

Town of Ipswich, Massachusetts
Ad Hoc Audit Committee
Ipswich Public Schools Operational Review
Request for Proposal
Final Draft - August 26, 2014



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Section 1 - Introduction and Background

The Town of Ipswich, Massachusetts, acting through an Ad Hoc School Audit Committee, seeks detailed proposals for an Operational Review of the Ipswich Public Schools.

At the Ipswich Annual Town Meeting on May 13, 2014, a citizen's initiative was presented, modified and duly adopted petitioning this effort. The result of this initiative was that an Ad Hoc Audit Committee (heretofore known as the "Committee") was constituted to draft a Request for Proposal, to secure proposals and to make a determination as to who might receive an award. While the Committee seeks to encourage competition and evaluate firms on a uniform basis, the Committee retains complete discretion as to the manner by which proposals shall be evaluated and services awarded and reserves the right not to make any award under this process.

The fee for services will be bid and shall not exceed a total cost of \$50,000.

The Ipswich Public Schools serves the North Shore Massachusetts Town of Ipswich, located approximately 25 miles north of Boston and having a population of approximately 13,500 residents. The Ipswich Public Schools provides educational services to the towns' school age children, comprising approximately 2050 students, including approximately 85 school choice students and 23 tuitioned out/collaborative students. The schools include Ipswich High School (9-12), Middle School (6-8), Doyon School (K-5), Winthrop School (K-5) , and Lord Sq administrative offices housing the Superintendent and other central administrative functions.

The firm selected to perform the operational review shall be familiar with the following Exhibits and will utilize existing data and other information in their field work; the intent is not to replicate work that has recently been or is in the process of being completed, but rather complement or be in addition to such work:

- (1) Ipswich Public Schools FY2015 School Department Budget
 - a) Override Budget (Exhibit 1a)
 - b) 3.65% Budget (Exhibit 1b)
- (2) Finance Committee Annual Report For the Town Meeting Tuesday, May 13, 2014
- (3) Ipswich School Department, Review of Facilities Department Operations, February 24, 2014
- (4) Analysis of the Administration of Human Services, October, 2010
- (5) Energy Audit Reports, Part I & II, January 19, 2010
- (6) Clinical & Educational Services (Special Education) Analysis
- (7) District Food Service Operation Review, May 2013

Exhibits 1-7 can be found on line at www.ipswichschools.org/District/FY15-Budget-docs.html

- (8) Current teacher salary schedule,
- (9) Current contractual salaries, by position, for, clerical, teacher assistants, bus and van drivers, food service, custodians, athletic coaching and administrators, including the Superintendent,
- (10) Staffing levels at each school, plus the central office, showing position title and quantity at each position
- (11) Curriculum Development, Policy IF, showing structure of curriculum committees
- (12) Sample class schedules for students at each grade level including elementary, middle and high school
- (13) List of last purchase date for new textbooks, at all grade levels in all core subjects
- (14) Recent IT consultant recommendations, current purchases and status of implementation.
- (15) Age and condition of all classroom technology equipment,
- (16) IT staffing by school and central office, including quantity and position title
- (17) Time with Joanne Cuff, School System Director of Finance and Operations to discuss purchasing practices
- (18) FY15 budget and FY14 actual costs for regular and special education transportation.
- (19) Current enrollment chart
- (20) Currently expected grant listing showing description and amount,
- (21) Community Use of School Facilities, Policy KG & KG-A, showing how rentals and associated fees are tracked
- (22) FY15 planned and FY14 actual listing of professional development activities including description, funding level and level of participation
- (23) FY15 budgeted and FY14 actual listing of outside purchased services including description and funded amount, \$20K and above
- (24) Feoffee Settlement Agreement, Dec 23, 2009.
- (25) Principle Elements for Future Feoffee Distributions, Policy DDA
- (26) List of FY14 and FY15 Feoffee Trust funded projects
- (27) Draft Contract for Services
- (28) Transportation Contract

The Ipswich Public Schools has agreed to cooperate with the Contractor and provide whatever assistance is necessary to the Contractor to complete the operational review.

Section 2 - Scope of Services

The methodology by which the Contractor is expected to satisfy the requirements of this RFP is by the performance of an external review, of the adequacy of the educational and non-educational services delivered and the efficiency with which they are delivered and supported, and to identify short- and long- term costs that should be expended and/or savings that can be gained through the implementation of best practices, including potential collaboration with other municipal departments. Any cost savings opportunities that are identified must be accompanied by a reasonable, proposed alternative.

It is intended that the review shall not include areas described in any recently conducted outside audits for special educations, district food service, energy, custodial, facilities as documented in Exhibits 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7 nor in areas defined by the School Choice program, a separate audit of which is currently underway. The Contractor will document and present a written final report of its findings, commendations, recommendations and projected added costs and/or cost savings associated with each of its recommendations.

During the performance of the contract the contractor will seek to minimize the disruption to the day to day operation of the schools. Advance notice shall be provided for any visit to the schools or school offices. Also during the performance of the contract an average of one meeting per week will be held in Ipswich with the Committee to resolve issues and to review findings that have occurred to date. Such meetings held via conference call would be acceptable. Any questions associated with such meetings shall be forwarded in advance.

Goals

The operational review shall be performed recognizing that the goals of the Ipswich School System include, but are not limited to the following priorities:

1. To prepare students for college acceptance and completion
2. To provide a current, well defined, and comprehensive K-12 curriculum delivered by well trained, highly competent instructors
3. To limit class sizes such that goals (1) and (2) can be reasonably accomplished given the diversity of student capabilities within each classroom
4. To offer and provide a superior fine and performing art program within the curriculum
5. To offer a diverse program of extra-curricular and athletic programs

The formal goals of the Ipswich Public Schools, as voted on by the Ipswich School Committee, can be found at:

http://www.ipsk12.net/pages/Ipswich/Departments/Superintendent/District_Goals

Scope

The operational audit shall be performed in the following areas and disciplines within the Ipswich School System. Areas are to be reviewed for efficiency and effectiveness with efficiencies highlighted and potential cost savings identified.

1. **Salaries and Staffing** - To include review of all salaries for reasonableness as compared to peer communities including: teachers, clerical, teacher assistants, athletic coaching and administrators, including the Superintendent. To include review for reasonableness, as compared to peer communities and considering existing student enrollment, of staffing levels at each school (administrative, teaching within each subject area, nursing & custodial) and the Central office.

Exhibits to be provided: (1) current teacher salary schedule, (2) current contractual salaries, by position, for clerical, teacher assistants, bus and van drivers, clerical, food service, custodians, athletic coaching and administrators, including the Superintendent, (3) staffing levels at each school, plus the central office, showing position title and quantity at each position

2. **Curriculum Management** - Consider the cost and effectiveness of existing curriculum management practices and compare with those of peer communities. Review for adequacy of instruction facilities, tools and training and adequacy of class offerings as compared to peer communities. To include curriculum coordinator vs curriculum teams (Ipswich model), keeping textbooks current, cost and methods for curriculum development at each level. To include the cost and effectiveness of current student class schedules vs potential alternative scheduling systems, also considering time allotted to core subject areas (science, math, language arts, social studies, foreign language) vs non-core areas (physical education, fine arts, performing arts, etc). Are athletic offerings reasonable as compared to peer communities?.

Exhibits to be provided: (1) Curriculum Development Policy, IF, showing structure of curriculum committees, (2) sample class schedules for students at each grade level including elementary, middle and high school, (3) last purchase date for new textbooks, at all grade levels in all core subjects

3. **Information Technology (IT)** – Using Feoffee grant monies, the Ipswich Public Schools is currently investing in new IT network infrastructures including classroom technology at all school buildings. Evaluate current staffing levels, policies and procedures in relation to current MA public school standards including refresh rates to properly maintain or timely replace equipment. Include collaboration opportunities with Town or Town utility IT departments.

Exhibits to be provided: (1) Recent IT consultant recommendations, current purchases and status of implementation. (2) Age and condition of classroom technology equipment, (3) IT staffing by school and central office, including quantity and position title

4. **Purchasing** - To include validation that state purchasing policies are being followed. To include review of purchasing practices to determine if purchases are consolidated within each school, among schools and between schools, and with municipal to minimize multiple purchases of the same item and to obtain best pricing. Are adequate practices in place to minimize waste/losses?

Exhibits to be provided: (1) Time with Joanne Cuff, School System Director of Finance and Operations

5. **Transportation** - To include review of regular and special education transportation costs for reasonableness and comparison with peer communities.

Exhibits to be provided: (1) FY15 budget and FY14 actual costs for regular and special education transportation. (28) Transportation contracts

6. **Collaboration** - Based on knowledge of other similar towns and school districts, identify areas where greater collaboration within and between schools or between schools and municipal would yield significant cost savings. Consider such areas as IT, payroll, HR, Purchasing, and field maintenance.

Exhibits to be provided: (None)

7. **Elementary grade configuration** - Review the enrollments, grade configurations, staffing, administrative and support staff of Doyon and Winthrop elementary schools and report on the potential cost savings and the pros and cons of consolidating Pre-K to grade 2 into one school and grade 3 to 5 into the other. Or any other grade consolidation configuration that would generate program efficiencies and cost savings. Consider the impact of any proposed changes on increased transportation costs and the possible loss of Title 1 funding.

Exhibits to be provided: (1) current enrollment chart

8. **Outside funding** - Does the school's outside funding levels compare reasonably with peer communities? Would a part time grant writer increase federal, state and/or private grants sufficiently to justify the salary of a part time grant writer? Are the schools charging enough for school facility use by outside groups? Is every outside group that is using our facilities paying their policy appropriate rental rate? Is there equity of fees and cost between use groups? Are use fees affect participation levels? Provide benchmarks to peer group for student user fees including but not limited to after school activities, athletics, bussing, parking and lunch fees.

Exhibits to be provided: (1) currently expected grant listing showing description and amount, (2) school facility rental policy, Community Use of School Facility, Policies KG & KG-A, showing how rentals and associated fees are tracked

9. **Professional development** - Are we devoting sufficient funds to professional development as compared with peer communities?

Exhibits to be provided: (1) FY15 planned and FY14 actual listing of professional development activities including description, funding level and level of participation

10. **Purchased Services** - Are outside purchased services such as legal, grounds & buildings maintenance, security & virtual high school reasonable, being procured using best practices, policies and procedures. Are expenses comparable with peer communities?

Exhibits to be provided: (1) FY15 budgeted and FY14 actual listing of outside purchased services including description and funded amount, \$20K and above

11. **Feoffee funding** - Ipswich receives an annual distribution from a Feoffee Trust. Given school policy and the court settlement agreement that defined the terms of the Trust, is Ipswich allocating these funds in a reasonable manner given the needs of the school system.

Exhibits to be provided: (1) Feoffee Settlement Agreement, Dec 2009, with restrictions on Trust use. (2) School policy on use of Feoffee Trust funds, Principle Elements for Future Feoffee Distributions, Policy DDA, (3) list of FY14 and FY15 Feoffee Trust funded projects. (29) Payne Grant and Mini-grant policies and procedures.

12. **Peer Group Communities** – The Consultant will create with the Committee’s input and recommendations a peer group of 10 to 12 communities to be used for the audit comparisons. The peer community profile shall closely match Ipswich’s profile in resident and student population, economic factors including income and housing values, MCAS and sat scores

Section 3 - Submission Requirements

September 9, 2014 - Release of Request for Proposal

October 6, 2014 - Proposals Due

Interviews with Candidates week of October 20, 2014

October 29, 2014 - Select Vendor

November 12, 2014 - Vendor Agreement

November 12, 2014 thru December 20, 2014 - Scheduled Auditor site visits

March 4, 2015 - Submission of Findings and Recommendations with Supporting Data

March 25, 2015 - Formal Meeting with Committee to Review March 4, 2015 Submission

April 10, 2014 - Final Report Due

Two separate envelopes, one containing eight (8) copies of the non-price proposal marked “Non-Price Proposal” and one containing two (2) copies of the price proposal marked “Price

Proposal" must be received by the Purchasing Office, Town of Ipswich, Town Hall, 25 Green Street, Ipswich, MA 01938, **by October 6, 2014 at 2pm.**

The RFP process requires that price proposals must be separate from technical proposals. Therefore, please make no reference to pricing in the non-price technical proposal. Failure to adhere to this requirement will result in disqualification. It is solely the responsibility of the potential buyer to insure that the proposal arrives on time to the correct office.

Section 4 - Minimum Qualifications

Interviews will be conducted by the Committee with each bidder determined by the Committee to be responsive. **The respondent must certify in its cover letter that it meets the following minimum requirements.** Failure to include such certification in the cover letter demonstrating that these criteria have been met will result in your proposal being rejected without further consideration.

1. The firm must be well versed with at least five (5) years experience performing similar such audits and also having significant, direct experience conducting such audits in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
2. The firm must have knowledge of and demonstrated experience in evaluating: educational program requirements, best practices in public education, and accounting practices and procedures.
3. The firm must have knowledge of and demonstrated experience in working with Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education standards and requirements.

Section 5 - Proposal Requirements

1. Provide the name and location of your firm.
2. Provide a summary of the ownership and organizational structure of your firm.
3. Provide a summary of the expertise, capacity and resources of your firm. Identify at least five of your municipal government and school district clients for which you have provided services of similar scope and size to those contemplated by this Request for Proposal. Include a contact name and telephone number for each such client.
4. Provide a project organization chart listing the individuals that will be associated with this audit, including their responsibilities. Provide a list of the auditors to be used in the execution of the proposal along with a resume of each auditor. Any changes to the list of auditors must be approved by the Committee.

5. Proposal must include a detailed methodology by which the audit will be conducted, including a detailed schedule and a schedule for planned meetings or conference calls with the Committee.
6. Provide copies of audit reports taken from audits performed by the Contractor for Massachusetts municipal government or school district clients of similar scope and size to that contemplated by this Request for Proposal.
7. Proposals must be accompanied by a concise cover letter that is a maximum of two pages in length that describes why the applicant is the best candidate to complete the operational review in a timely manner.
8. Proposal must include a quoted price for the full scope of work and a pricing sheet which includes the basis by which the fee for services shall be assessed, such as (1) on-site visits and data gathering, (2) compilation of findings and recommendations and (3) preparation and submission of final report. Pricing shall be valid for 60 days from date of submission.
9. Discuss any potential conflicts of interests the firm or any individual within the firm might have representing the Town of Ipswich.
10. Sealed proposals (three (3) originals and five (5) copies) must be received on or before 2:00 PM, on **Monday, October 6, 2014**, at which time all proposals will be opened and reviewed by the Committee. Responses should be printed double-sided and bound in such a manner that the pages lie and remain flat when opened. **Late proposals will not be accepted.**
11. Include an executed Certificate of Non-Collusion.
12. Proposal must be accompanied by any exceptions the Contractor is taking to the RFP Proposal Requirements and any data or exhibits required for the Contractor to perform the audit.
13. Provide a business information report or business profile from a credit reporting agency dated no earlier than 60 days prior to the bid submission date.
14. At the time of contract execution, the successful respondent will be required to provide a certificate of professional liability insurance indicating minimum coverage of \$1,000,000. A draft Contract for Services is provided as Exhibit 27.
15. Proposals must be signed as follows: 1) if the vendor is an individual, by him/her personally; 2) if the vendor is a partnership, put the name of the partnership, followed by the signature of each general partner; and 3) if the vendor is a corporation, by the authorized officer, whose signature must be attested to by the Clerk/Secretary of the corporation and the corporate seal affixed.

16. The successful vendor may arrange for sub-contract work to be done by others, however responsibility for such work and any resulting payment remains with the vendor and such subcontractors shall be listed in the proposal.
17. All vendor employees must submit the proper application for a CORI background check by the Town prior to visiting a school building.
18. The Town of Ipswich require all persons and companies performing work and/or services for the Town of Ipswich to carry workers' compensation insurance for all employees. The vendor agrees to hold the Town and its employees, agents and officials harmless from loss or damage due to claims for personal injury and/or property damage arising from, or in connection with the contract. The contractor shall provide the Town of Ipswich proof of valid insurance for worker's compensation, general liability and automotive.

Section 6 - Meetings and Communication

It is expected that the selected firm will maintain a high level of communication with the Committee during the study. The selected firm is expected to attend work and review meetings or conference calls as necessary, an average of one per week with the Committee to resolve issues and to provide progress updates and scheduling plans. Meetings via conference call would be acceptable.

Section 7 - Final Report and Presentations

All work must be completed and the Final Report must be submitted to the Towns' representative no later than **April 10, 2015**. The selected firm shall prepare and present a final written report documenting the findings, recommendations, supporting rationale, and projected costs or cost savings associated with the recommendations.

One formal presentation shall be made to the Committee on March 25, 2015 or fourteen days after receipt of the Findings and Recommendations with Supporting Data. The presentation will be open to the public and attendees, along with the Committee, may include the Ipswich School Committee, the Ipswich Board of Selectmen and the Ipswich Finance Committee. It should be understood that questions from the general public will be entertained at the public meeting.

Provide twelve (12) copies of the final report and an electronic copy in a format agreeable to the Committee.

The RFP will be appended to and become part of a Contract for Services.

Section 8 - Rule for Award

Applications will be assessed with regard to the following factors:

1. Relevant experience of the firm and proposed project staff (20%)

Highly Advantageous - The project staff has completed at least two school audits of similar size and scope or larger successfully. Success is measured by positive references from clients.

Advantageous - The project staff has completed at least one school audit of similar size and scope or larger successfully. Success is measured by positive references from clients.

Not Advantageous - The project staff has provided consultant services to public schools but not related to school audits or similar work.

Unacceptable - The project staff has some professional experience but not related to consultant services for public schools.

2. Staffing plan and methodology (20%)

Highly Advantageous - The staffing plan exceeds the established scope of work with professional standards of methodology.

Advantageous - The staffing plan meets the established scope of work with professional standards of methodology.

Not Advantageous - The staffing plan fails to meet the established scope of work but does meet professional standards of methodology.

Unacceptable - The plan fails to meet any of the professional standards of methodology.

3. Proposer's demonstrated ability to complete projects on a timely basis (10%)

Highly Advantageous - The consultant firm has a near perfect record of being able to complete projects on a timely basis.

Advantageous - The consultant firm has some delays when completing projects for clients.

Not Advantageous - The consultant firm has many delays when completing projects for clients.

Unacceptable - The consultant firm never completes projects on time for clients.

4. Clarity and comprehensiveness of proposed plan (20%)

Highly Advantageous - The proposed plan exceeds the standards in clarity and comprehensiveness.

Advantageous - The proposed plan meets the standards in clarity and comprehensiveness.

Not Advantageous - The proposed plan fails to meet the standards in clarity and comprehensiveness in some aspects.

Unacceptable - The proposed plan completely fails to meet the standards in clarity and comprehensiveness.

5. Quality of references (15%)

Highly Advantageous - References exceed the requirements of the RFP in quantity and representation

Advantageous - References meet the requirements of the RFP in quantity and representation

Not Advantageous - References include proper representation but do not meet minimum quantity

Unacceptable - References meet neither minimum quantity nor minimum representation required by the RFP

6. Evaluation of previous audit reports (15%)

Highly Advantageous - Audit reports exceed quantity required and include findings and alternate methods in a most clear and comprehensive manner

Advantageous - Audit reports meet quantity required and include findings and alternate methods in a clear and comprehensive manner

Not Advantageous - Audit reports do not meet quantity required and include findings and alternate methods in a clear and comprehensive manner

Unacceptable - Audit reports do not meet quantity required and include findings and alternate methods neither clear nor comprehensive

The Committee will determine whether to award the contract to a responsive bidder pursuant to this Request for Proposal on or before **October 29, 2014**. The Committee reserve the right, as set forth in Section 1, to make no award at all. A poor reference may be the basis for a determination that the respondent is not a responsible bidder.

Section 9 - Standard Forms and Terms

Standard forms and terms will accompany this RFP. Proposals and written questions and clarifications shall be addressed to:

Frank Antonucci, Purchasing Director
Town of Ipswich
25 Green St.
Ipswich, MA 01938
(978) 356-6608 (Office) (978) 356-6616 (Fax)
franka@ipswich-ma.gov