

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

### **SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS SEARCH CONSULTANT SOUTH ORANGE MAPLEWOOD BOARD OF EDUCATION MAPLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY**

The South Orange Maplewood Board of Education (the “Board”) seeks the services of a consultant to conduct a full and comprehensive search for a new Superintendent of Schools. The South Orange Maplewood School District is a comprehensive K-12 District consisting of one (1) high school, two (2) middle schools and (6) elementary schools. The District’s schools have an enrollment of approximately 6,800 students and a faculty/staff of over 700. The present Superintendent shall be leaving the District on June 30, 2014, and it is expected that an Acting or Interim Superintendent will be appointed in June of 2014 and will assume the role in July of 2014. Additional information about the District is available online at [www.somds.k12.nj.us](http://www.somds.k12.nj.us).

#### **A. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS/DEADLINE**

Proposals shall be addressed to and received at the following:

Cheryl Schneider  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary  
525 Academy Street  
Maplewood, New Jersey 07040  
[cschneid@somds.k12.nj.us](mailto:cschneid@somds.k12.nj.us)

**Deadline for receipt of proposals is 3:00 PM, Wednesday, June 11, 2014.**

#### **B. INTRODUCTION**

The School District is beginning its search for a highly-qualified candidate for Superintendent of Schools to start work on January 1, 2015, or sooner. To help in the search for the most qualified candidate, the School District is seeking to retain the services of a search firm with experience in the recruitment of superintendents for school districts similar to South Orange Maplewood.

The South Orange Maplewood School District is a high-performing suburban school district serving a highly diverse population of approximately 6,800 students, Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The School District currently offers limited Pre-Kindergarten instruction and has plans for the development of an Early Learning Center to offer additional Pre-Kindergarten instruction. The two (2) middle schools are in the process of obtaining authorization for the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme. The high school is preparing to embark on the Middle States Accreditation process. District goals are developed each year by the Board of Education in collaboration with the Administration, incorporating community input. The current goals can be viewed at:

<http://www.somds.k12.nj.us/cms/lib7/NJ01001050/Centricity/Domain/3/district%20goals%208-26-13.pdf>.

The goals reflect the Board's priorities, including a vision of excellence and equity in public education without excuse, with a community-wide emphasis on addressing the Achievement Gap.

The School District is governed by a nine-member Board of Education. Three members are elected for a three year term in November of each year. Board members are responsible for setting policy for the operation of the District. Taxing authority lies with a Board of School Estimate comprised of two (2) Board of Education members and three (3) members from each of the municipalities' governing bodies (Township of Maplewood and Township of South Orange Village). The Board of Education approves the School Budget when the budget is within the tax cap set by the state of New Jersey. The Board of School Estimate will vote on the school budget should the Board of Education determine to seek funding above the cap. The Board of School Estimate also votes on authorizations to issue debt service. The approved 2014-15 school year budget is \$119,693,154.

The Board uses policy governance as its method of leading the district. The Superintendent is the Board's primary employee, and it is the Superintendent's role to evaluate and monitor all District employees. The Superintendent of Schools is responsible to the Board of Education for carrying out District policy, administering the operation of the District and schools, supervising all District personnel, and advising the Board of Education on all educational matters for the welfare and interest of the students.

### **C. PURPOSE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

This Request for Proposal ("RFP") seeks replies from experienced and qualified consultants specializing in assisting with employment searches for administrators of educational organizations. The Board of Education will work with the selected firm to develop a Superintendent search process and a timeline for the search activities. At a minimum, the activities will include the generation of a position description and qualifications, advisory services to the Board, identification and assessment of candidates, assisting with logistics of finalist interviews, and securing a satisfactory conclusion to the search. Understanding that discretion is of utmost importance to our District, as well as to many candidates, the search firm must maintain the confidentiality of all information collected as appropriate.

Respondents to this RFP should, at a minimum, provide the following:

- a. A letter of interest including company history.
- b. Qualifications and examples of comparable experience;
  1. The South Orange Maplewood Board of Education requires evidence from each respondent that the respondent has conducted and coordinated all of the activities for a successful Superintendent appointment from a minimum of five (5) public school districts. Each public school district must have a student population of 5,750 or more at the time of the search. Three (3) of the five (5) school districts shall be New Jersey public school districts. At least two of the districts must be high achieving, multicultural, and socio-economically diverse

(these districts do not have to be in New Jersey). The successful appointments must have occurred within the last five (5) years of the date of this request for proposal.

2. Letters of recommendation from five (5) school districts in which the respondents(s) has provided successful school superintendent searches and appointments. Three (3) or more of the letters must be from school districts in New Jersey with a school population of at least 5,750 students. At least two of the letters must be from high achieving, multicultural, and socio-economically diverse districts (these districts do not have to be in New Jersey).
3. The names and contact information for at least five references who can be contacted by the Board or by other individuals designated by the Board. In addition to these references, testimonials from other individuals may be useful to the Board. Respondents may provide contact information for individuals who can provide testimonials.
4. New Jersey state experience required; national experience beneficial.

c. A proposed search plan

1. Indicate the methodology you employ to initiate and carry out a search. Your narrative should address the search activities, including:
  - How you propose to communicate and work with nine-member elected board of Education
  - How will you identify prospective candidates and promote their interest to apply.
  - Your experience in effective community engagement both in terms of collecting information form the public to develop the initial position qualifications and evaluation criteria and in providing a meaningful way to generate and receive public input in the evaluation of final candidates.
  - How you will collect information form stakeholders to develop the initial position qualification and evaluation criteria.
  - What you see as the major challenges to a successful superintendent search and how you project would address them.
  - What would you consider to be a reasonable timeline that the project team will use to guide the search process
  - What information, services and assistance you will require from the School board and district staff to enable you to conduct the search.

d. A proposed search schedule to include initial community input before June 24, 2014, and with a new superintendent in place no later than January 1, 2015.

e. Background on the individuals who will be working with the South Orange Maplewood Board of Education and include a primary contact and references, to be available to communicate with the Board or other contacts as designated by the Board. The District's liaison with the search consultant shall be Board President, Elizabeth Daugherty.

- f. A proposed budget, including all fees and related expenses, including, but not limited to, out-of-pocket costs, related to the completion of the search, as described herein.
- g. Pursuant to P.L. 2004 c. 57, all proposals must be accompanied by a New Jersey Business Registration Certificate issued by the New Jersey Department of Treasury, Division of Revenue. All vendors are required to comply with the requirements of Public Law 1975, Chapter 127, "Law Against Discrimination" and Affirmative Action, N.J.S.A. 10:5-31 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 17:27-1.1 et seq.

Statement of Corporate Ownership required – N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-4.4d

#### **D. SCOPE OF SERVICES**

- a. The proposed plan should describe the services to be provided and the manner in which the consultant intends to identify and recruit qualified applicants and assist in the screening of candidates as per the criteria to be developed by the Board.
- b. The services to be provided by the consultant shall include, but not be limited to:
  - i. Assisting and advising the Board in developing a profile of the skills and attributes to be required of the new superintendent;
  - ii. Assisting and advising the Board in the soliciting and gathering of input from school and community individuals and groups as to the skills and attributes which they desire in the new superintendent and the process of selection; including conducting community input sessions, electronic solicitation of input via a written survey of community, staff and Board; and by conducting interviews with and soliciting input from School Board members, school district staff, community leaders and the general public to develop the qualifications and criteria that will be used to judge Superintendent candidates.
  - iii. Advertising the position as well as recruiting quality applicants to apply; developing and distributing recruitment materials that will encourage qualified candidates to apply; conducting personal outreach recruiting to ensure that the applicant pool includes highly qualified candidates with diverse backgrounds and experiences;
  - iv. Receiving and thoroughly reviewing all applications; Assisting with the evaluation and interviewing of potential candidates; receipt and review of candidate credentials, followed by collection of relevant background information on potential candidates so that the strengths and weaknesses of each applicant can be assessed.
  - v. Developing a process for the screening of candidates' applications, assisting with the selection of those candidates for further review and establishing a schedule and procedure for interviewing selected candidates; assisting the Board with prescreening candidates based on clearly delineated criteria. Assisting the Board in evaluating the

applicants against the qualifications and criteria developed to create a group of candidates for interviews.

- vi. Complete in-depth background investigations of candidates to be interviewed by the Board, including verification of appropriately conferred degree(s); Ensuring that there is compliance with applicable legal requirements.
- vii. Scheduling and attending Board/candidate interviews as requested; Rank candidates with rationale for ranking; develop interview questions; screen resumes with Board's Search Committee.
- viii. Facilitating visits by the Board to the communities of the finalist(s).
- ix. Assist the Board with final interviews and employment of the new superintendent; Assisting the Board in determining a salary and fringe benefits package; assisting the Board in contract negotiations with the selected candidate.
- x. Performing other functions as determined through discussion with the Board or designated individual(s) following award of contract.

The timeline for the Superintendent Search is four (4) to six (6) months.

#### **E. SELECTION/INTERVIEW PROCESS**

The Board will review all proposals and will invite selected respondents to participate in an interview process to present and discuss their proposal, and respond to questions. The primary contact listed in the RFP response will be contacted in regard to the status of their proposal, including the interview. Interviews are currently scheduled to occur on June 12 and June 13, 2014, subject to change based on Board member availability.

The Board will select the proposal that it deems will best serve the interest of the South Orange Maplewood School District, taking into account a range of technical, managerial and cost-related criteria, including the scope, clarity, relevance and feasibility of each respondent's proposal; the qualifications of the individuals who will work on the project; the demonstrated ability of the respondent to perform the services set forth in the proposal; and the relative cost of the proposals. Price being but one factor that will be considered. The Board reserves the right to reject any and all submitted proposals.

The consultant's contractor agreement will be subject to final approval as to form by the District's counsel and by majority vote of the Board.