

Send these 12 to any vendor, in writing (including RallyOrder; we'll answer all 12). Score the answers' character: specific beats smooth.

1. WHO IS THE MERCHANT OF RECORD?

If it's the school, funds settle to school-controlled accounts under district procedures. Anything else, your finance office underwrites the someone-else.

2. WHERE EXACTLY DOES A SALE SETTLE, AND WHEN?

Reader → processor → which account, whose name, what timing. Vague answers here are disqualifying.

3. FULL FEE BREAKDOWN ON A \$10 SALE?

One worked example: processing + platform + everything. Composite pricing hides in percentages.

4. WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR DATA AND HISTORY IF WE LEAVE?

Exportable records in standard formats, stated in the agreement.

5. CAN STUDENTS OPERATE IT WITHOUT ACCESS THEY SHOULDN'T HAVE?

Structural separation (open selling, gated refunds/settings) beats a shared-password policy.

6. WHAT STUDENT DATA DO YOU COLLECT, AND WHAT DO YOU DO WITH IT?

In writing, for counsel, against FERPA/COPPA. Follow-up: will you contractually commit to never selling or monetizing student data?

7. WHAT CAN A 15-YEAR-OLD LEARN FROM IT?

Does the store's data live where students can read it, or in a back office built for a manager?

8. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE WI-FI DROPS DURING LUNCH?

Do cash sales continue? Card? What limits, who controls them, how does the queue sync back, how are duplicates prevented?

9. WHAT DOES SETUP + MAINTENANCE REQUIRE FROM OUR IT DEPARTMENT?

Count the tickets: provisioning, updates, network exceptions, per-device config.

10. DOES THE REPORTING UNDERSTAND A SCHOOL YEAR?

Fiscal quarters mean your semester close happens in a spreadsheet. Calendar fit tells you who it was built for.

11. WHO ELSE RUNS THIS IN A SCHOOL, AND CAN WE CALL THEM?

School references specifically. Honest and reachable beats big and absent.

12. WHAT'S ON YOUR ROADMAP FOR SCHOOLS SPECIFICALLY?

Are schools on the roadmap, or along for the ride?

THE DEMO RULE: 30 minutes with your actual crew (fastest cashier, CFO, bookkeeper) beats three vendor decks.