SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH FOR BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Request for Statement of Qualifications from Executive Search Firm or Consultant

Deadline: November 30, 2018
SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH FOR BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REQUEST FOR STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM

The Superintendent Search for Boston Public Schools hereby requests proposals from qualified firms or individual consultants to provide Executive Search Consultant Services for the position of Superintendent for the Boston Public School system. The cost of this superintendent search, including the services of an executive search consultant will be privately funded through foundation support. As such, this request is not being issued under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30B. However, to ensure that the Search Committee obtains the most qualified firm or individual consultant that can most effectively deliver the required services, the Search Committee requests informal proposals as set forth below.

Firms and/or individuals interested in undertaking this assignment must forward 14 copies of a detailed proposal to be received no later than the close of November 30, 2018, at the following address:

Superintendent Search
Boston School Committee
Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building
2300 Washington Street
Roxbury, MA 02119

All questions concerning this Request must be sent in writing to the Boston School Committee office at superintendentsearch@bostonpublicschools.org.

Please be advised that this search will go at an accelerated rate, with the goal of finalizing an appointment by July 1, 2019. Interested firms or individuals, therefore, must be willing to commit the necessary staff resources to accommodate that appointment timeline. The Search Committee reserves the right to reject or accept any proposal based on criteria established at its sole discretion.

I. Scope of Services

The responsibilities of the selected firm will include the following:

1) Assist the Search Committee in conducting a search that generates a diversified pool of highly qualified candidates, including women and people of color.

2) Identify and solicit applications from superior candidates locally, nationally, and internationally.
3) Maintain communication with candidates and respond to certain candidate inquiries and information requests.

4) Screen the initial applicant pool and provide a report on each applicant, using criteria established by the Search Committee.

5) Conduct reference and background checks including the nature and content of the background checks on all interviewees, as required, including extensive reference checks on three to six finalists.

6) Provide advice and direct assistance to the Search Committee in the overall conduct of the search, including the interview process.

7) Assist the Search Committee staff in coordinating candidate interviews and making necessary arrangements for candidate travel and accommodations.

8) Perform other related services in the conduct of the search.

II. Submission Guidelines

Each proposal must include at least the following information:

1) A summary of the firm’s experience in conducting executive searches, highlighting executive searches for superintendent of schools for comparably sized urban PreK-12 school districts.

2) A list of recent assignments in education and/or related fields, including the names of client institutions and the titles of positions for which searches were conducted.

3) The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of at least three individuals who may be contacted to comment on the firm’s performance in recent searches in the last five years.

4) Evidence of commitment to, and successful experience in recruiting outstanding superintendent candidates from culturally diverse backgrounds.

5) The name of each staff member who will be assigned to this search, a brief summary of his/her relevant credentials and experience, and an indication of the proposed time commitment to this project for each staff member. Please identify the lead staff person and provide contact information.

6) The proposed fee structure for this search, including more than one option depending on the specific nature of the final assignment.
Based on its review of proposals received by November 30, 2018, the Search Committee will invite a small number of selected firms or individuals to meet with it during the weeks of December 3-13, 2018. A final determination/award will be made by December 14, 2018 and is subject to Boston School Committee approval.

**Schedule – Key Dates**

1. Request Distributed: November 15, 2018
2. Vendor Questions Due: November 26, 2018
3. Questions Answered in Writing: November 28, 2018
4. Responses due by 5PM: November 30, 2018
5. Interviews by Search Committee: December 3-13, 2018
6. Finalist selected: December 14, 2018

This solicitation shall not be construed in any manner to be an obligation by the District to enter into an agreement with any vendor.

The Search Committee reserves the right to reject any or all responses in its sole discretion. The Search Committee may negotiate the terms of the contract including revisions to the scope of the work with the selected vendor prior to entering into a contract.

The Search Committee reserves the right to revise in part this RFQ by issuing one or more addenda to each of the respondents. If the Search Committee cancels or revises this Request, all respondents will be notified by addenda. The Search Committee also reserves the right to extend the date responses are due.

Statements of interest and any other information submitted in response to this Request shall become the property of the Search Committee. Notwithstanding any indication by Respondent of confidential contents, and with the exception of bona fide confidential information, contents of responses are public documents subject to disclosure under the Massachusetts Public Records Law after the completion of the selection process.

The Search Committee will not provide compensation to Responders for any expenses incurred by Responders for response preparation or for any demonstration or participation in their selection process that may occur. Contractors submit responses at their own risk and expense.

A specific Superintendent job description will be provided to the successful search firm or consultant after the time of selection of a firm or consultant and the award of a contract to a search firm or consultant.
III. General Information about the District

Background

Over the past 20 years, the Boston Public Schools (BPS) has been transformed from a failing school district to one of the most renowned urban public school systems in the country. We educate more than 54,300 students in 125 schools — 71 percent of the school-age children who live in Boston.

We are proud to be one of the most diverse school districts in the nation. Nearly one in every two students speaks a language other than English at home, and our students come from 139 different countries. One in five BPS students has a disability, and half are economically disadvantaged.

Approximately 42 percent of the system’s students are Latino/Latina; 34 percent are African American; 14 percent are White; 9 percent are Asian; and 1 percent are of a different background or multiracial. The Boston Public School system employs more than 10,000 persons, including 4,500 classroom teachers. The system’s general fund budget for FY19 is $1.1 billion.

On the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) – also known as the “Nation’s Report Card” – Boston students’ performance is on par with the national average for all public schools, including suburban schools, in grade 4 Reading and in grade 8 Mathematics. This is the first time since measurements began that any urban school district has met this mark in two subjects and grades. Since 2007, the BPS four-year graduation rate has steadily increased, reaching its highest rate ever in 2017 despite more demanding standards required by the state for graduation; and the percentage of ninth-graders who dropped out before graduation decreased to its lowest point ever for the 2017 Cohort.

BPS is the home of many firsts in the nation: first public school (Boston Latin School, 1635), first public elementary school (Mather Elementary School, 1639), first public school system (1647), first public high school (English High School, 1821).

- Our 2017 4-year graduation rate of 72.7 percent was the highest it has ever been—up 14.8 points since 2007.

- 4-year graduation rates for Latino students have risen from 50.6 percent in 2006 to 69 percent in 2017.

- BPS offers pathways to graduation to students who may have dropped out through our Re-Engagement Center, one of the first of these centers in the nation, and our
summer graduation programs. The Re-Engagement Center, a joint initiative between the Boston Public Schools and the Boston Private Industry Council, re-enrolls more than 400 dropouts annually, and has helped to cut the number of dropouts in half since 2005.

- The number of students taking an AP exam has nearly doubled in the past 10 years, increasing from 1,666 students in 2008 to 3,100 students in 2018. Along with greater access to AP courses and exams, 51.3% of students received a qualifying score of 3 or higher.

- Nearly 17,000 additional students now have access to arts learning opportunities during the school year, compared to nine years ago. 96 percent of students in grades pre-kindergarten through eighth receive at least weekly, year-long arts instruction—up from 67 percent in 2009. The number of high school students receiving any arts instruction has more than doubled from 2009 to 2018—from 26 to 63 percent, respectively. The district has seen even greater gains in the percentage of pre-kindergarten through eighth grade students receiving arts instruction two or more times per week, from less than 10% in 2009 to 65% in 2018. High School students meeting the MassCore graduation requirement in the Arts has increased to 61%.

- The percent of students who pass all grade 10 MCAS tests on the first attempt has risen from 39 percent in 2007 to 58 percent in 2018. Passing all grade 10 MCAS tests are part of the state graduation requirements, known as the Competency Determination.

- In the 2018-2019 school year, we will offer full-day pre-kindergarten education for over 2,500 four-year-olds, up from 700 seats in 2005.

- Expanded Learning Time (ELT) is one of the key ways in which the district hopes to provide a high-quality education for all. Schools in BPS can expand the day though the Schedule A initiative, having turnaround status, or becoming an autonomous school. As of the 2017-2018 school year, BPS will have implemented ELT in a total of 57 schools serving over 23,000 students in only three years.

- One in five students attends one of our award-winning summer learning initiatives - nationally recognized for excellence in summer learning in 2013.

The next superintendent will partner with the BPS community to address a number of ongoing system-wide challenges, including:

- Closing persistent opportunity and achievement gaps by fostering opportunities for marginalized students (Black, Latino, English Language Learners, students with
disabilities, economically disadvantaged) to flourish across all areas of their education.

- Implementing BuildBPS, the district’s 10-year educational and facilities master plan, to increase equity, expand access to quality, and reduce transitions for families.

- Addressing the complex needs of the district’s high population of special education students and English Language Learners.

- Increasing staff diversity, to ensure that our teachers and administrators reflect the students they serve.

- Providing targeted, ongoing support for turnaround schools, the district’s lowest performing schools.

- Redesigning the high school experience to prepare every young person for post-secondary, career, and life-long success.

- Addressing the varying admissions processes in high school admittance.

BPS Strategic Plan

In 2015, the Boston School Committee, following an extensive community engagement process, approved a five-year strategic plan for the district which set the following aspirational goals for the district:

**Improved student outcomes**
- All students will graduate ready for college and/or career as life-long learners and engaged global citizens.

**Improved school quality**
- BPS will be a district of high-performing schools, eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps.

**Strong district leadership/high-quality, action-oriented teachers and staff**
- BPS will recruit, develop and retain highly effective, culturally-competent school and district leaders, teachers and staff who are held accountable for meeting objectives.

**Effective resource allocation**
- BPS will make effective and equitable use of resources.

**Greater community engagement**
- All schools will strengthen student, family, and community investment to guarantee opportunities for student success.
**Superintendent Position**

The Superintendent is the executive for the School Committee in all matters relating to the powers and duties of the School Committee. S/he has the sole authority to make appointments and promotions for all school system positions.

The Boston Public School system is governed by a seven-member school committee appointed by the Mayor of Boston to four-year terms. Committee members are entitled to a stipend.

The School Committee is charged with hiring, supervising, evaluating, and paying the superintendent. It also has the authority to develop educational, personnel, managerial and financial policies for the school system and to adopt balanced operating and capital budgets annually. Additionally, the superintendent serves as a member of the cabinet of the Mayor of the City of Boston.

The Superintendent has the obligation to implement the policies and budget of the school district.

It is essential that the Superintendent demonstrate: a) educational leadership; b) administrative and leadership skills; and c) the ability to communicate and interface with effectively with the Boston community and its institutions. A specific job description will be developed.

Candidates must have demonstrated experience improving outcomes and closing opportunity gaps for students of color, English learners, students with disabilities, and students of low socio-economic status.

**IV. Qualifications**

All firms and consultants that can demonstrate an ability to meet the basic scope of services in this RFQ shall be considered. It is preferred that applicant firms or consultants have recent experience in conducting a successful search (selection of a candidate and acceptance of a position, as facilitated by your firm) for a Superintendent of Schools for a comparably sized urban PreK-12 school district with at least 40,000+ students and which has authorized Charter Schools.

**V. Search Committee Membership**

Co-Chairs:

Alexandra Oliver-Dávila, member, Boston School Committee; executive director, Sociedad Latina
Dr. J. Keith Motley, professor and former chancellor, UMass Boston

Members:

Samuel Acevedo, executive director, Boston Higher Education Resource Center (HERC)

Carlos Brown, parent, Guild Elementary School

Dr. Tanya Freeman-Wisdom, headmaster, John D. O’Bryant School of Mathematics and Science

Katherine Grassa, principal, Curley K-8 School

Carolyn Kain, chair, Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council

Craig Martin, principal, Michael J. Perkins Elementary School

Michael O’Neill, member, Boston School Committee; executive vice president, 451 Agency

Elvis Rodriguez, student, Snowden International High School; member, Boston Student Advisory Council

Jessica Tang, president, Boston Teachers Union