff, and, as appropriate, families and students.
- Support Auburn-Washburn branding, including district and school logos, colors, and naming conventions.

### **Role of Auburn-Washburn USD 437**

- Designate a project team, including the Director of Communications (project lead) and Director of Technology (technical lead).
- Provide access to relevant systems and data, including Infinite Campus, consistent with district policy and data privacy requirements.
- Coordinate with schools and departments to support implementation, training, and communications.
- Participate in solution design workshops, configuration review, user

- acceptance testing, and rollout planning.
- Review and approve project plans, major milestones, and go-live readiness.

## 2.2 Performance Metrics and Contract Management

The district intends to monitor vendor performance using key performance indicators (KPIs) and regular review meetings. Metrics may include, but are not limited to, system uptime, message delivery times, support response times, accessibility-related issues, and usage/engagement statistics. Metrics and targets will be finalized during contract negotiations and reviewed periodically.

## 3. Submission Instructions

### 3.1 Proposal Content

Proposals must be organized and labeled using the sections below. Vendors are encouraged to use a response workbook or structured attachments that clearly map to each requirement.

- Cover Letter
- Executive Summary
- Technical Proposal, including system overview, architecture, response to the Feature & Functionality Matrix, accessibility and language support, integration plan, security and compliance approach, implementation and training plan, and support model.
- Cost Proposal, including one-time implementation costs, annual licensing/maintenance, and any optional services.
- Proposed Service Level Agreement (SLA), as described in Section 6.
- Cybersecurity, Incident Response, and Business Continuity documentation (high-level or redacted versions may be provided initially, with detailed information shared under NDA).
- At least three (3) K–12 client references for similar implementations.
- Attached DA-146a Kansas Mandatory Contractual Provisions form (or a statement agreeing to the terms therein upon award), and any other required district procurement forms.

### 3.2 Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted electronically in PDF format by email to [roberjes@usd437.net](mailto:roberjes@usd437.net), no later than May 29, at 3:00 PM Central Time. The email subject line must read “RFP 2026-COMMS-1 – Mass Communication System Proposal – [Vendor Name]”. Late submissions will not be considered.

## 4. How We Choose

### 4.1 Minimum Qualifications

- Legal authorization to do business in the State of Kansas.

- Not debarred or suspended from doing business with any federal, state, or local government.
  - At least three (3) years of experience providing PK–12 communication platforms of similar size and complexity.
  - At least three (3) K–12 client references using the proposed or substantially similar solution.

## 4.2 Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria and approximate weights (subject to adjustment by the district):

Category	Weight
System Functionality, Accessibility & Usability	20%
Security, Compliance, Communication Governance & Reliability	30%
Implementation, Integration & Support	20%
Total Cost of Ownership	30%

Particular consideration may be given to solutions that provide robust communication oversight, retention, parent transparency, and compliance-management features aligned with Kansas law and district policy.

## 4.3 Selection Process, Award, and Protest Procedures

An Evaluation Committee that includes representatives from Communications, Technology, Teaching & Learning, Athletics, building principals, parents, and students will review proposals and participate in vendor demonstrations. The district may conduct multiple rounds of review, request best and final offers, or negotiate with one or more proposers. Final award is contingent upon Board of Education approval and execution of a contract including DA-146a and district terms.

Protests and appeals must follow USD 437’s purchasing policies and any applicable Kansas statutes. The district’s standard protest procedures will be provided upon request or referenced in the final contract.

## 5. Terms and Conditions

This section incorporates USD 437 and State of Kansas standard terms and conditions, including but not limited to the DA-146a Mandatory Contractual Provisions. In the event of a conflict between vendor terms and DA-146a, the DA-146a provisions shall control. The

contract will be governed by the laws of the State of Kansas and is subject to annual appropriation by the Auburn-Washburn Board of Education.

## **6. Appendix – SLA & Critical System Requirements**

Because this system will be used for critical emergency communications with law enforcement, the media, staff, students, and families, the Service Level Agreement (SLA) is a key component of evaluation and contract terms.

- Maximum downtime per incident shall be no greater than four (4) hours, including planned and unplanned outages.
- If downtime exceeds the SLA, the vendor must provide, at no cost to the district, an immediate mechanism for emergency communications or reimburse the district for reasonable costs incurred to find and use alternative emergency communication services, if needed, and provide an additional 10% discount on licensing for the remainder of the contract term (as defined in the executed agreement).
- Vendor must provide a detailed SLA document specifying uptime guarantees, maintenance windows, incident response times, and escalation procedures.
- Vendor must provide documentation of its cybersecurity program, including alignment with a recognized framework (e.g., NIST, ISO), Incident Response Plan (IRP), and Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans (BCP/DRP). High-level or redacted versions may be provided initially, with detailed documentation shared under a mutual NDA.
- Vendor must maintain appropriate security certifications (e.g., SOC 2 Type II or equivalent) and provide evidence of annual