
Request for Proposals

Strategic Initiatives Related to Educator Talent, School Turnaround and District Reform

Connecticut State Department of Education

Procurement Contact: Karen Gliha

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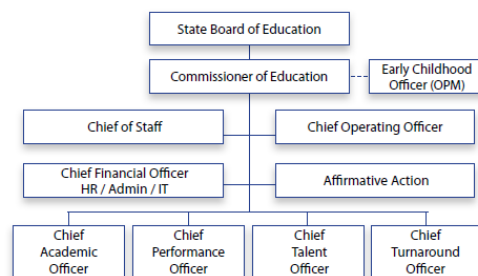
CONNECTICUT GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATOR EVALUTION

BACKGROUND

The Connecticut State Department of Education (“CSDE”) is seeking assistance for the implementation of key initiatives in the areas of educator talent, school turnaround and district reform.

These initiatives described in this RFP are central to the efforts of Governor Dannel P. Malloy and Commissioner Stefan Pryor to improve student achievement and close the achievement gap in Connecticut. On May 15, 2012, Governor Malloy signed Public Act 12-116, An Act Concerning Education Reform, which empowers the CSDE to implement a set of crucial new reforms in the areas of early childhood education; state supports and interventions in low-performing schools and districts; the expansion of high-quality schools of choice; educator talent evaluation and development; and the delivery of new resources to high-needs communities to fund new district reform efforts. The legislation was recognized by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, who commended Connecticut for “coming together to enact meaningful education reforms that will benefit students.”

Since the appointment of Commissioner Pryor, the CSDE has – in addition to working to craft and ensure passage of the education reform legislation – overseen the state’s successful application to the U.S. Department of Education for a waiver from No Child Left Behind, begun implementation of a Department-wide reorganization, facilitated the adoption of new guidelines for teacher and administrator evaluation by the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council and State Board of Education, awarded 1,000 new high-quality early childhood slots to high-needs communities, and begun the process of implementing Public Act 12-116’s signature district and school interventions, the Commissioner’s Network and Alliance Districts programs. The reorganized CSDE has the following structure:



The Talent Office, led by the Chief Talent Officer, will implement strategies to develop and attract a first-rate, diverse corps of educators to Connecticut’s classrooms, principals’ offices, and district offices by improving the entire professional experience and human resource system for teachers and leaders. This includes working collaboratively around the state to develop and expand robust and meaningful professional development based on the new educator evaluation systems, prepare teachers for Common Core standards and the 21st century classroom through improved educator preparation programs, create tuition and loan forgiveness programs to attract top graduates to high-need schools and engage key stakeholders in order to ensure success in all Talent Office initiatives.

The Turnaround Office, led by the Chief Turnaround Officer, will work to turn around schools with records of persistent underperformance by providing supports, guidance, interventions, and new

strategies. This office will analyze low-performing schools and identify the nuanced leadership, assessment, curriculum, professional development, technology, and other changes necessary to improve student outcomes. The Turnaround Office will seek out best practices from the state and the country and work to support the Alliance Districts and implement the Commissioner's Network – a cohort of up to 25 low-performing schools that will receive the state's most intensive supports and interventions.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Talent Office Initiatives

Excellent schools begin with great school leaders and teachers. The Governor's reform package creates high expectations for educator preparation, frees districts to offer individualized and meaningful job-embedded professional development, and creates new career pathways for our most accomplished educators. To meet the needs of our teachers and leaders, Public Act 12-116 sets a comprehensive approach to guide the entire talent system so that Connecticut can prepare, recruit, hire, support, develop, and retain the best.

Attracting and Hiring the Best

Attracting high-quality applicants to teacher and leadership positions in Connecticut, especially to our hard-to-staff locations, requires deliberate planning and action. Public Act 12-116 focuses on recruiting effective teachers and leaders to our schools by:

- Initiating an intensive and deliberate recruitment campaign targeting top talent;
- Working with leading nonprofits to attract and develop outstanding candidates to teach in and lead our schools; and
- Building a community of practitioners focused on improving leadership through a Connecticut School Leadership Academy for current and aspiring leaders.

Evaluating, Supporting, and Retaining the Best

Based on the work of the state's Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC), the State of Connecticut Board of Education approved Connecticut's statewide Guidelines for Educator Evaluation—a new statewide approach based on multiple indicators of student performance, observations, and other inputs. In the 2012-13 school year, ten pilot districts/consortia of districts will pilot evaluation systems based on these Guidelines.

As part of the new educator evaluation systems, districts will be required to provide effective and job-embedded professional development. This professional development must be focused on strengths and needs that are identified through evaluations, and is intended for delivery by coaches, mentors, and peers in teams and small groups.

Turnaround Office Initiatives

Connecticut is home both to schools that are succeeding and to schools that are struggling. Many schools in Connecticut face challenges that contribute to lower achievement among their students. But while some of these schools have begun to turn the corner in spite of these challenges, others are stagnant or even declining. When a school is failing its students and lacks the capacity to change, we as a state have a collective responsibility to intervene — strategically, supportively, and intensively — on behalf of our underserved students. We know where the problems are. In the state's lowest-

performing elementary schools, almost half of third graders are far below grade level. The results at the high school level are just as stark: in 2010, 5 percent of high schools produced almost 1,300 of the state's high school dropouts — nearly 40 percent of the total. Dramatic underperformance requires a dramatic response.

Alliance Districts

Public Act 12-116 establishes a process for identifying thirty Alliance Districts – the districts with the lowest district performance index scores statewide – and allocates to these districts increased Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding for the upcoming fiscal year. The Alliance District program is intended to help districts raise student performance and assist in closing the achievement gap. Each district's receipt of its designated funding allocation is conditioned upon district submission, and CSDE approval, of an application that includes a plan for the expenditure of this new increment of conditional funds in the context of the district's overall strategy to improve academic achievement.

Commissioner's Network

In an unprecedented effort to close the achievement gap statewide, Public Act 12-116 allows for the creation of the Commissioner's Network: a system of state supports and interventions to improve chronically low-performing schools. Up to 25 schools will participate in the Network over the next three years. Home districts' overall capacity and track records, among other factors, will be taken into account when devising particular strategies to turn around struggling schools. Schools whose home districts have the strongest capacity may create and implement school intervention policies in partnership with the state's Turnaround Team. These schools may retain district governance, with the CSDE providing resources, flexibility, and support for turnaround strategies spelled out in agreements with the local district. For schools whose home districts are academically struggling or do not have the necessary capacity (among other factors), the CSDE may exercise authority to serve as a temporary trustee — administering turnaround strategies directly. The goal for these schools will be to drastically lift their performance and plan a successful transition back to local district governance within a few years.

Implementation of the Network has begun, with four school districts working with their local stakeholders to develop turnaround plans for a struggling school, which were recently approved by the State of Connecticut Board of Education. These plans will be submitted for CSDE review in early August. If selected, these schools would participate in the Network as district-led turnaround efforts for the 2012-13 school year.

The Commissioner's Network will:

- Provide leadership to schools selected from among the state's lowest-performing schools;
- Restructure schools to provide more learning time, including extended school day and extended school year programming;
- Provide startup and operational resources to enable the ramp-up of new strategies;
- Offer funds for enhanced compensation to attract talented professionals to schools that need them most; and
- Establish a community schools approach by establishing or strengthening wraparound services for students, with linkages and referrals to health and social service providers.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Bidders may respond with proposals to provide services for all or a subset of the areas below, each of which is represented individually in the Product and/or Services Specification in the next section:

*Supports requested in the **Talent Office** are as follows:*

- A. Design and implement a Connecticut Leadership Academy for aspiring and advancing leaders
- B. Design a system—Professional Learning Frameworks—that connects the professional learning needs of teachers and administrators identified through the new Educator Evaluation and Support System in the areas of student performance and professional practice to local, regional and state-wide professional learning opportunities for educators.
- C. Design and implement a coaching model that provides job embedded support for teachers based on the results of the new Educator Evaluation and Support System.
- D. Design and implement a coaching model that provides job embedded support for principals and assistant principals based on the results of the new Educator Evaluation and Support System.
- E. Design and implement coaching model that provides job embedded support for Superintendents and Central Office administrators.

*Supports requested in the **Turnaround Office** are as follows:*

- F. Department and District Turnaround Support

Policy Services and Stakeholder Liaison

- G. Communication, Coordination and Overall Strategy

PRODUCT AND/OR SERVICES SPECIFICATIONS

TALENT OFFICE

- A. ***Design and implement a Connecticut Leadership Academy for aspiring and advancing leaders—superintendents and/or central office staff, principals and teacher leaders***
 - 1. Develop a sustainable leadership pipeline through the creation of a state-based Academy for superintendents and district-based aspiring leaders such as, but not limited to, principals and teacher leaders as well as help create and implement such Academy statewide;
 - 2. Position the Academy to offer professional search services for districts regarding superintendent and other leadership vacancies;
 - 3. Connect in-state private and public institutions of higher education as well as private and public pK-12 institutions and non-profit organizations to the academy;

4. Program may include the provision of technical assistance services to districts who host a district-based aspiring leaders program;
5. Program must include innovative ways for aspiring leaders to receive training which may include, but is not limited to, residency and an extensive internships;
6. Program must specify the method for selecting the highest quality candidates and mentors;
7. Program must contain a component that focuses on the skills needed to lead in an urban environment; and
8. Program must include strategies to collaborate with locate school districts to identify areas of need.

B. Design a system—Professional Learning Frameworks—that connects the professional learning needs of teachers and administrators identified through the new Educator Evaluation and Support System in the areas of student performance and professional practice to local, regional and state-wide professional learning opportunities for educators

1. This system must connect data generated through teacher and administrator evaluations to professional learning;
2. This system must include a component of coaching to assist local districts in developing processes and systems that will connect the results of evaluation to professional learning at the local district level;
3. This system must use the Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2012) as the foundational principles for the Professional Learning Framework; and
4. This system must help shift from a CEU system to evaluation-linked supports.

C. Design and implement a coaching model that provides job embedded support for teachers based on the results of the new Educator Evaluation and Support System. The coaching model must include the following:

1. An articulated model of coaching best on research and best practice;
2. Comprehensive training of coaches;
3. A process for the ongoing development of coaches;
4. A component that situates the selection of coaches and the coaching model within the larger context of teacher development, supervision and evaluation practices within the school;
5. A process for orienting school to the purposes and functioning of coaching model;
6. A process for recruiting teachers interested in a coaching role from the group of teachers identified as “Distinguished” or high performing; and
7. An implementation plan that provides classroom coaching in key areas identified in the school’s improvement plan and through the evaluation system.

D. Design and implement a coaching model that provides job embedded support for principals and assistant principals based on the results of the new Educator Evaluation and Support System. The coaching model must include the following:

1. An articulated model of coaching based on research and best practice;
2. Comprehensive training of coaches;
3. A process for the ongoing development of coaches;
4. A component that situates the selection of coaches and the coaching model within the larger context of administrator development, supervision and evaluation practices within the school district;
5. A process for orienting the district to the purposes and functioning of coaching model;
6. A process for recruiting principals interested in a coaching role from the group of principals state-wide who have been identified as high performing; and
7. An implementation plan that provides on-site coaching to in key areas identified in the district's improvement plan and through the evaluation system.

E. Design and implement coaching model that provides job embedded support for Superintendents and Central Office administrators. The coaching model must include the following:

1. An articulated model of coaching based on research and best practice;
2. Comprehensive training of coaches;
3. A process for the ongoing development of coaches;
4. A component that situates the coaching model within the larger context of district need and state-wide initiatives and strategies to improve schools; and
5. A process for recruiting individuals interested in a coaching role.

TURNAROUND OFFICE

F. Department and District Turnaround Support

1. Provide expertise and capacity to the CSDE in preparation of and during the first cohort of Commissioner's Network schools, which is initiated in the 2012-13 school year;
2. Provide expertise and capacity to the CSDE as planning begins for the second cohort of Commissioner's Network schools to be launched in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years;
3. Provide expertise and capacity to CSDE turnaround and redesign of low-performing schools of various categories in the Alliance Districts as well as district-wide transformational strategies;
4. Provide guidance on leading research and best practice into district, state, and national policy and models in support of turnaround efforts; and
5. Complete various ad hoc tasks that are central to the work of the Turnaround Office.

POLICY SERVICES AND STAKEHOLDER LIAISON

G. Communication, Coordination and Overall Strategy

1. Conduct policy research and advice in advance of and in support of upcoming legislative sessions;
2. Serve as primary liaison for the CSDE and Commissioner with Connecticut stakeholders, including teacher and administrator unions;
3. Develop and provide effective communication and coordination with all stakeholders, including unions, in support of successful implementation of Public Act 12-116;
4. Develop and provide effective communication and coordination with all stakeholders, including unions, in advance of and in support of upcoming legislative sessions; and
5. Work with SDE Turnaround Team as liaison to Commissioner's Network and Alliance District stakeholders and advise SDE leadership regarding these initiatives.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposers must address each of the items detailed below.

1. Qualifications and Experience

a. Demonstrated ability to provide services: Experience

Please provide a detailed explanation of the experience you or your organization has to support the CSDE as requested.

b. Demonstrated ability to provide services: Staff (working on project)

Please provide a detailed explanation of your experience to support the CSDE as requested.

2. Methodology

a. Proposed method of providing service

Please provide a detailed explanation of the methodology you will use in order to provide the services requested.

b. Proposed resources providing services

Please provide a detailed explanation of the resources you will use in order to provide the services requested.

3. Pricing

a. Proposed Pricing

Please provide detailed budget.

b. Additional Savings and/or Increased Revenues and/or Sustainability Plan

Please provide an explanation of additional savings and/or increased revenues and/or logic for how your proposal will be sustainable.

4. Organizational Information

a. Financial Stability

b. References

c. Quality Assurance

d. Appropriate Insurance/Bonding

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

I. Contract Period

The State intends that this contract shall be in effect for a period of 1 year, beginning on August 31, 2012 and ending August 30, 2013. The State reserves the right to extend this contract for a period up to the full original contract term or parts thereof with mutual consent between both parties.

II. Quantities and/or Usages

These are estimated quantities and/or usages only and in no way represent a commitment and/or intent to purchase. Actual quantities may vary and will be identified on individual purchase orders issued by the requesting state entity.

III. Brand Name Specifications and/or References

The use of the name of a manufacturer or of any particular make, model or brand in describing an item does not restrict proposers to that manufacturer or specific article unless limited by the term "no substitute". However, the article being offered must be of such character and quality so that it will serve the purpose for which it is to be used equally as well as that specified, and the proposer shall warrant to the State that it is fit for that purpose. Proposals on comparable items must clearly state the exact article being offered including any and all applicable options and the proposer shall furnish such other information concerning the article being offered as will be helpful in evaluating its acceptability for the purpose intended. If the proposer does not indicate that the article offered is other than as specified, it will be understood that the proposer is offering the article exactly as specified. Proposers must submit complete documentation on the specifications and quality levels of the proposed products. Proposals submitted that do not contain this documentation are subject to rejection.

IV. Contract Award

The State reserves the right to award this Contract in a manner deemed to be in the best interest of the State and may include, but not be limited to:

- A. by item, group of items, or in its entirety
- B. geographic location to adequately service the entire State of Connecticut in the best possible manner
- C. Multiple Vendor Awards

V. 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.

VI. Amendment or Cancellation of the RFP

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.

VII. Proposal Modifications

No additions or changes to any proposal will be allowed after the proposal due date, unless such modification is specifically requested by CSDE. CSDE, at its option, may seek proposer retraction and/or clarification of any discrepancy or contradiction found during its review of proposals.

VIII. Proposer Presentation of Supporting Evidence

Proposers must be prepared to provide any evidence of experience, performance, ability, and/or financial surety that CSDE deems to be necessary or appropriate to fully establish the performance capabilities represented in their proposals.

IX. Proposer Demonstration of Proposed Services and or Products

At the discretion of 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 CSDE and without cost to the State.

X. Erroneous Awards

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 CSDE shall not constitute a breach of contract on the part of CSDE since the contract with the initial proposer is deemed to be void and of no effect as if no contract ever existed between CSDE and such proposer.

XI. 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 CSDE.

XII. Ownership of Proposals

All proposals shall become the sole property of the State and will not be returned.

XIII. 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.

XIV. 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.

XV. 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 CSDE 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). A performance evaluation of any

subcontractor shall be provided promptly by the successful proposer to CSDE upon request. The successful proposer must provide the majority of services described in the specifications.

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 state will pursue negotiations with the highest scoring proposal. If, for some reason, CSDE and the initial proposer fail to reach consensus on the issues relative to a contract, then CSDE may commence contract negotiations with other proposers. CSDE may decide at any time to start the RFP process again.

Thereafter, Proposers will be required to sign a formal contract as identified in “Contract”. The contract may include a liquidated damages clause at the discretion of the State.

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 Document, will be considered as part of the Selection process **and are listed in order of relative importance.**

Selection Criteria:

1. **QUALIFICATIONS/ EXPERIENCE**
2. **METHODOLOGY**
3. **PRICING**
4. **ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION**

INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

I. Proposal Schedule

Release of RFP:	August 13, 2012
Mandatory Site Visit:	Not Applicable
Receipt of Questions Answer to questions will be posted as an Addendum	August 22, 2012
Proposal Due Date	August 27, 2012

During the period from your receipt of this Request for Proposals, and until a contract is awarded, you shall not contact any employee of the State of Connecticut for additional information, except in writing, directed to the "Department Contact" listed on the cover page of this document.

II. Bidder Information

Company/Vendor

Bidder's Address

Bidder's Representative

Telephone #'s:

Email Address

III. Bidder Submission

Please check the box(es) below to identify which sections are addressed in the submitted proposal. Should interested parties select more than one box, bidder submissions should be clearly marked with the sections the bidder is responding to from the RFP and followed by a detailed response and additional requested information within the “Instructions to Bidders”.

*Supports requested in the **Talent Office** are as follows:*

- Design and implement a Connecticut Leadership Academy for aspiring district leaders—superintendents, principals and teacher leaders.

- Design a system—Professional Learning Frameworks—that connects the professional learning needs of teachers and administrators identified through the new Educator Evaluation and Support System in the areas of student performance and professional practice to local, regional and state-wide professional learning opportunities for educators.

- Design and implement a coaching model that provides job embedded support for teachers based on the results of the new Educator Evaluation and Support System.

- Design and implement a coaching model that provides job embedded support for principals and assistant principals based on the results of the new Educator Evaluation and Support System.

- Design and implement coaching model that provides job embedded support for Superintendents and Central Office administrators.

*Supports requested in the **Turnaround Office** are as follows:*

- Department and District Turnaround Support

Policy Services and Stakeholder Liaison

- Communication, Coordination and Overall Strategy

IV. Submittal Requirements

Proposers must address each of the items detailed below:

1. Qualifications and Experience

a. Demonstrated ability to provide services: Experience

Please provide a detailed explanation of the experience you or your organization has to support the CSDE as requested.

b. Demonstrated ability to provide services: Staff (working on project)

Please provide a detailed explanation of your experience to support the CSDE as requested.

2. Methodology

a. Proposed method of providing service

Please provide a detailed explanation of the methodology you will use in order to provide the services requested.

b. Proposed resources providing services

Please provide a detailed explanation of the resources you will use in order to provide the services requested.

3. Pricing

a. Proposed Pricing

Please provide detailed budget.

b. Additional Savings and/or Increased Revenues and/or Sustainability Plan

Please provide an explanation of additional savings and/or increased revenues and/or logic for how your proposal will be sustainable.

4. Organizational Information

a. Financial Stability

b. References

c. Quality Assurance

d. Appropriate Insurance/Bonding

V. Questions

Questions for the purpose of clarifying the RFP must be submitted in writing and must be received no later than noon on Wednesday, August 22, 2012 to the CSDE contact person noted below.

Questions must be emailed to: Karen.Gliha@ct.gov

Answers to questions received will be posted as an Addendum.

VI. 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 August 27, 2012, at:

**The Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Fiscal Services, Room 309
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.**