

## PHASE 2: HIAT SY27 FSMC RFP

The SY27 FSMC procurement for HIAT will occur in two phases: Phase 1 includes the proposal submission due on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, and Phase 2 includes an onsite taste test and FSMC interview held on Wednesday, May 20, 2026. The SFA will score and rank selected proposals by assigning a score between zero and the maximum score to each proposal criterion. Respondent evaluations and the awarding contract will be based on the total points of Phase 2 added to Phase 1.

Should a respondent choose not to participate in Phase 2, they will simply receive a 0 for each Phase 2 criterion.

Phase 2 evaluations will be scheduled in one-hour increments for each respondent. Full details regarding the tasting and interview process are as outlined below.

### Higher Institute of Arts & Technology – TASTING INSTRUCTIONS

Date:	May 20, 2026
Time:	TBD – School will schedule w/ each FSMC directly
Location:	5861 Harrison Street, Merrillville, IN 46410
Point of Contact:	Nicholas Arthur, narthur@phalenacademies.org

#### Tasting Instructions:

The tasting committee will consist of **5 participants** in total. Every effort will be made to keep all committee members consistent for all taste tests.

**Bidders must show one complete tray for visual evaluation of each entire meal.** The vendor should present the main menu item, as well as the fruit/vegetable sides of their choice that would align with the 21-day menu cycle. Components must be in full, compliant portion sizes to meet the K-8 NSLP meal pattern.

**Bidders must provide 5 samples for exactly 3 days of the 21-day menu cycle.** Selected sample days do not need to be consecutive. Samples may be smaller portion sizes and do not need to include fruit or milk.

Use of on-site ovens and warmers **is allowable** but will need to be communicated ahead of time to ensure there are no disruptions to the current meal service. All samples must be portioned and ready for consumption by the scheduled tasting start. Trays, boats, and utensils should be provided by the responding bidder.

The sum evaluation total will be converted to a point rating between 1-5.

## TASTE TEST SCORECARD

Taste Test participation will be scored as part of the evaluation criteria on a scale of 1-5. If a respondent does not participate, they will receive a 0 for the taste test criteria category.

RATING CRITERIA	VENDOR:		
1 = Poor    2 = Fair    3 = Neutral    4 = Good    5 = Excellent			
	Entrée # 1	Entrée # 2	Entrée # 3
<b>COMPLETE TRAY:</b> Does the meal look appetizing? Do the components of the meal appear to pair well together?	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<b>SAMPLE TASTE:</b> Is the flavor overall satisfying?	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<b>TEXTURE:</b> Is the texture overall satisfying?	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<b>CHILD FRIENDLY:</b> Do you think a child would want to eat this meal? Does the meal make an effort to appeal to children (5-12 years old)?	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<b>OVERALL RATING:</b> How would you rate this meal in comparison to other school-based meals?	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
<b>Meal Score (out of 25):</b>			
<b>Total Score (out of 75):</b>		<b>Notes:</b>	

### **FSMC Interviews:**

Following the scheduled tasting, school leadership will hold a 25-30-minute interview with each respondent to discuss 5 prepared interview questions, as well as any clarity or follow-up questions needed for the respondent's initial proposal submission. The interview will result in one collective score on a scale of 0-5.

- 5 – Exceptional: Demonstrates strong experience, specific examples, and clear alignment with district goals
- 4 – Strong: Good responses with clear strategies and relevant experience
- 3 – Adequate: Acceptable but somewhat general or lacking detail
- 2 – Limited: Responses raised concerns or lack clear strategy
- 1 – Poor: Minimal insight or weak understanding of school food service operations
- 0 – Non-Responsive: Questions not meaningfully answered; respondent did not participate in FSMC interview