



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – GOVERNANCE REVIEWS

RFP# 2010-1

Bid Open Date: September 14, 2009

Bid Closing Date: October 5, 2009

OVERVIEW OF THE PCSB GOVERNANCE DEEP DIVE REVIEWS:

The District of Columbia Public Charter School Board (PCSB) requests proposals for the performance of governance deep dive reviews at identified charter schools based on the results of early screens of governance practices conducted by PCSB staff. These early screens examine charter school Boards of Directors' practices in 8 governance review dimensions:

1. Strategic direction
2. Board expertise/experience
3. Board structure/stability
4. School performance monitoring
5. Compliance, ethics, and oversight
6. Demand, and parent satisfaction
7. Leadership accountability
8. Leadership succession planning

The purpose of the deep dive reviews will be to provide an in-depth examination of charter school Boards of Directors' governance practices in each of these review dimensions, evaluated against a 5-scale rubric.

The governance deep dive reviews will take place from January through May 2010.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE PCSB:

The School Reform Act of 1996 established the PCSB as a chartering authority in the District of Columbia. In its role as an independent charter authorizer, the PCSB accepts and reviews applications to establish charter schools and provides oversight of those charter schools once approved. The PCSB also has the authority to revoke a school's charter for failure to comply with its charter, or applicable laws or regulations. The PCSB currently provides oversight of 57 charter schools on 99 campuses.

The governance reviews exist as part of a larger framework, the Performance Management Framework (PMF), which examines charter school academic and non-academic performance and will allow the PCSB to evaluate schools across common indicators and tier schools based largely on their academic performance. The tier results will allow the PCSB to reward high performing charter schools, and provide support and consequences for those schools that have not achieved that status, thus allowing PCSB to better allocate its resources.

ABOUT CHARTER SCHOOLS AND CHARTER SCHOOL GOVERNANCE:

Charter schools are publicly funded schools that operate independent of the public school system. In exchange for this autonomy, charter schools are accountable for demonstrating high performance. Failure to do so could result in charter revocation.

Each charter school is governed by a Board of Directors. Each charter school's Board of Directors consists of up to 15 members, including at least two parents. A majority of the board members must reside in the District of Columbia. The Board of Directors holds responsibility for the overall performance of the charter school by setting policies to ensure that the school's performance is in keeping with established targets and that its administrative operations are functioning properly. Failure to provide adequate oversight jeopardizes student performance and the school's existence.

TASKS

Deep Dive Review Preparation

PCSB staff has conducted an initial screen at all charter schools, which includes a submission of documents, as well as a review of reported problems and change events at the schools. Schools advance to triage if documents are missing, or if reported problems and/or change events are noted. During triage, PCSB staff review additional documents to evaluate schools' performances in each of the 8 review dimensions. Schools advance to deep dive if they demonstrate signs of weak performance in 4 or more of the review dimensions.

The contractor will be expected to review all documents collected from schools, the results of the initial screen and triage stages, and participate in a meeting with PCSB staff to discuss the results of schools going into deep dive. The contractor will also schedule the deep dive reviews for each school, with guidance from PCSB staff.

Develop Deep Dive Protocol and Conduct Stakeholder Interviews

Using the Deep Dive Rubric (attached), the contractor will develop a Deep Dive Protocol centered around the 8 governance review dimensions that will sufficiently garner information to evaluate a charter school's performance in each dimension based on the

rubric. Additionally, the contractor will use this protocol to interview the school leader(s) and board members at each of the schools in the review.

Deep Dive Report

Using the information gathered from the stakeholder interviews, the contractor will develop a deep dive report for each school that provides a rating (based on the rubric) and narrative on the school's performance in each of the review dimensions, along with recommendations for next steps for the school.

Debrief Charter School Boards of Directors

The contractor will provide an oral debriefing to each school's board, preferably during a board meeting, to share the deep dive results and recommendations with each school.

Evaluation

The contractor will provide an evaluation to PCSB staff of the deep dive review process for the purpose of possible improvements to be made to the process in subsequent years.

Timeframe

The PCSB anticipates awarding the contract for the Governance Deep Dive Reviews by October 26, 2009. Initial screens of charter schools have begun, and triage reviews will be taking place at schools, as needed, beginning in October and finishing in March. It is expected that the contractor will begin scheduling deep dive reviews in November for those schools that have completed triage, with the first reviews taking place in January 2010. Additional scheduling of schools will take place throughout the remainder of the spring, based on schools' triage results. It is expected that all schools will be completed with deep dive reviews no later than May 2010. The PCSB estimates that deep dive reviews will be required for 50 schools.

Compensation

The total anticipated costs for the deep dive reviews will be no more than \$100,000 - \$150,000.

Qualifications

The PCSB seeks contractors that possess:

- a depth of experience in working with boards on governance
- strong oral and written communication skills
- exceptional organizational skills
- familiarity with charter schools
- familiarity with the DC educational community

Proposal Contents and Deadline for Submission

Proposals should provide:

- a description of the contractor's expertise in each of the review dimensions;
- evidence of the contractor's capabilities and experience with regard to each of the tasks and qualifications noted in this RFP;
- a résumé or vita; and
- a budget for the contractor's time and expenses.

Proposals should not exceed 35 pages in length, excluding attachments.

Proposals will be accepted until 5:00 PM, October 5, 2009. Proposals should be sent to Tamara Lumpkin, Deputy Director, at lumpkin@dcpubliccharter.com. Questions concerning the RFP should be submitted to the same e-mail address, or faxed to 202-328-2661.