

Request for Proposals

Professional Services for Low-Performing Schools to Support and Empower Teachers and Leaders

RFP Number: 14SDE0016RFP

Date Issued: February 18, 2014

Due Date: March 14, 2014

Procurement Contact: Andrew Ferguson

Stefan Pryor, Commissioner of Education
Connecticut State Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue | Hartford, CT 06106
www.sde.ct.gov



**Connecticut State Department of Education
Turnaround Office**

**Stefan Pryor
Commissioner of Education**

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The CSDE does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. The CSDE does not unlawfully discriminate in employment and licensing against qualified persons with a prior criminal conviction. Inquiries regarding the CSDE's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to:

Levy Gillespie
Equal Employment Opportunity Director
Title IX /ADA/Section 504 Coordinator
State of Connecticut Department of Education
25 Industrial Park Road
Middletown, CT 06457
860-807-2071

**Professional Services for Low-Performing Schools
to Support and Empower Teachers and Leaders**

Request for Proposals

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Overview	.....	p. 4
II.	Outline of Work	.....	p. 4
III.	Contractor Qualifications	.....	p. 6
IV.	Proposal Requirements	.....	p. 6
V.	Selection Criteria	.....	p. 9
VI.	Instructions to Proposers	.....	p. 9
VII.	Submittal Requirements	.....	p. 10
VIII.	Contract	.....	p. 10
IX.	Appendix A: RFP Rubric	.....	p. 11

Request for Proposals

I. Overview

A growing body of research demonstrates the primacy and impact of teacher and leader effectiveness on student achievement. Typically, urban public school districts have difficulty attracting and retaining top talent in their lowest-performing schools. Leaders and teachers in these schools often lack the ongoing support, development, feedback, and coaching necessary to grow as professionals and become highly effective. The Turnaround Office and the Connecticut State Department of Education (“CSDE”) unfortunately do not have the capability or capacity to meaningfully support and systematically increase leader and teacher effectiveness in these schools and at scale. Therefore, the Turnaround Office seeks a provider willing and able to offer professional services to support and empower teachers and leaders in low-performing schools in the areas described in Section II of this Request for Proposals (“RFP”).

II. Outline of Work

A. Purpose:

The purpose of this RFP is to identify a proven provider(s) able to offer the professional services, or some combination thereof, listed below that will support and empower teachers and leaders serving in low-performing schools. It is expected that these services will lead to significant gains in student achievement.

B. Scope and Activities:

The CSDE is seeking a proven provider willing and able to:

1. Provide differentiated teacher coaching to new and/or developing teachers;
2. Design and/or deliver targeted and job-embedded professional development for teachers;
3. Offer leadership development support to school administrators;
4. Provide ongoing training and calibration support for school administrators executing frequent formal and informal teacher evaluations;
5. Support school leaders in communicating meaningful and actionable feedback to teachers and staff;
6. Support school leaders in using data and aligning professional learning opportunities to staff development areas identified through evaluations;
7. Provide monitoring tools to evaluate leadership effectiveness and the professional work environment;
8. Diagnose instructional and leadership constraints in low-performing schools; and/or
9. Offer training in best practices for classroom walkthroughs and teacher and leader coaching.

C. Deliverables:

1. **Teacher Coaching:** The provider must offer direct and differentiated coaching for select new and/or developing teachers in low-performing schools. Coaching must be highly individualized and responsive to staff development areas. The provider must employ various coaching methods, such as co-teaching, model lessons, and classroom observations with opportunities for reflection and feedback.
2. **Evaluation Support:** The provider must support the implementation of formal and informal evaluations in low-performing schools by providing calibration training and strategies to communicate meaningful and actionable feedback to staff. The provider must be adept at promoting a professional learning culture in diverse school settings, and adapting to the nuances of district-specific evaluation rubrics and protocols. The provider must offer systems and tools to support evaluations.
3. **Strategic Staffing:** The provider must support school and district leaders in designing and implementing systems to attract and retain top talent. The provider must support school leaders in making strategic staff placement decisions driven primarily by student needs.
4. **Instructional Leadership:** The provider must work in collaboration with the districts, schools, Turnaround Office, and other partners to assess and promote teacher and leader effectiveness. The provider must offer tools and processes to evaluate instructional leadership and the professional school culture on an on-going basis. The provider must support school leaders in administering excellent professional development aligned to staff evaluation data.

D. Outcomes:

By partnering with a proven provider to offer the above professional services for teachers and leaders serving in low-performing schools, the Turnaround Office aims to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Dramatically increase student achievement in low-performing schools.
2. Support and empower teachers by creating professional learning environments.
3. Develop school leadership in the areas of instructional excellence and staff development.

E. Timeline:

The anticipated start date of the contract(s) potentially resulting from this RFP is May 1, 2014. The provider(s) would be expected to collaborate with the CSDE and participating districts during spring and summer of 2014 to assess teacher and leader capacity in low-performing schools, identify a caseload of teachers for direct coaching, and prepare for full implementation for the start of the 2014-15 school year. From August 2014 to July 2015, the provider(s) would be expected to implement the services and deliverables described herein.

III. Contractor Qualifications

The CSDE is seeking proposals from providers who:

1. Have the necessary capacity and infrastructure to deliver on elements listed in Sections II.B (“Scope and Activities”) and II.C. (“Deliverables”).
2. Have demonstrated an ability to partner with districts and low-performing schools, and can point to growth in student performance resulting from the delivery of professional services similar to those described herein.
3. Are willing to work collaboratively with the CSDE and partner schools and districts by adapting to local context to successfully implement the services outlined herein.
4. Have the ability to offer pre-implementation services beginning in spring and summer 2014, and full implementation services beginning in fall 2014.

Proposers must submit references from schools and/or districts in which they have offered similar services in order to prove their qualifications (see Section IV).

IV. Proposal Requirements

A. Required Format:

1. Description of Service Model and Approach

In no more than two pages: Please describe your organization’s services and approach to talent management in low-performing schools. Describe how your organization would maximize teacher and leader effectiveness in a turnaround setting. Please include your organization’s strategies to operationalize and support work in each of the areas described in Section II (“Outline of Work”).

2. Experience and Track Record

In no more than two pages: Please describe and provide examples of your organization’s experience increasing teacher and leader effectiveness, and ultimate impact on student achievement. Please include: (a) a list of schools and/or districts that your organization has supported and provide student achievement data demonstrating the effectiveness of your services; (b) a summary of key goals and how success is measured in similar engagements; and (c) the name and contact information for three references in a school and/or district in which your organization has operated in a similar capacity.

3. Staffing Model

In no more than one page: Please provide an overview of your staffing model and a short narrative detailing the roles of key staff involved in your current engagements. Please outline who would be working with the CSDE, districts, and schools in order to fulfill the responsibilities outlined in Section II of this RFP, and with what frequency.

4. Cost Information

In no more than one page: Please provide an overview of the costs associated with your model. Include a detailed menu of services, including the intensity of services (e.g., duration and staffing) and associated costs for each service. Acceptable costs could include staffing, programs, supplies, subcontracts with vendors to provide supplemental services, operations, overhead, etc. Identify the cost structure (e.g., per pupil, per school) and whether costs are variable or fixed. If appropriate, please separate costs associated with the planning phase versus full implementation.

B. Minimum Submission Requirements:

The minimum submission requirements for an acceptable proposal are detailed below; any proposal that does not meet these requirements will be deemed unacceptable and ineligible for further review and consideration.

1. Meeting the submission deadline of March 14, 2014.
2. Submitting a complete proposal by following the required format (see Section IV.A.).
3. Submitting any required forms and attachments, including the references requested in Section IV.A.2.c. (“Experience and Track Record”).

C. Contract Period:

The anticipated start date of the contract(s) potentially resulting from this RFP is May 1, 2014, and the anticipated end date is July 1, 2015. The CSDE reserves the right to extend the contract(s), or parts thereof, for a period up to or exceeding the full original contract(s) term with mutual consent between both parties.

D. Contract Award:

The CSDE reserves the right to award contract(s) in a manner deemed to be in the best interest of the State.

E. Stability of Proposed Prices:

Any price offerings from proposers must be valid for a period of 120 days from the due date of the proposals.

F. Amendment or Cancellation of the RFP:

The CSDE reserves the right to cancel, amend, modify or otherwise change this RFP at any time if it deems it to be in the best interest of the State to do so. The CSDE, at its option, may seek proposer retraction and/or clarification of any discrepancy or contradiction found during its review of proposals.

G. Proposer Presentation of Supporting Evidence:

Proposers may be invited to present to the CSDE, at the CSDE’s full discretion, providing additional evidence of experience, performance, ability, and/or financial surety that the CSDE deems to be necessary or appropriate to fully establish the performance capabilities represented in their proposals.

H. Proposer Demonstration of Proposed Services and/or Products:

At the discretion of the CSDE, proposers must be able to confirm their ability to provide all proposed services. Any required confirmation must be provided at a site approved by the CSDE and without cost to the State.

I. Erroneous Awards:

The CSDE reserves the right to correct inaccurate awards. This may include, in extreme circumstances, revoking the awarding of a contract already made to a proposer and subsequently awarding the contract to another proposer. Such action on the part of the CSDE shall not constitute a breach of contract on the part of the CSDE since the contract with the initial proposer is deemed to be void and of no effect as if no contract ever existed between the CSDE and such proposer.

J. Proposal Expenses:

Proposers are responsible for all costs and expenses incurred in the preparation of proposals and for any subsequent work on the proposal that is required by the CSDE.

K. Ownership of Proposals:

All proposals shall become the sole property of the State and will not be returned. All of the information contained in a proposal submitted in response to this RFP is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Section 1-200 et seq. of the Connecticut General Statutes. The FOIA declares that, except as provided by federal law or state statute, records maintained or kept on file by any public agency (as defined in statute) are public records and every person has a right to inspect such records and receive a copy of such records.

L. Ownership of Subsequent Products:

Any product, whether acceptable or unacceptable, developed under a contract awarded as a result of this RFP shall be the sole property of the State unless otherwise stated in the contract.

M. Oral Agreement or Arrangements:

Any alleged oral agreements or arrangements made by proposers with any State agency or employee will be disregarded in any State proposal evaluation or associated award.

N. Subcontractors:

CSDE must approve any and all subcontractors utilized by the successful proposer prior to any such subcontractor commencing any work. Proposers acknowledge by the act of submitting a proposal that any work provided under the contract is work conducted on behalf of the State and that the Commissioner of Education or his/her designee may communicate directly with any subcontractor as the State deems to be necessary or appropriate. It is also understood that the successful proposer shall be responsible for all payment of fees charged by the subcontractor(s). Upon request, a performance evaluation of any subcontractor shall be provided promptly by the proposer to the CSDE. The proposer must provide the majority of services described in the specifications.

V. Selection Criteria

A selection committee will review and score all proposals. The following information, in addition to the requirements, terms and conditions identified throughout this RFP, will be considered as part of the selection process:

- A. Description of Service Model and Approach:** Clarity and strength of the organization’s programs, services, and work process and products.
- B. Experience and Track Record** (including references): Outcomes and experiences of the organization and its staff in contributing to dramatic school improvement, as measured by gains in student achievement; a proven ability to maximize teacher and leader effectiveness and meaningfully impact student achievement, as evidenced by letters of reference and outcome data.
- C. Staffing Model:** Coherent staffing model explaining the organization’s leadership structure and proposed plans to staff the engagement with experienced and talented professionals.
- D. Cost Information:** Substantiation and explanation of costs associated with the work being proposed by the proposer.

VI. Instructions to Proposers

A. Proposal Schedule:

CSDE releases RFP.	February 18, 2014
Proposers submit questions to the CSDE.	February 28, 2014
CSDE responds to proposers’ questions and posts answers to questions as an Addendum to the RFP.	March 3, 2014
Proposers submit RFP responses by the deadline.	March 14, 2014

During the period from your organization’s receipt of this RFP, and until a contract is awarded, your organization shall not contact any employee of the State of Connecticut for additional information, except in writing, directed to the Procurement Contact listed on the cover page of this document, at Connecticut State Department of Education, Turnaround Office, 165 Capitol Avenue, Room 249, Hartford, CT 06106.

B. Questions:

Questions for the purpose of clarifying this RFP must be submitted in writing and must be received no later than noon on February 28, 2014, in the State of Connecticut. Questions must be emailed to andrew.ferguson@ct.gov. Answers to questions received will be posted as an Addendum to this RFP.

C. Proposals:

All responses to this solicitation must be submitted as follows:

Proposal must include 5 complete copies and must be stamped in as received, by 4:00 p.m. eastern time on Friday, March 14, 2014, at:

The Connecticut State Department of Education
Turnaround Office, Room 249
c/o Lisa Carta-Corriveau
165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106

**Expedited services (Fed Ex, USPS, UPS) are acceptable providing a signed receipt identifies the delivery time prior to the above stated time.

VII. Submittal Requirements

Request for Proposal Responses (Page Limit: 6 pages)

Description of Service Model and Approach	(2 pages)
Experience and Track Record	(2 pages)
Staffing Model	(1 pages)
Cost Information	(1 pages)

Required Attachments

- 3 professional references

VIII. Contract

This RFP is not a contract and, alone, shall not be interpreted as such. Rather, this RFP only serves as the instrument through which proposals are solicited. The CSDE will pursue negotiations with the first selected proposer(s). If, for some reason, the CSDE and the first selected proposer(s) fail to agree to a contract, then the CSDE may commence contract negotiations with other proposers. The CSDE may decide, at any time, to start the RFP process again.

IX. Appendix A: RFP Rubric

Proposer:	Total Score:
	_____/100

Section	1 - Below	2 - Partially Meets	3 - Meets	4 - Exceeds
Description of Service Model and Approach	Offers insufficient information regarding the organization's model and approach to delivering the programs and services solicited through the RFP.	Offers a somewhat clear explanation of the organization's programs and services that could be strengthened by greater detail and specificity.	Offers a comprehensive and well-written explanation of the organization's programs and services solicited through the RFP.	Offers an exceptionally clear, comprehensive, and compelling description of the organization's programs and services solicited through the RFP.
Experience and Track Record	Provides insufficient evidence of the organization's track record, success, and experiences driving results with schools and/or districts.	Provides some evidence to suggest the organization's efficacy driving results with schools and/or districts; evidence suggests moderate or inconsistent impact.	Provides sufficient evidence to validate the organization's track record, success, and experiences driving results with schools and/or districts.	Provides ample evidence of the organization's effectiveness in the field; demonstrates strong results and the ability to replicate that success.
Staffing Model	Provides insufficient information regarding the organization's leadership structure and staffing model for the engagement outlined in the RFP.	Begins to describe the organization's leadership structure and staffing model; however, there are outstanding questions regarding capacity for the partnership.	Articulates the organization's leadership structure and proposed plans to staff the engagement with experienced and talented professionals.	Fully describes the organization's leadership structure and proposed staffing model, inspiring confidence in the organization's capacity to impact achievement.
Cost Information	Fails to provide cost information and/or cost information is unclear and lacks alignment with the organization's proposed services and staffing model.	Provides some cost information; however, the presentation may be disorganized or lack detail and alignment to the services requested through the RFP.	Provides adequate cost information, including a breakdown of the proposed services and staffing structure aligned to the RFP.	Provides clear and sufficient cost information aligned to the proposed services and staffing structure, showing justifications for all costs.
References	Fail to inspire confidence in the organization's programs, services, and track record with schools and/or districts.	Provide testimonials that may be inconsistent with one another and/or do not sufficiently describe the partner's past work and impact on achievement.	Offer strong testimonials speaking to the organization's effectiveness and impact; may lack specificity around the partnership.	Offer consistent and powerful endorsements validating the partner's organizational effectiveness and impact on student achievement.

Section	Score	Weighting	Total Points
Description of Service Model and Approach		x 7	_____/28
Experience and Track Record		x 7	_____/28
Staffing Model		x 4	_____/16
Cost Information		x 4	_____/16
References		x 3	_____/12
Total Score:			_____/100