

**Sole Source
Written Determination**

Agency Identification: Office of Student and Community Engagement, SCDE

Description of the agency need that this procurement fulfills: *(See instructions on last page for guidance)*

In response to SC Law on Character Education, Section 59-17-135, the Office of Student and Community Engagement (OSCE) supports districts in providing Character and Resilience Education (CARE) and connects districts with community partners who can provide solutions to school needs. OSCE does this through strategic networking, aligning programs to district goals and preferences, and internal collaboration that bring transformation to schools and strengthen community sectors in South Carolina. Our goal is to help prepare and equip every student for a successful future.

Describe the Market Based on Research Performed: *(See instructions on last page for guidance)*

Other vendors offer character and leadership-based programs, such as Good Life, Center for Character and Citizenship, and Stephen Covey's Leader in Me; however, none has provided the flexibility, curriculum, and supports that students and stakeholders need for student success. Maxwell's integrated approach and learning model (peer-to-peer instruction) works equally well with students (all grades) and with adults and community members.

Users of the Maxwell iLead program, including an educator (M Dandridge) in the Aiken School District, note iLead's success in their school. "My focus is teaching students how to be successful in and outside of school. The iLead course offers the character-building lessons I had been looking for in the high school setting and has made tremendous impacts on students at Silver Bluff High School for the past four years. iLead's enhanced foundational lessons now provide digital resources for teachers and engaging activities for students, making the life-changing lessons even more relatable." One high school student went from being suspended every year (9 – 11th grade) to improving grades, behavior, and even joining the golf team. The lesson on perseverance hit the student on a heart level and it changed his perspective, mindset, and offered other actions and choices for improving his behavior (no suspensions in 12th grade). Golf has been the outlet for focus, calming down, and connecting him with others.

Currently some districts (i.e., Lancaster) have chosen iLead as the primary character and leadership support and use it in schools, with administrative teams, school boards, and community members (Chamber of Commerce). The program creates a common process and language that is supported in their community. Indian Land Elementary's principal shared, "iLead gives us a focus and common language with more purpose and meaning. These leadership principles are something that our district is taking seriously." A second-grade teacher offered that while using the peer-to-peer model for iLead, her students "have grown to learn how to be conversation starters and such good listeners. They now know how to hear what is being said and are learning how to respond appropriately." Two of her second-grade students said, "It (iLead) started being so great in my life... I'm applying it (iLead) in school and trying to work on it at home. I've been influenced by it a lot. I try to be a good example in my class to help my friends."

Sole Source Vendor Name: **Growing Leaders - Maxwell Leadership Foundation**

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Based upon the following determination, Agency proposes to acquire the supplies, construction, information technology, and/or services described herein from the vendor named above per SC Code Ann § 11-35-1560 and SC Regulation 19-445.2105, Sole Source Procurement.

Description of supplies, construction, information technology, and/or services vendor will provide under the contract: *(See instructions on last page for guidance.)*

Users of the iLead program need custom Growing Leaders Leadership curriculum and resources for students and teachers across SC. Resources include student/educator licenses to access the curriculum platform and/or printed workbooks; in-person and virtual training to support successful implementation of the program; six opt-in leadership and character development sessions for educators; and limited onsite training for high-need schools and/or community engagement to support school implementation.

Explain why the described solution is the only solution that meets the agency's need and how no other identified solutions were sufficient. *(See instructions on last page for guidance)*

A brief market scan confirms that other vendors offer similar services. However, due to widespread adoption across multiple districts, retraining costs, and the risk of disrupting integrated workflows and positive impacts on school culture, continued use of Maxwell is justified. SY 24-25 had 104,589+ engaged students with 4, 241+ trained educators, and 231+ schools enrolled and implementing curriculum. Switching vendors from Maxwell to another program could significantly undermine progress made and is not in the best interest of the state or the students it is serving.

Note: Determination is not complete without required signatures and dates

Required Signatures:

Prepared by: Mandy Roberts Date: 9 /26 /25

Printed Name: Mandy Roberts Title: CARE Manager

Approved by: Ellen Weaver Approval Date: 9/30/2025

Printed Name: Ellen Weaver Title: Superintendent of SCDE

The last page contains instructions and is not required to be retained.