



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

For

MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE

SUPERINTENDENT'S PRIORITY SCHOOLS

TURNAROUND MODEL

Requests for Proposals Issued: December 20, 2012

Deadline for Submittal of Proposals: February 13, 2013

Requests for Proposals for Measuring the Effectiveness of the
Superintendent's Priority Schools Turnaround Model

I. INSTRUCTIONS

The Sacramento City Unified School District is seeking proposals from qualified consulting firms to assist the District in measuring the effectiveness of its Superintendent's Priority Schools Turnaround Model.

Interested firms are invited to submit one original signed proposal and five (5) separate digital copies (individual CDs or flash drives) in PDF format. The proposal shall be made in the format provided and the complete proposal, together with any and all additional materials, shall be enclosed in a sealed envelope addressed and delivered no later than 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 13, 2013, to the following address:

Sacramento City Unified School District
Contracts Office
5735 47th Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95824

The sealed envelope shall be marked on the outside lower left corner with the words "Measuring the Effectiveness of the Superintendent's Priority Schools Turnaround Model RFP." It is the Proposer's sole responsibility to ensure that their proposal is received prior to the scheduled closing time for receipt of proposals. No corrected or resubmitted proposals will be accepted after the deadline.

This Request for Proposals does not commit the Sacramento City Unified School District to award a contract or pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal responsive to this request. The District reserves the right to accept all or part of any proposal or to cancel in part or in its entirety this Request for Proposals. The District further reserves the right to accept the proposal that it considers to be in the best interest of the District.

All requirements must be addressed in your proposal. Non-responsive proposals will not be considered. All proposals, whether selected or rejected, shall become the property of the District. Firms are responsible for checking the website periodically for any updates or revisions to the RFP.

Requests for Information

Questions related to this RFP should be submitted in writing via electronic mail to priorityschools@scusd.edu, no later than Wednesday, January 16, 2013. Specify "RFP for Measuring the Effectiveness of the Superintendent's Priority Schools Turnaround Model" in the subject line. Responses to all questions received will be addressed at the Bidders Conference and posted on the District's website.

Bidders Conference

A Bidders Conference is scheduled for Thursday, January 31, 2013, at 4:00 p.m. at the Sacramento City Unified School District, Serna Center, 5735 47th Avenue, 95824. All questions and answers related to this RFP will be addressed at this conference. Each firm must have a representative at the Bidders Conference to qualify.

II. BACKGROUND

In the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD), there is enormous potential to improve the lives of underserved children. SCUSD is the 12th largest school district in California and one of the 100 largest in the United States, serving approximately 44,000 students on 80 campuses. Neighborhoods served range from thriving affluent areas around the Capitol to federal housing projects. Seventy-two percent of SCUSD students qualify for a free or reduced-price lunch; at 36 schools, 100% of students meet this federal poverty threshold, in part because Sacramento's unemployment rate hovers around 11.9% – 4% higher than the national average.

[The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University](#), in conjunction with Time magazine, has named Sacramento "America's Most Integrated City," a place where "everyone's a minority—including whites." Our student population is 36% Hispanic or Latino; 18.3% Asian; 16.3% African American; and 19% White. About 7% of students are of two or more races or ethnicities. Residents within SCUSD speak more than 40 languages; 38% of students do not speak English at home.

Currently, the District is in Year 3 of Program Improvement (PI), 55 (70%) of its schools have a PI designation. Sixteen of these are in Year 5 or greater of PI status. To reach its goal of ensuring that all of its students are college and career ready upon graduation, SCUSD must systemically improve the way its students learn and teachers teach. The organization must transform to become an efficient, effective model with a laser-like focus on student learning and instruction, which is seamlessly aligned with the goals of Pillar Three, Organizational Transformation, of the District's *Strategic Plan 2010-2014: Putting Children First*. To this end, the Superintendent's Priority Schools, which are learning laboratories, incubators of innovation and first in line for resources and support, serve as models for attacking persistent under-performance and the achievement gap by utilizing proven strategies and effective practices aimed at putting the schools on a trajectory for high performance plus be replicated and taken to scale across the District.

The genesis of this methodology took place in February, 2010, when the District was informed by the California Department of Education that one of its elementary schools, Oak Ridge Elementary, was one of the 5% lowest performing schools in the state. The Superintendent directed staff, consisting of the Chief Accountability Officer and Associate Superintendents, as well as the Director of Assessment, Research and Evaluation, to examine data related to the performance of SCUSD's lowest-performing schools, including Oak Ridge. The team examined data including California Standards Tests, achievement trends over the last five years, length of tenure of principals, years of teaching experience of staff, Academic Performance Index, Adequate Yearly Progress and Program Improvement status, as well as graduation and dropout rates. Thoughtful consideration was given to the capacity of the District and resources available to devote to the school turnaround process. At the conclusion of this thorough analysis, six (three elementary, two middle and one high) schools were selected as Priority Schools for 2010-11. All of the schools were in the lowest 20% in the state in terms of achievement. The District expanded the initiative by adding another middle school that came aboard in 2011-12.

The Superintendent's Priority Schools are designed around a simple philosophy: one size does not fit all. Realizing this, each school has been redesigned around a set of principles that both provide guidance as to what is important and allow for the individual needs of each school. These five design principles are:

- **Set the conditions for success through strategic staffing and facility improvements**
The driving theme behind the Priority School plan is to create a team of successful leaders and teachers at each school and then give them the flexibility to do what needs to be done while holding them accountable for the results. During the spring of 2010, five new principals for the Priority Schools were selected from the ranks of successful principals in SCUSD based on criteria such as Academic Performance Index growth at their current sites, years of successful experience at narrowing the achievement gap, performance of their current school as compared to similar schools and a proven track record of leadership. One principal, who had been at Father Keith B. Kenny for only one year, remained at the site. The Superintendent met with each of the six principals who accepted the challenge and they committed to remaining at the Priority School site for at least three years. The principals then selected Assistant Principals and Learning Specialists who would become their Leadership Team at each of the schools. Principals and Assistant Principals received a 10% salary bonus and agreed to work year round. Teachers at each of the schools were offered the opportunity to transfer to another site. Transfer requests were: Oak Ridge: 6; Father Keith B. Kenny: 1; Jedediah Smith (*now named Leataata Floyd*): 6; Fern Bacon: 6; Will C. Wood: 1; and Hiram Johnson: 5. At some schools, teachers whom the principal felt would stand in the way of reform were administratively transferred to other sites.

Deep-cleaning, painting (both interior and exterior), and landscaping crews were dispatched during the summer months of 2010 and 2011 to give the six schools a fresh, clean appearance and to set a new tone for the learning environments at each school.

- **Focus on rigorous student work**
During the summer months of 2010, all of the Priority Schools formed data inquiry teams that were subsequently trained and coached in the Data Wise process, a cycle of inquiry developed at Harvard's Graduate School of Education in 2001. Data Wise is aimed at helping the schools use student data, including tests and writing samples, more effectively as keys to improving teaching and learning. The teams continue to use their Common Planning Time (CPT) to dig into data with their peers as they learn strategies for examining student work, ways to identify what students are struggling with, examine teacher practices that may have led to the struggles and determine an action plan to address the student problems. Instructional coaches and administrators at each site assist and coach teachers through this process. The focus of the work is to train teachers, by examining student work products, to change their practice in order to increase rigor and assist students in employing, on an everyday basis, higher order thinking skills. During the first two years, coaches from Transformation by Design provided on-site support to teachers, administrators and instructional coaches as they endeavored to perfect the process.

To enable students to have extended learning time and to be able to implement student supports, Jedediah Smith (*now named Leataata Floyd*), Father Keith B. Kenny, Oak Ridge, Will C. Wood and Fern Bacon added a half hour to their instructional day during the 2010-11 school year. In addition, Jedediah Smith (*now named Leataata Floyd*), Father Keith B. Kenny and Oak Ridge implemented an extended Kindergarten day. During the 2011-2012 school year, Rosa Parks and Will C Wood continued with the After School Educational and Safety Program (ASES). This program allowed for continued extended learning during the day. Oakridge extended their school day by 45minutes through the support of the School Improvement Grant (SIG). All other schools restructured their master schedules to ensure that students were provided extended learning embedded within the school day.

- **Focus on professional learning and collaboration**

At Jedediah Smith (*now named Leataata Floyd*), Oak Ridge, Father Keith B. Kenny, Fern Bacon, and Will C. Wood, teams of teachers were also trained the summer of 2010 in *Write Tools* strategies, an academic writing program aimed at assisting teachers to instruct students in how to write at a higher level of complexity. Additionally, Oak Ridge, Jedediah Smith (*now named Leataata Floyd*), and Father Keith B. Kenny teachers participated in *Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies*, a program designed to assist teachers in acquiring “a toolbox” of strategic practices that address the needs of diverse learners. Jedediah Smith (*now named Leataata Floyd*) and Oak Ridge are also early implementer sites for inclusive practices, a program that aims to include special education students as much as possible in regular education classes by training all teachers to work collaboratively in using co-teaching methodologies that address a wide variety of learning styles and needs. In addition, Father Keith B. Kenny teachers received training in offering High Quality First Instruction. All Priority principals were also offered the services of a personal leadership coach who was experienced in school turnaround initiatives.

During the 2011 school year, each of the schools continued the instructional initiatives from the first year. Progressively, as effective instructional initiatives continued to become deeply embedded in the teaching practices of the school, principals worked to further solidify teacher teams by building their capacity in an effort to strengthen the academic programs. Added to the 2011 instructional initiatives, was a laser-like focus on implementing the ELA Common Core State Standards. Once again, teams of teachers began participating in District professional learning that called for them to return to their respective sites and put into action what they learned. Additionally, Will C. Wood began their journey on addressing the unique needs of their English Language Learner (ELL) population during the 2011-2012 school year. As a “focus” school, they have continued the work with Dr. Filmore and the District’s ELD training specialists and together are developing rigorous units of study aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

- **Focus on family and community engagement**

Additional support services, such as parent advisors, counselors, nurses, and social workers were added at the schools based on their individual needs. The focus of Year One was to set the stage for improvement by creating a climate and culture of active engagement of students in their own learning and parents and families in their students’ learning progress. All of the Priority Schools have Parent Resource Centers (Will C. Wood and Hiram Johnson have expanded existing facilities for parents) and all are conducting home visits with the Parent Teacher Home Visit Project. Due to a grant received by the District from Target, all six schools organized Family Academies designed to address parent/family educational and interest needs during the spring of 2011. *Stand Up for Sacramento Schools*, a non-profit organization, assisted with the Home-School Connection Program at each site to recruit and organize parents and volunteers. Will C. Wood, Hiram Johnson, and Father Keith B. Kenny worked with the Family and Community Engagement Office to become certified as Welcoming Schools. Other Priority Schools began the process during the spring of 2011.

During the 2012 school year, each school continued its focus on supporting a positive family and community culture. To customize and address each one’s unique culture, each school is utilizing proven strategies such as monthly parent resources meetings, implementation of the Latino Literacy Project, etc.

- **Focus on organizational transformation**

We know that, on an operational level, the school district needs to break down barriers between the central office and school sites to create a more effective flow of services. A new Office of Accountability was formed to assist in creating a “no-excuses” culture that offers supports and holds schools and principals accountable for results. The seven Priority Schools reported directly to the Chief Accountability Officer from 2010-2012, and currently to the lead Area Assistant Superintendent, eliminating “reporting layers,” and all departments have been instructed that the Priority Schools’ needs come first. They are at the “head of the line” for services and supports. It is well known that, in order for the Priority Schools to be successful, adults in the school must work in teams. All Priority School principals and assistant principals received training on collaborative leadership, led by Mike Mattos, author of *The Collaborative Administrator*. This training focused on how to build and sustain collaborative teams.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

The Sacramento City Unified School District is seeking to measure the effectiveness of the Superintendent’s Priority Schools Turnaround Model and is looking for collaboration and assistance from qualified firms who can satisfactorily provide the following:

- Include the seven Priority Schools: three elementary, three middle, and one high
- Address all five design principles:
 - Set the conditions for success through strategic staffing and facility improvements
 - Focus on rigorous student work
 - Focus on professional learning and collaboration
 - Focus on family and community engagement
 - Focus on organizational transformation
- Utilize both quantitative and qualitative measures
 - Student learning, including student work
 - Instructional processes
 - Culture and climate
- Include a variety of stakeholders
- Provide recommendations and implications for scalability and sustainability

IV. CONTENTS FOR PROPOSALS

In order for proposals to be considered, said proposal must be clear, concise, complete, well organized and demonstrate both respondent’s qualifications, and its ability to follow instructions. The quality of answers, not length of responses or visual exhibits is important in the proposal.

The proposal shall be organized in the format listed below and shall be limited to twenty (20) pages (excluding attachments and appendices) on 8 ½” x 11” paper with all responses bound with tabs separating each section. Respondents shall read each item carefully and answer each of the following items accurately to ensure compliance with District requirements. Failure to provide all requested information or deviation from the required format may result in disqualification. Restate each item prior to addressing said item.

A. Submittal Letter

Include the RFP's title and submittal due date, the name, address, fax number and telephone number of the responding firm. Include a contact person and corresponding e-mail address. The letter shall state that the proposal shall be valid for a 60-day period and that the staff proposed is available immediately to work on this project. The person authorized by the firm to negotiate a contract with the District shall sign the cover letter.

B. Description of Firm

This section should provide information regarding the size, location, nature of work performed, years in business and the approach that will be used in meeting the needs of the District.

C. Organizational Structure

Describe your firm's organizational structure. Supply the names of the professionals who will be responsible for this project. Please provide brief resumes for these individuals.

D. References and Description of Experience

This section should identify similar projects that the firm has completed as outlined in the RFP. Use this section to indicate the areas of expertise of your firm and how the firm's expertise will enable the District to benefit from that expertise. Include the size of at least three (3) school districts with similar demographics and student performance, along with the names of individuals familiar with your work that can be contacted by District staff.

E. Project Overview

This section should clearly convey the consultant's understanding of the nature of the work related to student academic performance and the general approach the consultant will use to complete the project. This section should include, but not be limited to, a discussion of the organization of the project and a summary of the proposed approach.

F. Detailed Work Plan

This section of the RFP should include a full description of each step your firm would follow in completing the project. The work description should be in sufficient detail to show a clear understanding of the work and proposed approach.

This section should also include a description of the format, content and level of detail that can be expected for each deliverable.

A schedule showing the important milestones should also be included.

G. Cost Proposal

This section must provide a full description of the expected expenditures for the work described in this RFP. The cost proposal must include all consultant fees, preparation of deliverables, travel expenses per trip to Sacramento, printing, etc.

V. SELECTION CRITERIA

Consulting firms submitting proposals are advised that all proposals will be evaluated to determine the firm deemed most qualified to meet the needs of the District. The selection criteria will include, but not be limited to, the items listed below:

- A.** Demonstrated understanding and responsiveness to the Request for Proposals.
- B.** Proposals and experience of firm and personnel named in the proposal.
- C.** Past experience in assisting California school districts in implementing intervention supports, assessments, systemic data inquiry methodology for learning from student results, designing and implementing instruction improvements, and professional development targeted to improve student achievement.
- D.** Describe your company's commitment to provide academic excellence to students and staff at under-performing schools. Include historical impact data for similar demographics and student performance.
- E.** Project understanding and approach including an understanding of the District.
- F.** Satisfaction of previous clients. Provide three (3) references that reflect similar demographics and student performance, and are similar to the work contemplated in this RFP. Include the scope of work for each reference.
- G.** Oral interview.
- H.** Completeness and quality of the proposal.
- I.** Cost proposal.

VI. PROCESS FOR SELECTING FIRM

A Selection Advisory Committee, chaired by Dr. Sara Noguchi, Area Assistant Superintendent and Dr. Olivine Roberts, Chief Academic Officer, will select and rank in the order of their qualifications those companies deemed to be the most highly qualified to perform the required work.

The Selection Advisory Committee may choose to interview any, all, or none of the respondents as may be in the best interest of the District. If interviews are held, the chairpersons will notify those companies selected as to place, date, and time. The District will make investigations as necessary regarding the financial stability of any or all respondents and may require review by the District's legal counsel.

The names of all firms submitting proposals and the names, if any, selected for interview shall be public information. After award, final ranking, committee comments and evaluation scores as well as the contents of all proposals become public information. Firms that have not been selected shall be so notified in writing after the conclusion of the selection process.