Garrett County Board of Education

Strategic Planning

Request for Proposals

December 2018
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### TIMELINE

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<tr>
<td>December 12, 2018</td>
<td>Release Request for Proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 3, 2019</td>
<td>Proposal deadline: Proposals to be submitted via email to Matthew Paugh by 5:00 PM EST</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week of January 7, 2019</td>
<td>Select consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 14, 2019</td>
<td>Notify applicants of decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 22, 2019</td>
<td>Execute contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1, 2019</td>
<td>Work commences</td>
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INTRODUCTION

The Garrett County Board of Education (hereinafter known as the “Board”) is seeking proposals from interested consultants and/or firms to provide Strategic Planning Services.

BACKGROUND

Located in the westernmost corner of Maryland, Garrett County Public Schools educates 3,661 students and employs approximately 495 teachers and staff. The system encompasses seven elementary schools, two middle schools, one elementary/middle school, and two high schools for a total of twelve schools. In response to a May 2017 request from the Garrett County Commissioners to develop a plan to guide operating and capital budget priorities, the Board embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning process in the summer of 2017.

In September 2017, the Board outlined a set of values to guide the planning process. These values include the following statements:

1. We value our local community schools.
2. We value academic excellence.
3. We value equity in learning experiences and opportunities.
4. We value transparency in decision-making to maintain the trust of our communities, parents, students, faculty, and staff.
5. We value accessibility to diverse learning experiences.
6. We value co-curricular opportunities.
7. We value robust special education programs and meeting the needs of our most vulnerable populations.
8. We value innovative solutions to financial challenges that align with core values.
9. We value efficient and sustainable services and a streamlined and efficient administration that support the educational mission of Garrett County Schools.

The Board also reaffirmed its goals, which are as follows:

1. All students will be challenged with a rigorous instructional environment preparing them to become lifelong learners and responsible citizens.
2. Partnership with all members of our community will be fostered and strengthened by engaging them in the education of our children.
3. All students and staff will learn in a safe, secure, and caring environment where everyone is valued and respected.
4. Every department and school will be a good steward of system resources and will manage them in a cost-effective manner.
5. All employees will be highly qualified and effective in their jobs contributing to a self-renewing organization.

The Superintendent conducted a SWOT analysis through an online survey and school-based forums during the fall of 2017. As a result of that analysis, the Board identified numerous strategic issues, which were ultimately brought down to ten overarching issues. These include:

- Educational Services: Recognize the value of the schools to the community while creating a plan for sustainability.
  - Ensuring elementary instructional programs and secondary course offerings and programs will prepare students for high school and post high school through an examination of curriculum alignment and resources at all levels.
  - Ensuring class sizes are at optimal size for both learning opportunities and efficiencies
The Board has developed these general expectations for the strategic planning process:

- Strategic decision-making should begin with values.
- Strategic decision-making must be based on data-driven assessments of strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities facing Garrett County Schools.
- While a strategic planning process is an opportunity to address financial challenges and threats via cuts or reallocations of funds, it is also a time to identify investments in strategic priorities.
- The strategic planning process must take account of financial realities and political statements of the Board of Commissioners, but we must challenge local government to consider additional investments to help us successfully navigate the current economic climate with the least disturbance to communities, academic quality, and the lives of family and children.
- The strategic planning process must be transparent, and each phase of the process must include engagement beyond the administration to include board members, faculty, students, staff, community leaders, parents, and citizens.
- Strategic planning participants must strive to consider how proposals affect citizens across the county, in all communities, and to strive for equity.
- Strategic planning participants must strive for objective assessments, and be willing to consider changes to traditional programs, current administrative arrangement and staffing models, and human resource benefits.

PURPOSE

The Board is seeking a professionally-qualified consultant/firm to work with its members to create a strategic plan to address its strategic issues through a comprehensive, data-driven, and community-engaged planning process. The strategic plan will outline the direction and vision for Garrett County Public Schools for the next five years and beyond. The completed strategic plan should help the Board make future decisions concerning the Garrett County Public Schools that are aligned with its mission, vision, and values.
SCOPE

The consultant shall, at minimum, accomplish the following:

Planning Activity and Final Deliverable
Working with the Board, the consultant will:

1. design and execute a comprehensive strategic planning process;
2. develop an actionable five-year strategic plan, including a projected budget for its implementation;
3. develop recommendations regarding the plan’s implementation and support structure.

Research
It is anticipated that these tasks will be accomplished through a combination of activities, such as:

- focus groups, interviews, and/or any other method that will be useful in soliciting community input;
- facilitated group meetings with partners to create consensus regarding the strategic plan (including goals, objectives, strategies, and tactics); and
- review and present available data, partner strategic plans, and any relevant research and best-practices.

ANTICIPATED PROCESS FOR STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

While the Board seeks the consultant’s recommendations regarding the best process to develop an actionable strategic plan, the Board envisions the scope of work being conducted in stages.

Stage 1. Formulating Strategies to Manage Strategic Issues.
A strategy can be defined as “a pattern of purposes, policies, programs, projects, actions, and decisions, or resource allocations that define what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it” (John M. Bryson, Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement, 4th ed. [San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011], p. 60). We anticipate this phase including at least the following three steps:

1. Identification of practical alternatives for resolving strategic issues.
2. Identification of the barriers to achieving alternatives
3. Development of major proposals for resolving strategic issues built from alternatives.

In developing these proposals, ideas should be solicited from various community stakeholders.

Stage 2. Public Presentation of Strategy Options.
In this stage, the public should have an opportunity to learn and provide feedback on the major proposal alternatives for resolving strategic issues.

Stage 3. Draft Strategic Plan to be presented at a public Board meeting.
The consultant will present recommendations on major proposal alternatives as the basis of a formal strategic plan to the Board of Education for adoption. The presentation should include how proposed strategies best resolve strategic issues and allow the Board to meet goals and preserve values.
The Board anticipates that the plan document should include:
- An executive summary
- A comprehensive, detailed plan that identifies:
  - Shared vision
  - Goals
  - Objectives
  - Strategies
  - Tactics
  - Responsible parties and roles
  - Measures
  - Outcomes

The plan should also include:
- Evidence of broad community engagement and input
- Support based on reliable data and educational research
- Resource development strategies
- Initial communication strategies (What are the key messages? Who are the targets for those messages? How are the messages delivered? Who delivers the messages?)

Stage 4. Development of implementation recommendations

This stage includes the development of recommendations regarding the implementation phase of the plan. Included within this phase should be recommendations regarding:
- A detailed budget to implement the plan
- Launch event
- Infrastructure (e.g., backbone organization, staffing, etc.) needed to support the plan’s implementation
- Data tracking

CONSULTANT QUALIFICATIONS

To accomplish the scope requested, the consultant will need to possess the following qualifications:
- Experience at successfully developing consensus-based strategic plans
- Strong facilitation skills
- Knowledgeable of education systems and issues
- Experience at engaging and soliciting input from various community sectors
- Experience at gathering and utilizing data to inform the strategic planning process
- Knowledgeable of budgeting
- Knowledgeable of marketing, communications, and branding
- Knowledgeable of resource development
PROPOSAL

Proposals must include the following:

General Information

The Board understands that the scope of work requested may be conducted by a single consultant, a consultant group, or by a partnership of consultants. The proposal should provide the name, title, address, telephone number, and email address for each person engaged in scope activities. Further, if a consultant group or partnership of consultants is proposed, the proposal should indicate who will serve as the “point” person for the purposes of this RFP and the engagement.

Consultant Qualifications and Roles

Provide brief biographies for the consultant who will be supporting the project. The proposal must describe the consultant’s qualifications to conduct the RFP scope of work activities, including his/her expertise, knowledge, and experience. Experience should include examples of conducting similar or related work.

If a consultant group or partnership of consultants is proposed to conduct the RFP scope of work, the proposal must indicate which activities each consultant will conduct as well as information about their level of expertise, knowledge, and experience to conduct those specific activities.

Work Plan

The proposal should contain a detailed description of the activities to be conducted by the consultant in order to complete the requested scope of work, including:

- the specific activities to be conducted at each stage,
- a clear explanation as to how the consultant/firm will incorporate a broad range of stakeholders,
- a timeline for the activities at each stage,
- milestones and deliverables tied to those activities, and
- a detailed budget for each stage, along with a proposed payment schedule tied to project milestones and/or deliverables.

References

The proposal should include three references who can speak to their experience with the consultant in conducting projects of similar scope. Information regarding each reference should include the individual’s name, address, telephone number, and email address.

Previous Work Product

The proposal should include at least two examples of written work similar to the scope of work requested within this RFP (e.g., strategic plan).
GENERAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

Inquiries and Point of Contact

All questions/inquiries regarding this RFP may be directed to Matthew Paugh matthew.paugh@garrettcountyschools.org.

Proposal Submission

Applications must be submitted by email to Matthew Paugh at matthew.paugh@garrettcountyschools.org by 5:00 PM EST on January 3, 2019.

APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA

The proposals will be reviewed and evaluated based on the following criteria:

Qualifications

- The consultant has the qualifications needed to successfully complete the scope of work
- The consultant has prior experience working on similar projects
- The consultant has background and experience in working with rural school districts

Scope of Proposal

- The proposal demonstrates an understanding of the project objectives and desired results
- The proposal illustrates an approach to the scope of work that will likely lead to the successful development of an actionable strategic plan
- The proposal illustrates the consultant’s ability to successfully execute the proposed approach
- The proposal includes an appropriate process to interact with the Board and community stakeholders

Work Plan

- The proposal adequately details project activities and milestones or deliverables associated with each stage of the scope of work
- The proposal includes a detailed timeline for each stage
- The work can be completed within the project timeline
Budget

- The proposal includes a detailed budget for each stage of the scope of work
- Proposed costs are reasonable
- Proposed schedule of payments corresponds appropriately with tasks, milestones or deliverables

REFERENCE CHECKS

Information from references will be evaluated using the following criteria. The evaluation will be labeled as satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

References

(Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory)

- The reference would hire the consultant again
- The original scope of services was completed within the specified timeline
- Interim deadlines were met in a timely manner
- The consultant was responsive to the reference’s needs
- The consultant anticipated problems and solved them quickly and effectively
- The original scope of services was completed within the project budget

PRESENTATION/INTERVIEW

Consultants may be asked to participate in an interview and/or provide a presentation to the Board in order to further gauge their fit and ability to work on this project. If needed, interviews will be scheduled to take place the week of January 7, 2019.

PROPOSAL ACCEPTANCE

The Board reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, or any part thereof, and to waive any formalities.

- The Board reserves the right not to accept the lowest priced proposal. Proposals that do not comply with the requirements stated within this RFP or which are submitted after the deadline are subject to disqualification at the Board’s discretion.
- The Board reserves the right to request additional information from vendors after the RFP deadline, should such action be in the best interest of the Board.
• Following the deadline for RFP submittals: the Board, its employees, its agents, its representatives, and its attorneys reserve the right to have further discussions related to price and services provided with any prospective vendor during the review process. The Board, employees, agents, representatives, and attorneys reserve the right to conduct these discussions with one or more respondents in order to arrive at a final selection.
• All proposals and all supporting documentation submitted with the proposals shall become the property of the Board and will not be returned.
• All proposals and supporting proposal documents become public information and are available for inspection by the general public.
• Responses to this RFP shall be incorporated into the resulting contract at the discretion of the Board.
• This RFP may be awarded to a single vendor or multiple vendors in order to meet the service requirements of this RFP.