

South Orange – Maplewood School District
525 Academy Street
Maplewood, New Jersey 07040

Request For Proposals (RFP)
EQUITY EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT
- Evaluation & Recommendation –

Background: The South Orange Maplewood School District sought to hire an Educational Equity Consultant pursuant to a Resolution Agreement, Case No. 02-13-5003, entered into with the United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. The resolution agreement commits the Board of Education to retain and work with a consultant with expertise in addressing the underrepresentation of African American students in college and career preparatory programs and courses to analyze District data and practices, at all grade levels, and to make recommendations, as appropriate, for improving the Board's efforts to provide all students with equal access to and an equal opportunity to participate in such programs and courses. The Educational Equity Consultant will also be called upon to assist the District in eliminating or significantly reducing the adverse impact of the District's discipline policies and practices, with an emphasis on reducing the use of out-of-school suspensions.

Procurement Method: Pursuant to 18A:18A-1 et seq. and 40A:11-4.5, the Business Administrator received permission from the Department of Local Government Services to utilize Competitive Contracting instead of Competitive Bidding for the hiring of an Educational Equity Consultant. Therefore, this was not a bid, but rather a Request for Proposal (RFP). As such, the District shall award the contract to the Consultant whose proposal is determined to be the most advantageous based upon the Evaluation Criteria.

Request For Proposals (RFP): The Equity Educational Consultant RFP was advertised on December 22, 2014 and twenty-six (26) potential Consultants received and reviewed our Specifications.

Proposal Opening: Three (3) proposals were submitted and opened on January 15, 2015 with the following results:

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| • Sage Educational Consultants | # 1 | \$ 78,500 |
| • Pollins and Associates, Education Specialists | # 2 | \$385,400 (alternate proposal \$699,900) |
| • Ritu Pancholy | # 3 | \$130,000 (annually) |

RFP Evaluation Method: In accordance with the methodology in 18A:18A-4.4b and contained within the RFP, an interview/question format and score sheet was used with all prospective companies to interview the candidate Consultants. The four (4) criteria that were considered in evaluating the proposals are as detailed in the following table, weighted based upon importance to the District and as approved by the Department of Local Government Services stated above. The points awarded ranged from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest score and 1 being the lowest.

<i>EVALUATION CRITERIA:</i> The categories considered in evaluating the proposals:	Points 1 to 5 (5 = Highest)	Weight Factor	Total
A. Program Price:		25%	
B. Capability and Record of Performance:		15%	
C. On-Site Consultant		30%	
D. Proposed Program:		30%	
TOTAL SCORE			

Evaluation Committee: A panel of eight (8) members, consisting of four (4) Board of Education members and four (4) District administrators, served on the Evaluation Committee:

Evaluation of Proposals: On January 22, 2015, the Evaluation Committee interviewed each of the three (3) Consultants that submitted proposals as above. Questions were asked and responses were graded in each of the sections (A through D) of the Evaluation Criteria. Score sheets were completed by each committee member and were tabulated by the Business Administrator. As per the RFP Specification, after points were awarded by the evaluators, a weighting factor was applied, and thus a total score derived. While each of the proposers shared insight into the agreement with the Office of Civil Rights, the committee felt that the proposal by Sage Educational Consultants, LLC best met the needs of the District.

The results, in order of overall performance, are as follows:

1. Sage Educational Consultants – outlined a step by step approach for speaking with stakeholders, performing analyses and developing an action plan and professional development plans. The staff that would be involved includes experienced instructors and administrators who have had involvement in OCR reporting, Collaborative Assessment Planning for Achievement (CAPA), Regional Achievement Centers and School Improvement Panels. Members have had experience in guidance and counseling strategies, have evaluated Advanced Placement programs, and have experience in developing and implementing student disciplinary codes and developing district intervention and referral service procedures. Sage Educational Consultants were ranked highly on their capability to perform the requirements and were the highest ranked on their pricing proposal.
2. Pollins and Associates, Education Specialists – presented a proposal that would include the collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data including input from stakeholders, would provide reports containing recommendations, professional development that would enhance the prospects of fulfilling the requirements of the OCR resolution agreement, and would assist with program development and implementation. Pollins and Associates also offered additional services, including an alternate proposal for a more aggressive timeline and intensive assistance. The team would include members experienced in education, research and evaluation, professional development and educational consulting. Pollins and Associates received the highest scores for their program.
3. Ritu Pancholy – presented an alternate proposal, as was allowed by the Request for Proposal specifications, for the District to hire an employee rather than a consultant. The emphasis of the proposal was on the long-term benefit of hiring an in-house attorney to develop an institutional capability not only to handle the particular requirements in this immediate resolution agreement, but to also create and maintain policies and procedures to fulfill the overall goal of providing equal opportunity for all students and staff members regardless of race, national origin, gender or sexual orientation in the School District. Although Ms. Pancholy’s experience as an attorney with the New York City Department of Education includes extensive experience with OCR investigations, the committee was not in support of the alternate proposal and so the program received low scores compared to the other proposers.

Recommendation: It is the Evaluation Committee’s recommendation to the Board of Education to approve Sage Educational Consultants as Educational Equity Consultant to the South Orange Maplewood School District. Sage Educational submitted the least expensive proposal and had the highest scoring proposal in the Evaluation Committee’s interview and vetting process.