

Date: December 17, 2019

To: Dr. Michael Lubelfeld, Superintendent of Schools
Members of the Board of Education

From: Dr. Holly Colin, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

Subject: Student Services Program Evaluation

Policy Alignment: Policy 4:60 – Purchases and Contracts

Disposition: Action

Executive Summary:

In keeping with the District 112 focus on continuous improvement, the District issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a comprehensive program review and evaluation of student services. The goal is to assess our effectiveness in meeting the needs of diverse learners and to improve outcomes for students with special needs. The evaluation will look at the overall strengths and opportunities for growth in our instructional programs and include both special education services and the multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) for all students.

The RFP was issued on October 25, 2019 and all proposals were due on November 15, 2019. DM Group, Integrated Comprehensive Systems for Equity, and WestEd Professional Services submitted proposals in response to the RFP. All three proposals were reviewed and reference checks were completed. DM Group was identified as the most qualified to provide an internal audit of student services.

In order to secure the most beneficial pricing, District 112 and 113 joined together and requested a joint cost proposal from DM Group. DM Group offered three options for the joint evaluation process and in consultation with District 113, the administration recommends moving forward with *Option 3* detailed on the attached proposal.

Recommendation: Approve

Suggested Motion: May I have a motion to approve the contract with DM Group for comprehensive program evaluation of District 112 student services at a cost not to exceed \$80,000 as presented.

November 15, 2019

Dr. Holly Colin
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
North Shore School District 112
1936 Green Bay Rd.
Highland Park, IL 60035

Dr. Colin,

District Management Group (DMGroup) is pleased to present this proposal to provide North Shore School District 112 with a Special Education, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Program Evaluation. As expectations rise while funds decrease, all districts are faced with the challenge of doing more with less. Fortunately, DMGroup has researched a wide range of best practices that are both more effective and more cost-effective for serving students with special needs.

Improving outcomes for students with special needs and students who struggle who don't have a disability is an imperative upon which virtually all superintendents, parents, school boards, special education directors, and teachers strongly agree. Yet, despite the hard work of so many caring people and the rising share of funding directed to special education, the achievement results of students in special education and of other students who struggle remain a source of frustration and disappointment for the majority of districts nationwide.

Achieving better results is possible. Based on a synthesis of pedagogical research, our in-depth study of districts most successful in this area, and our extensive analytics database, DMGroup has identified best practices for helping districts improve equity and outcomes for struggling students (both with and without IEPs). With our Special Education and MTSS Review, DMGroup will take a close look at your district's current practices; given the importance of core instruction to all students, our analysis will encompass not only an examination of special education, but also some general education practices as well.

An important and innovative aspect of this review is the use of DMGroup's schedule sharing technology. Every special education staff member and selected general education staff, such as reading teachers, Title 1 tutors, instructional coaches, or ELL teachers, will share via an online tool, a typical week's schedule. This provides a fine-grain understanding of service delivery model and how staff spend their time – with students, doing paperwork, in meetings, and so on. It also provides insight into typical group sizes and more.

Having obtained a clear picture of current practices, DMGroup will compare these practices to best practices and to practices of other like-districts. The Special Education and MTSS Review will culminate in identifying high-impact opportunities to raise achievement of students who struggle, improve staff quality of life, and manage costs... all at the same time.

Our final report commends successful practices in the district, focuses on a few realistic, high-impact opportunities to improve outcomes. As a final step in the Special Education and MTSS

Review, DMGroup will facilitate at the full-day retreat prioritizing the recommendations put forth and to help your team begin to craft detailed action plans tailored to the culture of your district. In sum, this process will provide a deep understanding of special education and some general education practices in the district and will help create a targeted, practical road map for increasing student achievement and managing costs.

Recognizing that district administrators and staff already have a full plate, we have designed the Special Education and MTSS Review process to minimize demands on staff time while ensuring a high level of input. Cross-departmental teams will help guide our work and ensure a collaborative approach to improving special education. Our Special Education and MTSS Review therefore includes establishing a “guiding coalition” that includes district and school leaders and others as determined by the district. This important group will ensure that the values and priorities of the district are at the core of the work, and the coalition will serve as a sounding board for the initial recommendations and provide two-way communication with key stakeholders including parents.

We look forward to the opportunity of working with you.

Sincerely,

Nate Levenson

Managing Director

District Management Group



December 3, 2019

Dr. Holly Colin
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
North Shore School District 112
1936 Green Bay Rd.
Highland Park, IL 60035

Dr. Colin,

Based on your request to support vertical alignment for North Shore School District 112 and Township High School District 113, District Management Group is pleased to present this amendment to our RFP response. Three options are provided for your consideration.

Option 1: Two separate but aligned reviews

In this option, each district will interact separately with DMGroup but receive similar studies. Each study will address issues of vertical alignment in addition to the scope of the original proposal. To maximize savings for each district, on-site research and meetings will be coordinated to occur on consecutive days, thus reducing travel costs.

For Option 1, the cost to each district for the study will be reduced from \$80,000 to \$72,000.

Option 2: Integrated reviews to maximize both vertical integration and economies of scale

In this option, a number of steps would be conducted with joint teams from each district. There would be one guiding coalition, one sharing of best practices, and a joint planning retreat. This is designed to unify the efforts going forward. This reflects the interconnected nature of the districts.

Additionally, each district would receive district specific recommendations, analysis and opportunities for continuous improvement. To maximize savings for each district, on-site research will be coordinated to occur on consecutive days, thus reducing travel costs.

For Option 2, the cost to each district for the study will be reduced from \$80,000 to \$62,500.

Option 3: Two separate but aligned reviews with an additional joint planning meeting.

In this option, each district will interact separately with DMGroup but receive similar studies. Each study will address issues of vertical alignment in addition to the scope of the original proposal. To maximize savings for each district, on-site research and meetings will be coordinated to occur on consecutive days, thus reducing travel costs.

In addition to each district having separate planning retreats, DMGroup will also facilitate a joint cross district planning retreat.

For Option 3, the cost to each district for the study will be reduced from \$80,000 to \$76,000.

Please let us know if you need any further information. We look forward to the opportunity of working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nate Levenson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nate Levenson

Managing Director

District Management Group