

The School District of Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh, PA)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY AND ATTENDANCE ZONE DEVELOPMENT

Issue Date: March 3, 2025

Submission Deadline: March 21, 2025

Introduction

The School District of Pittsburgh (PPS) invites proposals from qualified, Pittsburgh-based mapping consultants and demographers with a deep understanding of the city's historical, geographical, and cultural landscape. The selected consultant will develop effective and equitable attendance zones and feeder patterns for elementary, middle, and high schools. Attendance zones are geographic boundaries that determine which school a student attends. Feeder patterns are the default progression of students K-12. Given that past redistricting efforts have disproportionately impacted marginalized communities, local expertise is essential for creating solutions that prioritize equity and sustainability.

This initiative aligns with the [District's Facilities Utilization Proposal](#), which transitions PPS to a PreK-5, 6-8, and 9-12 school model and converts select magnet schools into neighborhood magnets with designated attendance zones, while preserving application options for students outside these zones. The primary objectives include maintaining continuity in feeder patterns, ensuring equitable access to education, and minimizing disruption to affected communities. A key purpose of this plan is to analyze and address inefficiencies related to student distance and travel times, particularly for our elementary-aged students. It also aims to evaluate the existing attendance zones to reduce potential transportation costs and create a balanced consideration of population and demographics to optimize student distribution and resource allocation.

As directed by the Board of Public Education of PPS, Superintendent Wayne N. Walters and District Leadership presented the Facilities Utilization Plan Proposal on April 3, 2024—a strategic initiative designed to optimize educational facility use across the District. This plan extends beyond facility restructuring; it seeks to enhance learning environments, align with financial capabilities, and uphold the District's commitment to sustainability and community engagement. The plan outlines 12 recommendations, aligned to the District's five-year strategic plan, including:

1. Creating safe, modern, and effective learning environments to ensure equitable access to high-quality education for all students.
2. Transitioning to a streamlined structure of foundational K-5 schools and developmentally responsive 6-8 middle schools to provide scalable pathways leading to high schools where students can make informed choices.
3. Transforming schools into vibrant community hubs to accommodate a broad range of activities and services beyond the traditional school day.
4. Conducting a comprehensive review of existing feeder patterns to enhance equity and resource efficiency.
5. Implementing a facilities utilization protocol to strategically evaluate school spaces for modern learning and working environments.
6. Introducing a comprehensive educational enhancement plan tailored to address the diverse needs of educators and students.
7. Incorporating Gholdy Muhammad's five pursuits into the facilities utilization plan with a focus on cultivating joy.
8. Developing scheduling and time allocation models prioritizing literacy, math, STEM, art, music, world language, physical education, and career exploration opportunities.
9. Implementing a unified safety plan covering both physical and academic aspects.
10. Developing a holistic strategy to eliminate racial and disability disparities in education.
11. Revitalizing and updating all magnet programs to ensure equitable access and standardized admissions.
12. Establishing a financial management protocol to identify areas for cost reduction without compromising educational quality.

On October 15, 2024, Education Resource Strategies (ERS) presented its final recommendations for advancing equity, excellence, and efficiency in the design of the PPS school portfolio. Following this presentation, the Board directed the Superintendent to conduct a feasibility study of ERS's recommendations. The Feasibility Report, completed in January 2025 and publicly presented on February 25, 2025, lays the foundation for the next phase—engaging a demographer to conduct a comprehensive analysis of district-wide zoning adjustments. This work is essential to ensuring equitable access, efficient resource use, and long-term sustainability across PPS schools.

District Mission

PPS will be one of America's premier school districts, student-focused, well managed, and innovative. We will hold ourselves accountable for preparing all children to achieve academic excellence and strength of character, so that they have the opportunity to succeed in all aspects of life.

District Vision

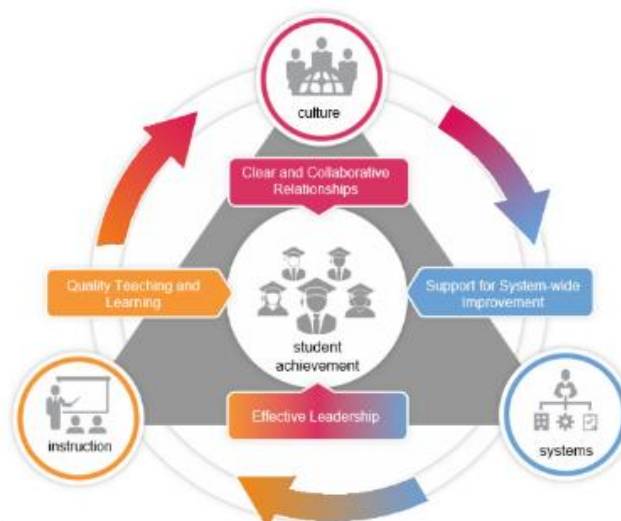
All students will graduate high school college, career and life-ready prepared to complete a two-or four-year college degree or workforce certification.

District Beliefs

- All children can learn at high levels.
- Teachers have a profound impact on student development and should have ample training, support, and resources.
- Education begins with a safe and healthy learning environment.
- Families are an essential part of the educational process.
- A commitment from the entire community is necessary to build a culture that encourages student achievement.
- Improvement in education is guided by consistent and effective leadership.
- Central office exists to serve students and schools.

District Theory of Action

If PPS **CULTURE** values clear and collaborative relationships and **SYSTEMS** are in place that support system-wide improvement and effective leadership, then quality and equitable teaching and learning practices utilizing culturally responsive practices and standards-based **INSTRUCTION** with a belief that all students can learn, will ensure high expectations and **STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**, so all students successfully graduate college, career and life-ready.



Priority Goals

The Superintendent's five priority goals articulate key strategies aimed at improving Culture, Systems, and Instruction in the School District of Pittsburgh. The implementation of these priority goals will serve as steppingstones to outline a collaborative and strategic approach via a strategic plan to solve our challenges with student outcomes and experiences.

1. Invest in culturally responsive, evidence-based training, tools, and resources.
2. Construct safety, health, and wellness protocols.
3. Expand stakeholder communication and partnerships.
4. Design effective organizational systems.
5. Strategically allocate resources to ensure equity, excellence, and efficiency.

Please click [here](#) to learn more about the Superintendent's five priority goals.

Background

As the largest of 43 school districts in Allegheny County and the second largest in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, PPS serves over 18,000 students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 in 54 schools, over 4,000 employees, and a general budget of \$752.3 million dollars. The student population is 53% African American, 33% White, and 14% Other, with more than 1,100 English Language Learners and 58 native languages spoken by students.

Scope of Work and Deliverables:

1. **Identification of Rules and General Principles for Attendance Zones Creation:**
 - Collaborate with district leadership and stakeholders to establish guiding principles and rules for defining attendance zones, ensuring alignment with Pittsburgh's historical, cultural, and geographical considerations.
2. **Detailed Demographic Analysis:**
 - Conduct a comprehensive 10-year analysis of demographic trends and shifts within the District's population, focusing on variables such as age, race, socioeconomic status, and other relevant factors.
 - Utilize diverse data sources, including census data, district enrollment data, and community demographic studies, to inform zone and feeder pattern creation.
3. **Creation of Attendance Zones:**
 - Develop equitable and data-driven attendance zones for elementary and middle schools based on agreed-upon principles, reflecting the District's strategic priorities and community context.
 - Incorporate demographic, geographic, and cultural considerations to promote neighborhood continuity and balanced student enrollment.
4. **Projections and Growth Modeling:**
 - Provide projections of future population and school-age demographic changes within Pittsburgh to anticipate and accommodate shifts that may impact zoning decisions.
 - Offer data-driven insights on potential long-term effects of attendance zones and feeder patterns on school capacity and community needs.
5. **Establishment of Feeder Patterns:**
 - Align feeder patterns with attendance zones while minimizing disruptions and ensuring equitable access across all levels.
 - Document consistent and equitable feeder patterns for transitions from elementary to middle and middle to high schools.

6. Provision of Digital Geographic Files:

- Deliver high-quality digital geographic files (e.g., GIS shapefiles) that represent the new attendance zones and feeder patterns.
- Ensure compatibility with the District's data systems for internal review, visualization, and public engagement.

8. Equity and Impact Assessment:

- Analyze the impact of proposed attendance zones and feeder patterns on different student groups, including race, socioeconomic status, and other relevant factors.
- Provide measures of average travel times for students by both vehicular and walking routes, comparing impacts across Pittsburgh's diverse neighborhoods.
- Ensure the proposed solutions promote equity and minimize unintended adverse consequences.

9. Data Visualization and Communication:

- Create clear and accessible visualizations, reports, and maps that effectively communicate demographic data, proposed zones, and community impacts to stakeholders.
- Utilize visual tools and narratives to convey complex data in an understandable and engaging manner.

To effectively meet these requirements, you should include the following key components in your proposal:

1. Communication Schedule: Clearly outline the frequency and method of communication with the Chief of Accountability. This could include weekly progress updates, bi-weekly meetings, or any other agreed-upon schedule.
2. Access to Information and Materials: Specify how the Chief Accountability Officer will have access to the collected information and materials. This could involve setting up a shared drive, providing regular updates via email, or scheduling specific times for information sharing.
3. Reporting Mechanisms: Detail how progress will be reported to the Chief Accountability Officer, including the format of reports, key metrics to be included, and any specific requirements for reporting.
4. Escalation Procedures: Outline the process for escalating issues or concerns to the Chief Accountability Officer, including who should be contacted and how quickly issues should be addressed.

By including these components in your deliverables, you can ensure clear communication and effective collaboration with the District throughout the project.

Timeline/Response Submittal

The Office of the Data, Research, Evaluation and Assessment requests proposals from experienced and qualified firms/consultants. The consultant will be selected based on the proposal and an interview if needed. A timetable for the selection process is provided below:

RFP Release Date: March 3, 2025

Proposal Submission Deadline: March 21, 2025

Possible Interviews (if needed): Week of March 31, 2025

Legislative Approval by Board: April 30, 2025

Project Start Date: Upon Full Execution of Contract

Final Report Submission to Chief Accountability Officer: 75-90 days from executed contract date

Upon the release of this RFP and during the conclusion of the selection process, there shall be no communication between any prospective respondents, their lobbyist(s) or agent(s), and any employee of PPS or

its elected Board of Directors, except as provided for in the RFP. Any violation of this provision by any prospective firm and/or its agent shall be grounds for immediate disqualification.

All proposals shall be submitted to the School District of Pittsburgh as follows:

Dr. Theodore Dwyer,
Chief Accountability Officer
School District of Pittsburgh
341 South Bellefield Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Tel: (412) 529-3335
Email: tdwyer1@pghschools.org

Proposals can be submitted electronically via tdwyer1@pghschools.org by **Noon on March 21, 2025**. Proposals should not exceed 30 pages on 8 ½" X 11" paper 11" paper (including the cover letter, budget narrative, references, and all attachments), single-spaced, using a minimum font size of 10 pt. Any questions regarding this RFP should be addressed to Dr. Dwyer.

Proposals should be submitted following the instructions detailed below. PPS reserves the right to select a proposal in its entirety or some portion(s) thereof. Furthermore, PPS reserves the right to reject any proposals and waive irregularities.

Responses should address the following questions or requests for information:

I. Letter of Transmittal

Each proposal should be accompanied by a letter of transmittal that summarizes the proposal's key points and is signed by an authorized officer.

II. Experience and Qualifications

Provide brief biographies for the partners and employees supporting the PPS account, including any relevant experience for each. Please include only those individuals who will work on the PPS account and specify their role in the project.

Please describe relevant experience with demographic mapping, including previous work with other school districts. Please share any current projects and identify team members dedicated to current projects. Please provide three references.

III. Company Information/Equal Employment Opportunity

- A. Describe your company's equal employment opportunity policies and programs.
- B. Has your company or any of its employees, or anyone acting on its behalf, ever been convicted of any crime or offense arising directly or indirectly from the conduct of your company's business or have any of your company's officers, directors or persons exercising substantial policy discretion ever been convicted of any crime or offense, i.e., financial misconduct, fraud, or child abuse? If so, please describe any such convictions and surrounding circumstances in detail.

- C. Has your company, or any of its employees, or anyone acting on its behalf, been indicted or otherwise charged in connection with any criminal matter arising directly or indirectly from the conduct of your company's business which is still pending or have any of your company's officers, directors or persons exercising substantial policy discretion been indicted or otherwise charged in connection with any criminal matter, i.e., financial misconduct, fraud or child abuse which is still pending? If so, please describe any such indictments and surrounding circumstances in detail.

IV. Project Work Plan

Submit a detailed work plan for performed services. A timeline for the completion of specific work products should also be included.

V. Fee Proposal

Please provide a fee structure that your company would propose to provide demographic study services for the Office of the Superintendent, given the scope of services in your detailed work plan. Proposals must include the overall cost of all work, any hourly or daily rates, and cost estimates for travel and time associated with communicating with the PPS staff.

Evaluation Criteria and Selection Process

The contract will be awarded to the qualified proposer whose proposal is most advantageous to PPS based on the evaluation criteria specified below. Thus, while the points in the evaluation criteria indicate their relative importance, the total scores will not necessarily determine the award. Rather, the overall scores will guide PPS in making an intelligent award decision based on the evaluation criteria.

PPS reserves the right to request an interview from those companies/consultants determined to be in a competitive range and shall use the information derived from these interviews, if any, in its evaluation.

PPS anticipates selecting one consultant using the following criteria:

- Local Expertise in Pittsburgh's Context (Y/N)
- Relevant Professional Experience (20)
- Technical Expertise in Geographic Mapping (20)
- Project Work Plan & Timeline Feasibility (20)
- Impact Assessment (20)
- Cost Proposal & Budget (20)

The contractor will be selected by April 21, 2025.

Eligible Business Enterprise (EBE) Participation**1. EBE Goal**

An aspirational Eligible Business Enterprise (EBE) goal of 10% for business diversity spending, has been assigned for this contract opportunity. An EBE is a collective of firms that are certified in one or more of the following business diversity categories, registered in our online EBE directory, and used to track the district's diversity spend:

- Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)
- Women Business Enterprise (WBE)
- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)
- U. S. Small Business Administration 8(A)

2. Proposed Business Diversity Utilization

Is your firm a certified MBE, WBE, DBE, or 8(A) firm? If so, please provide proof of current certification from a certifying entity. Self-certification is not accepted.

Please also provide detailed information regarding any additional business entity that will assist in completing the scope of work defined by this solicitation. This should include the following:

- Company Name
- Company Contact (including title, email, and phone number)
- Scope of Work
- Dollar Amount & Percentage of Contract
- Company Diversity Type (provide proof for each certified firm)
 - MBE, WBE, DBE, 8(A), Diverse but not certified, N/A

3. Good Faith Effort

If no portion of this contract is awarded to a diverse business, specifically \$0 or 0% diversity spend, please provide detailed information addressing your firm's culture for business diversity & inclusion.

- Diversity Spend: How much money did your company spend with certified MBE, WBE, DBE, or 8(a) firms last year? What was the diversity percentage based on your total spending?
- Diversity Count: What is the total number of MBE, WBE, DBE, or 8(A) firms your company contracted with last year? Please itemize by each diversity type as well.
- Membership: Are you a member of any supplier/business diversity organizations? If so, please share the organization's name and provide details concerning your involvement with that organization.

For additional documentation related to EBE policies, the proposer should visit the district's website at: <https://www.pghschools.org/mwbe> or contact Paula B. Castleberry, Minority/Women Business Coordinator, pcastleberry1@pghschools.org.