REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

for

Marketing & Communications Services

Proposals Due:

No later than 4:00 p.m. EST on Tuesday, February 3, 2026

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1. Introduction

The Allentown School District (ASD) seeks proposals from qualified marketing and communications firms to develop and execute a comprehensive strategy that promotes the district, strengthens community engagement, and attracts and retains students. The selected firm will partner with ASD to enhance its brand, showcase academic excellence, and communicate the district's value to families and stakeholders.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

2.1 Background and Context

The District is a public-school district serving a diverse student population and community. The District is committed to providing high-quality educational programs, ensuring student safety and well-being, fostering strong community partnerships, and maintaining transparency and trust with families, staff, and the broader public.

In support of these commitments, the District seeks to strengthen its marketing and communications capacity to more effectively:

- Communicate its mission, vision, and strategic priorities;
- Support student enrollment, retention, and program awareness;
- Engage families, staff, and community stakeholders;
- Promote academic excellence, student success, and District initiatives; and
- Manage proactive and responsive communications in a dynamic public-sector environment.

2.2 Purpose of the RFP

The purpose of this Request for Proposals is to solicit qualified firms to provide **professional marketing and communications services** to the District. The selected firm will serve as a strategic partner to the District, providing planning, execution, and advisory services that enhance the District's communications effectiveness, brand consistency, and public engagement.

This RFP is intended to result in the selection of one (1) or more qualified firms capable of delivering comprehensive marketing and communications support on an as-needed and/or ongoing basis, as determined by the District.

2.3 Project Objectives

The objectives of this project include, but are not limited to:

- Developing and implementing a cohesive marketing and communications strategy aligned with District goals.
- Improving the clarity, consistency, and effectiveness of District messaging.
- Supporting enrollment, recruitment, and retention initiatives.
- Enhancing digital, social media, and community outreach efforts.

- Strengthening internal communications with District staff.
- Supporting media relations and crisis communications as necessary.
- Establishing measurable outcomes and performance indicators.

2.4 Scope and Nature of Services

The District anticipates that services may include strategic planning, branding, campaign development, content creation, digital communications, media relations, community engagement, internal communications, and performance reporting, as further described in Section 3 (Scope of Work).

The volume and nature of work may vary throughout the term of the contract based on District priorities, funding, and operational needs. No minimum amount of work is guaranteed.

2.5 Project Timeline

The District anticipates the following general timeline (subject to change at the District's discretion):

- RFP Issuance: January 21, 2026
- Deadline for Questions: January 27, 2026
- Proposal Submission Deadline: February 3, 2026
- Evaluation and Shortlisting: February 4, 2026
- Interviews/Presentations (if applicable): Week of February 9, 2026
- Anticipated Award Date: February 26, 2026
- Anticipated Contract Start Date: March 2, 2026

2.6 Contract Term

The District anticipates entering into a professional services agreement with the selected firm for an initial term of one (1) year, with the option to renew for additional terms at the District's sole discretion, subject to satisfactory performance and availability of funding.

2.7 District Roles and Responsibilities

The District will:

- Designate a primary point of contact for coordination and approvals.
- Provide reasonable access to District staff, information, and existing materials.
- Review and approve deliverables in a timely manner.
- Maintain final authority over all communications, messaging, and public statements.

2.8 Vendor Role

The selected vendor shall:

- Act as a professional advisor and partner to the District.
- Coordinate closely with District leadership and designated staff.
- Comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and District policies.
- Maintain confidentiality and protect District and student information.
- Deliver services in accordance with the Scope of Work and contract terms.

2.9 Budget and Funding

The District anticipates funding this project through approved operating and/or special funds. The District has not established a guaranteed minimum or maximum expenditure. Proposers shall submit pricing in accordance with Section 5 (Proposal Requirements).

2.10 Reservation of Rights

The District reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals.
- Waive minor irregularities or informalities.
- Request additional information or clarification.
- Modify the scope, schedule, or terms of this RFP.
- Cancel this RFP at any time if deemed to be in the District's best interest.

2.11 Relationship to Existing Agreements

The District currently maintains a separate Communications Support Agreement that provides executive communications, Superintendent messaging, leadership voice development, and active crisis communications support. Services provided under that agreement are expressly excluded from this solicitation.

All communications authored in the Superintendent's voice or directly attributed to the Superintendent, including but not limited to speeches, op-eds, blog posts, columns, leadership remarks, LinkedIn or other executive social media content, and Districtwide leadership messaging, shall remain under the purview of the District's existing communications partner.

This RFP is intended to procure campaign-based marketing, creative, paid media, and related execution services that do not duplicate or replace executive communications functions.

2.12 Coordination with Existing Communications Partner

The selected vendor will be expected to collaborate with the District's existing communications partner responsible for executive communications, Superintendent messaging, and crisis leadership. The District retains final authority over role delineation and approvals. Proposers must demonstrate the ability to operate within a multi-vendor communications environment.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The selected vendor shall provide comprehensive, professional marketing and communications services to support the District's strategic priorities. Services may include strategic planning, campaign development, branding, content creation, digital communications, media relations, community engagement, internal communications, and performance measurement.

The vendor shall act as a strategic partner to the District and deliver both advisory and execution services as requested. The scope described below reflects anticipated service categories; however, the District reserves the right to adjust priorities and request services based on operational needs, funding, and timelines. No minimum volume of work is guaranteed.

3.1 Discovery, Assessment, and Strategic Communications Planning

The vendor shall:

- Conduct a structured kickoff and discovery process with District leadership and designated stakeholders.
- Review and assess existing marketing, communications, branding, and outreach efforts, including digital platforms, campaigns, enrollment materials, and media presence.
- Conduct competitive and contextual analysis, including peer districts, charter/choice environments, and regional demographics as appropriate.
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive Marketing and Communications Strategic Plan, including:
    - Annual communications priorities
    - Campaign calendars (enrollment, programs, staffing, attendance, budget-related communications)
    - Target audience segmentation
    - Recommended communication channels
    - Messaging and timing strategies

Strategic planning and message development under this scope shall align with District-approved messaging frameworks. Executive-level message architecture and leadership voice development remain under the District's existing communications partner. The selected vendor will coordinate closely to ensure alignment and consistency.

3.2 Brand Strategy, Messaging, and District Identity

The vendor shall:

- Conduct a District brand audit to assess perception, consistency, and alignment.
- Develop or refine the District's brand positioning and narrative.
- Create a messaging framework tailored to key audiences, including families, students, staff, community members, and media.
- Support visual identity standards and templates (logos, color palette, typography, layouts) consistent with District branding.

- Develop a brand toolkit to support consistent use across schools, programs, athletics, and departments.

3.3 Marketing Campaign Development (Enrollment, Programs, Staffing)

The vendor shall plan and execute targeted campaigns to promote District goals, which may include:

- Student enrollment and recruitment (including Pre-K and Kindergarten)
- Specialized academic programs (CTE, magnet, IB, dual enrollment, arts, athletics, STEM)
- Staff recruitment, particularly for hard-to-fill positions
- Attendance improvement initiatives
- Informational campaigns related to bond, referendum, or budget initiatives (as legally permitted)

Campaign services may include:

- Campaign strategy and go-to-market planning
- Integrated campaign calendars (paid, owned, earned)
- Campaign creative concepts and messaging
- Campaign landing pages and conversion pathways
- Print and digital collateral (flyers, postcards, banners, signage)
- Message testing and performance reporting

Campaign strategy and execution may include creative development, visual identity, channel strategy, paid and organic deployment, and performance optimization. Where campaign messaging requires executive attribution or Superintendent voice, such content will be developed by the District's executive communications partner, with the vendor responsible for adapting approved messaging for campaign use.

3.4 Media Strategy, Buying, and Optimization (Paid Advertising)

The vendor shall:

- Develop media strategies aligned with campaign goals, target audiences, and budgets.
- Plan and manage paid media placements, which may include:
    - Search (SEM)
    - Social media advertising
    - Programmatic display
    - Video/CTV
    - Outdoor, print, or radio advertising (as appropriate)
- Conduct A/B testing and optimization of creative and placements.
- Provide budget pacing, performance analysis, and optimization recommendations.
- Ensure all paid media activities comply with applicable public-sector and legal requirements.

3.5 Content Strategy, Video, Photography, and Storytelling

The vendor shall:

- Develop and maintain a District content strategy and editorial calendar.
- Produce content including written materials, graphics, photography, and video.
- Develop storytelling assets that showcase authentic student, staff, and program experiences.
- Create video and photography assets such as:
    - District brand story videos
    - Program highlight videos
    - Recruitment and “day-in-the-life” features
    - Monthly or periodic spotlight content
- Maintain an organized content library for District use across platforms.

3.6 Digital Marketing, Web, UX, and Organic Growth

The vendor shall:

- Support District website strategy, content structure, and user experience.
- Provide recommendations for usability, accessibility, SEO, and performance improvements.
- Support landing page strategy and conversion optimization for enrollment and recruitment initiatives.
- Conduct SEO audits and organic growth strategies, including keyword research and content optimization.
- Support digital lifecycle communications, including email campaigns and retargeting strategies where appropriate.

3.7 Community Engagement, Public Relations, and Media Relations

The vendor shall:

- Develop and support community engagement strategies.
- Provide media relations support, including press releases, media advisories, and media kits.
- Support Superintendent and Board communications through background research, message framing, editing, or adaptation of District-approved messaging, as requested. Primary authorship of communications in the Superintendent’s voice is excluded from this scope.
- Support community listening efforts, surveys, and perception research as requested.
- Assist with reputation management and proactive storytelling.

3.8 Crisis and Sensitive Communications

The vendor shall support crisis preparedness and planning, including development and maintenance of crisis communication protocols, templates, and documentation.

During active crises or sensitive issues, the District's existing communications partner will serve as the primary communications lead. The vendor may provide background support, drafting assistance, documentation, or post-incident analysis only as requested by the District.

The vendor shall coordinate with District leadership, legal counsel, and existing communications partners as appropriate.

3.9 Internal Communications and Staff Engagement

The vendor shall support internal communications planning and execution **for department-level, initiative-based, and operational communications**, including HR, programmatic, and change-management initiatives.

The vendor may:

- Develop staff-facing messaging toolkits, templates, presentations, and guidance
- Support change-management communications and District initiatives impacting staff
- Assist departments with internal messaging alignment and rollout planning

Executive internal communications authored in the Superintendent's voice, including Districtwide staff newsletters and leadership updates, are excluded from this scope and are managed under the District's existing communications agreement.

3.10 Research, Analytics, Measurement, and Reporting

The vendor shall:

- Develop performance measurement frameworks aligned with District goals.
- Provide analytics and reporting, which may include:
    - Campaign performance metrics
    - Enrollment funnel analysis
    - Digital and social analytics
    - Media sentiment analysis
    - Survey and perception research results
- Deliver regular performance reports and executive summaries.
- Use data insights to recommend strategy adjustments and continuous improvement.

3.11 Project Management and Coordination

The vendor shall:

- Assign a dedicated account manager and project lead.
- Manage timelines, deliverables, approvals, and documentation.

- Participate in regular status meetings with District staff.
- Maintain transparent communication and tracking throughout the engagement.

4. DELIVERABLES

The selected vendor shall be responsible for providing the deliverables identified below. These deliverables represent anticipated outputs associated with the Scope of Work. The District may request some or all deliverables based on priorities, funding, and timing.

Proposers may recommend additional deliverables that enhance value to the District, provided such items are clearly identified.

4.1 Strategic Planning and Brand Deliverables

- Marketing and Communications Strategic Plan (12-month framework)
- Annual communications and campaign calendar
- District brand audit summary (as applicable)
- Brand positioning and narrative framework
- Messaging framework for key audiences (families, students, staff, community, media)
- District brand guidelines and visual identity standards
- Brand toolkit for schools, programs, athletics, and departments

4.2 Campaign and Go-to-Market Deliverables

- Campaign strategy and go-to-market plans for District initiatives
- Integrated campaign calendars (paid, owned, earned)
- Campaign creative concepts and messaging
- Campaign landing pages and conversion pathways
- Enrollment and recruitment campaign materials
- Program-specific promotional materials (e.g., CTE, magnet, arts, athletics)
- Attendance or informational campaign materials (as applicable)
- Campaign performance summaries and recommendations
- Campaign messaging aligned to District-approved and executive communications frameworks

4.3 Media Strategy and Paid Advertising Deliverables

- Paid media strategy and audience targeting plans
- Media plans by campaign or initiative
- Creative assets for paid media placements
- A/B testing plans and results
- Budget pacing and optimization reports
- Monthly or campaign-based paid media performance reports

4.4 Content, Video, Photography, and Storytelling Deliverables

- Content strategy and editorial calendar
- Written content (articles, stories, announcements)
- Graphic design assets and templates
- Photography services and curated photo library
- Video assets, which may include:
    - District brand story videos
    - Program highlight videos
    - Recruitment and "day-in-the-life" features
    - Periodic spotlight or storytelling features
- Content libraries organized for District reuse

4.5 Digital, Web, and SEO Deliverables

- Website communications and content recommendations
- Website architecture and UX recommendations (as applicable)
- Accessibility, usability, and SEO audit summaries
- SEO content strategies and keyword recommendations
- Landing page designs or wireframes (if applicable)
- Digital performance summaries and recommendations

4.6 Community Engagement, Public Relations, and Internal Communications Deliverables

- Community outreach toolkits and materials
- Press releases, media advisories, and media kits
- Speechwriting background materials, talking points, and message adaptations for District leadership **based on District-approved messaging frameworks**
  (Primary authorship of Superintendent-voiced communications is excluded)
- Community survey instruments and summary reports (as requested)
- Internal communication toolkits and templates for departments and initiatives
- Change-management communication materials
- Presentation materials and informational handouts

4.7 Crisis and Sensitive Communications Deliverables

- Crisis communication templates and protocols
- Scenario planning and preparedness documentation
- Post-incident communication summaries (if requested)

4.8 Measurement, Analytics, and Reporting Deliverables

- Performance measurement framework and KPIs
- Campaign analytics and dashboards
- Enrollment funnel analysis (as applicable)
- Media sentiment summaries
- Monthly and/or quarterly performance reports
- Executive-level summary reports with insights and recommendations

4.9 Project Management and Coordination Deliverables

- Project plans, timelines, and milestones
- Status reports and action trackers
- Meeting agendas and summary notes
- Documentation of approvals and deliverable tracking

5. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be clear, complete, and responsive to this Request for Proposals. Each proposal shall follow the format and organization outlined below. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in the proposal being deemed non-responsive.

5.1 General Submission Requirements

- Proposals shall be submitted by the date and time specified in this RFP.
- Proposals shall be valid for a minimum of 120 days from the submission deadline.
- All costs associated with proposal preparation and submission are the responsibility of the proposer.
- Proposals shall be signed by an individual authorized to bind the firm.
- The District reserves the right to request clarification, additional information, or supplemental documentation.

5.2 Proposal Organization and Format

Proposals shall be organized using the following numbered sections. Proposers are strongly encouraged to adhere to this format to facilitate evaluation.

5.3 Executive Summary

Provide a concise overview (no more than two pages) that includes:

- Firm understanding of the District's needs and objectives.
- Summary of the proposed approach and key differentiators.
- Unique strengths or value-added services.
- Commitment to meeting the Scope of Work.

5.4 Firm Background and Qualifications

Provide:

- Legal name, address, and years in operation.
- Description of firm size, structure, and areas of expertise.
- Experience providing marketing and communications services to public-sector and/or K–12 clients.

- Disclosure of any pending litigation, conflicts of interest, or adverse findings related to public contracts.

5.5 Relevant Experience and References

Provide:

- Descriptions of at least **three (3)** comparable engagements, preferably for public school districts or similar public entities.
- For each engagement include:
    - Client name and contact information.
    - Scope of services provided.
    - Duration of engagement.
    - Measurable outcomes or results achieved.
- Contact information for references may be verified by the District.

5.6 Proposed Team and Staffing Plan

Provide:

- Identification of the proposed project manager/account lead.
- Roles and responsibilities of all proposed team members.
- Resumes or biographies demonstrating relevant experience.
- Explanation of staffing levels, availability, and continuity/backup coverage.
- Description of subcontractors, if any, and their roles.

5.7 Technical Approach and Work Plan

Provide a detailed narrative describing how the proposer will perform the Scope of Work, including:

- Discovery and onboarding approach for the first 30–60 days.
- Strategy development and campaign planning process.
- Content development and approval workflow.
- Media relations and crisis communications support approach.
- Digital, social media, and community engagement strategies.
- Project management methodology, communication cadence, and escalation procedures.
- Timeline showing key milestones and deliverables.
- Description of coordination approach with the District's existing executive communications partner to ensure role clarity, message alignment, and avoidance of duplication.

5.8 Measurement, Reporting, and Performance Management

Provide:

- Proposed performance metrics and KPIs.
- Reporting frequency and sample report formats.
- Methods for campaign optimization and continuous improvement.
- Use of data and analytics to inform decision-making.

5.9 Equity, Accessibility, and Compliance

Describe how the proposer will:

- Ensure communications are accessible, inclusive, and culturally responsive.
- Support multilingual communications and community outreach.
- Protect student and District data and comply with applicable privacy, confidentiality, and cybersecurity requirements.
- Manage approvals, permissions, and content governance in a K–12 environment.

5.10 Cost Proposal

Provide a detailed cost proposal that includes:

- Pricing structure (e.g., retainer, hourly rates, deliverable-based pricing).
- Identification of all costs and assumptions.
- Any optional or alternate pricing.
- Clear identification of items not included in the base cost.
- Confirmation that pricing includes all labor, materials, travel, and overhead unless otherwise stated.

Costs shall be presented in a separate, clearly labeled section or attachment, if requested by the District.

5.11 Value-Added Services (Optional)

Proposers may include:

- Additional services, innovations, or tools that enhance value to the District.
- These services should be clearly identified as optional and not required for baseline evaluation.

5.12 Insurance, Legal, and Contractual Requirements

Provide:

- Evidence of ability to meet insurance requirements specified in this RFP.
- Acceptance of the District's standard contract terms or identification of requested exceptions.
- Statement confirming compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

5.13 Required Forms and Certifications

Include all required forms, certifications, and affidavits identified elsewhere in this RFP, including but not limited to:

- Non-collusion affidavit.
- Certification of non-discrimination.
- Certification regarding debarment or suspension.
- Any additional forms required by the District.

5.14 Exceptions and Assumptions

Clearly identify:

- Any exceptions to the RFP requirements.
- Any assumptions upon which the proposal is based.
  Failure to disclose exceptions or assumptions may result in rejection of the proposal.

5.15 Proposal Completeness

Proposals shall be complete, clear, and sufficiently detailed to permit thorough evaluation. Proposals that are incomplete, conditional, or non-responsive may be rejected at the District's sole discretion.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 Evaluation Process and Best-Value Award

Proposals will be evaluated to determine the offeror that provides the best overall value to the District, considering technical merit, demonstrated experience, responsiveness, capacity, and cost. The District may request clarifications, conduct interviews/presentations, and negotiate scope and pricing with one or more offerors. The District reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive minor informalities, and make an award in the District's best interest.

6.2 Minimum Responsiveness Requirements (Pass/Fail)

Proposals must, at a minimum:

- Be received by the stated deadline and contain all required submissions.
- Demonstrate ability to meet required insurance, confidentiality, and cybersecurity/data protection requirements (as applicable in the RFP).
- Identify a dedicated project lead/account manager and confirm availability to perform the work.
- Provide at least three (3) relevant references, preferably public-sector and/or K–12 clients.
- Provide a complete cost proposal in the format requested.

Failure to meet minimum requirements may result in the proposal being deemed non-responsive.

6.3 Technical Evaluation Criteria and Weights (100 Points Total)

The District intends to use the weighted criteria below. The District may score proposals using the rubric in Section 6.4.

A. Understanding of the District's Needs and Quality of Approach (20 points)

- Demonstrates clear understanding of K–12 public education communications, community trust, enrollment/recruitment pressures, multilingual outreach, and board/superintendent communications.
- Presents a logical, actionable approach that aligns to District priorities and the Scope of Work.
- Identifies risks and provides realistic mitigation strategies (e.g., approvals, rapid response, crisis communications, school-based content collection).

B. Scope of Work Responsiveness and Work Plan (20 points)

- Provides a detailed work plan with timelines, milestones, and deliverables.
- Clearly defines intake/production/approval workflow and stakeholder engagement plan.
- Demonstrates ability to support campaign planning/execution, content production, media relations, digital strategy, and reporting.
- Includes a practical onboarding/discovery plan for the first 30–60 days.

C. Relevant Experience and Past Performance (15 points)

- Demonstrated success providing similar services for public-sector and/or K–12 clients.
- Evidence of results (KPIs, outcomes, measurable improvements, campaign performance, engagement metrics).
- Strength and relevance of portfolio samples (creative quality, clarity, accessibility, multilingual communications, community engagement).

D. Team Qualifications, Capacity, and Continuity (15 points)

- Qualifications and experience of proposed team members (project leadership, creative, digital, PR, analytics).
- Adequacy of staffing levels and ability to meet timelines.
- Continuity plan (backup coverage, turnover mitigation, escalation path).
- Local/regional knowledge and community engagement experience (if relevant).

E. Measurement, Analytics, and Performance Management (10 points)

- Quality of proposed KPIs and reporting cadence.
- Ability to create dashboards/reports and optimize campaigns based on data.

- Demonstrates testing/learning approach (A/B testing, iterative improvement, actionable recommendations).

F. Project Management and Communication (10 points)

- Clarity of governance structure and meeting cadence.
- Tools/process for tracking deliverables, approvals, and deadlines.
- Responsiveness expectations and service levels (including time-sensitive communications).

G. Cost Proposal and Overall Value (10 points)

- Total cost of ownership and transparency of pricing structure (hourly vs. retainer vs. deliverable-based).
- Reasonableness of assumptions, inclusions/exclusions, and any optional services.
- Value relative to scope, staffing, and anticipated outcomes.

6.4 Scoring Rubric (Recommended for Defensibility)

To improve consistency and defensibility, evaluators may use the following scale for each criterion:

- **5 – Excellent:** Exceeds requirements; highly detailed, low risk, superior value.
- **4 – Good:** Meets requirements well; clear plan; low/moderate risk.
- **3 – Acceptable:** Meets minimum requirements; some gaps/uncertainty; moderate risk.
- **2 – Marginal:** Partially meets requirements; significant gaps; elevated risk.
- **1 – Poor:** Does not meet requirements; unclear approach; high risk.
- **0 – Non-responsive:** No meaningful information provided for the criterion.

6.5 Interviews/Presentations (Optional) and Their Role

At the District's discretion, finalists may be invited to an interview and/or presentation. Interviews may be scored as part of the criteria above (primarily A, B, D, and F) and may include:

- Walkthrough of proposed first 60 days and campaign approach
- Review of relevant work samples and results
- Proposed workflow for approvals, crisis communications, and rapid response
- Clarification of staffing, capacity, and pricing assumptions

6.6 Reference Checks

The District may conduct reference checks for one or more finalists. Reference feedback may be used to validate scoring for experience, performance, responsiveness, quality, and timeliness.

6.7 Tie-Breakers (If Needed)

If proposals are substantially equal in total score, the District may consider, in order:

1. Higher technical score (Sections A–F combined)
2. Stronger relevant K–12/public-sector references and demonstrated results
3. Lower overall cost / better total value

6.8 Final Award

The District intends to award to the responsible offeror whose proposal is determined to be most advantageous to the District, considering the evaluation criteria and successful contract negotiations.

7. Submission Details

7.1 Proposal Due Date

- Deadline: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 no later than 4:00 PM EST
- Format: PDF, submitted electronically to rfp@allentownsd.org Subject line should read as follows: "RFP – MARKETING – COMPANY NAME"
- Questions: rfp@allentownsd.org Subject line should read as follows: "RFP – QUESTION(S) - MARKETING – COMPANY NAME".

No proposal received after the deadline will be accepted. Please send via email, Tuesday, February 3, 2026 no later than 4:00 PM EST to rfp@allentownsd.org. All questions must be submitted via email by no later than 11:00 AM EST January 27, 2026 to the above noted email address. An addendum will then be posted on the District's website at: www.allentownsd.org/offices/financial-operational-services/bids-and-rfps

Requests for any information concerning this solicitation are to be referred to Department of Procurement at rfp@allentownsd.org or 484-765-4245.

8. RFP Addenda

In the event that modifications or additions to the RFP become necessary, such items will be posted on the District's website at www.allentownsd.org under Offices > Financial Services > Bids and RFPs.

8.1 Supporting Documentation

All documentation submitted with the proposal will become the property of Allentown School District.

8.2 Informality of Proposal and Acceptance, Rejection or Selection of Proposal

The Allentown School District expressly reserves the right to reject any or all proposals (in whole or in part, with or without cause, even if all stated requirements are met), to waive any informalities or irregularities in the proposals, and to accept that proposal or the combination of proposals which is in the best interest of the Allentown School District, in part or in whole. The District reserves the right to negotiate terms and conditions.

8.3 Execution of this "Request for Proposal"

The proposal must be signed by an official authorized to bind the respondent, and it must contain a statement to the effect that the proposal is firm for a period of at least 120 days from the date of receipt.

Proposals must be accompanied by the RFP of the Allentown School District, which is to be incorporated therein by reference. The District shall review the proposals pursuant to the criteria stated herein.

9. Cost and Pricing Data

The cost and/or price of this project will need to be a complete project cost, no additional fees, or "add-on" services will be accepted.

10. Timeline

- RFP Issued: January 21, 2026
- Questions Due: January 27, 2026
- Proposal Submission Deadline: February 3, 2026
- Selection Announcement: TBD
- Project Start: TBD

11. Unacceptable Work

If it is determined that the developers design and development work was unacceptable, because it did not meet the Standards, Programs, Activities, and Functions, the developer may, at the written request of the District, be required, to provide redesign at its own expense and resubmit a revised design or assessment. Failure to submit acceptable work in a timely manner shall constitute sufficient grounds for the District to withhold payment and to pursue all lawful recourse.

The vendor may be terminated at any time upon thirty (30) days written notice by either party without cause. However, if the vendor fails to comply with any of the terms specified in this Article due to gross negligence or irreprehensible harm to the District, the District may terminate this contract with seven (7) days' notice.

EXHIBIT A

Allentown School District

Base Services vs. Optional Services

This appendix is provided to clarify anticipated **base services** versus **optional or as-needed services**. The District may procure services from either category at its discretion. Proposers shall clearly identify pricing assumptions for each category in their cost proposal.

A. Base Services

Base Services represent the core services anticipated throughout the contract term and may include:

- Discovery, assessment, and strategic communications planning
- Brand strategy, messaging framework, and brand governance
- Ongoing campaign planning and coordination
- Content strategy and routine content development
- Social media and digital communications support
- Internal communications support
- Standard project management and coordination
- Routine analytics, reporting, and performance reviews
- Community engagement and public relations support excluding executive-authored communications

B. Optional / As-Needed Services

Optional Services may be requested at the District's discretion and are not guaranteed. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Large-scale or multi-market enrollment campaigns
- Extensive paid media buying and management
- Video production beyond routine storytelling needs
- Photography campaigns or large photo libraries
- Website redesigns or replatforming projects
- Advanced UX research and usability testing
- Comprehensive SEO programs or long-term organic growth initiatives
- Perception studies, focus groups, or brand tracking surveys
- Bond, referendum, or major initiative informational campaigns
- Crisis or emergency communications requiring extended or intensive support beyond preparedness and planning
- Proposers shall identify any optional services clearly and may propose alternate pricing structures for such services

EXHIBIT B

Allentown School District

1. INDEMNIFICATION.

(a) [COMPANY] agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT and its agents and employees, from and against any and all demands, claims, suits, causes of action, damages, losses, penalties, and/or expenses, including attorney's fees, arising out of or resulting from [COMPANY's] performance of the work required by the [COMPANY], regardless of whether such demand, claim, suit, cause of action, loss, penalty, or expense is incident to or arises out of conditions or omissions permitted or acts performed by any indemnitee.

(b) The [COMPANY] agrees to assume the entire responsibility and liability for all damages or injury to all persons, and to all property, arising out of or in any manner connected with the execution of the Work under this Agreement for Sale and Purchase of Property and to the fullest extent permitted by law, the [COMPANY] shall defend and indemnify the ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT from all such claims including without limitation claims for which the ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT may be or may be claimed to be liable by reason of its own independent negligence.

(c) The COMPANY agrees to assume its entire responsibility and liability for all damages or injury to all persons, whether its employees or otherwise, and to all property arising out of or in any manner connected with the execution of the "work" under this contract.

(d) Specifically, [COMPANY] also agrees to indemnify the ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT from liability for ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT's own negligence which results in harm to [COMPANY's] employees.

(e) The [COMPANY's] obligation under this section shall not be limited in any way by any limitation on the amount or type of damages, compensation or benefits payable by or for the [COMPANY] under worker's or workmen's compensation acts, disability benefits acts or other employee benefit acts.

(f) The [COMPANY] shall defend and indemnify the ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT from all such claims, including without limitation, claims for which the ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT may or may be claimed to be liable in whole or in part, and legal fees and disbursements paid or incurred to defend any such claims, as well as legal fees paid or incurred in connection with enforcing the provisions of this section.

(g) The [COMPANY] further agrees to obtain, maintain and pay for such general liability insurance coverage as will insure the provisions of this section and other contractual indemnification assumed by the [COMPANY] in the contract.

EXHIBIT C

Allentown School District

1. INSURANCE

(a) Contractor shall purchase and maintain insurance as outlined in following section (3), which will provide primary liability coverage to Contractor and ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT for claims which may arise out of or result form Contractor's operations under the Contract, including without limitation (i) claims because of bodily injury, occupational sickness or disease, or death, whether to Contractor's employees or others and whether or not under a workers' compensation or other similar act or law for the benefit of employees; and (ii) claims because of injury to or destruction of tangible property, including loss of use resulting therefrom.

(b) Certificates of insurance from the insurance carrier, or their authorized agent, with the appropriate additional named insured endorsement attached showing ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT as an additional named insured for primary liability coverage and stating the limits of liability and expiration date which are reasonably acceptable to ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT shall be filed with and accepted by ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT before operations are begun.

(c) Please have your insurance representative prepare and forward an acceptable Certificate of Insurance to:

ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
31 S. Penn Street, Allentown, AP 18102

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2. INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS.

(a) Commercial General Liability.
(i) Minimum acceptable limit of coverage is $1,000,000 per occurrence, $2,000,000 aggregate, $2,000,000 products and completed operations.
(ii) Coverage must be written on a Standard ISO General Liability form (CG0001) and must not contain any specific exclusions relating to contractual, products/completed operations liability, contractor's protective liability, and explosion, collapse, and underground (XCU) property damage hazard.
(iii) Depending on the nature and scope of work, higher limits may be required.

(b) Business Auto Liability Insurance.
(i) Minimum acceptable limit of coverage is $1,000,000 per occurrence combined single limit for bodily injury and property damage.
(ii) Coverage must include owned, hired, and non-owned vehicles.

(c) Workers' Compensation.
(i) Must provide benefits as mandated by the state worker's compensation statute.
(ii) Minimum acceptable employers' liability limit is $500,000 for bodily injury by accident and $500,000 for bodily injury by disease.

(d) Excess Liability Insurance with a minimum acceptable limit of coverage of $1,000,000 (or the final limit decided to be appropriate) per occurrence and aggregate. Such coverage shall be excess of the general liability insurance, business auto liability insurance, and employer's liability as required by this Addendum. ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT must be named as additional insured.

(e) If professional services are involved - Professional (E&O) Liability Insurance with minimum acceptable limits of $1,000,000 per claim, $3,000,000 aggregate.

(f) If any work involves or includes handling, transporting, disposing or performing work or operations with hazardous substances or constituents, contaminants, waste, toxic materials, or any potential pollutants – Environmental/Pollution Liability Insurance with minimum acceptable limits of $3,000,000 per occurrence. ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT must be named as additional insured.

(g) If contractor is providing web-based/cyber services or has access to owner's computer systems, websites, networks or other online content, Cyber Liability and Data Breach coverage shall be provided. Policy should include 3rd party privacy liability, network security liability, media liability & data breach coverage, with minimum limits of $2,000,000 per claim, through the term of this agreement and for at least one (1) year after. ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT must be named as additional insured.

3. OTHER INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS.

(a) Contractor shall purchase insurance from and maintain in an ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT or companies with an A.M. Best rating of "A" or better and lawfully authorized to do business in the jurisdiction in which the work is located.

(b) Coverage must be written on an "occurrence" basis and shall be maintained without interruption from date of commencement of work until completion. Contractor is responsible to pay any and all deductibles and/or self-insured retentions that may apply to the required insurance.

(c) The Contractor shall continuously provide up-dated and current certificates(s) of insurance throughout the term of the project as coverage expires.

(d) ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT **must** be named as "additional insured" with regards to general liability, cyber, auto liability and pollution liability (if applicable).

(e) Cancellation Clause: The certificate of insurance must provide a thirty (30) day notice of cancellation.

(f) Contractor's coverage naming the ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT as additional insured shall include an Endorsement specifying that the Contractor's coverage is primary to any other coverage available to the ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT, including, without, limitation, coverage maintained by the ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT wherein the ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT is the named insured, and that no act or omission shall invalidate the coverage.

(g) Contractor shall require all COMPANYs (of every tier) to meet the same insurance criteria as required of the Contractor. The COMPANYs' insurance must name the ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT as additional insureds. The Contractor shall maintain each COMPANY's certificate of insurance on file and provide such information to the ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT for review upon request.

(h) Contractor is responsible to pay any and all deductibles and/or self-insured retentions that may apply to the required insurance.

(i) Failure of Contractor to obtain and maintain the required insurance shall constitute a breach of contract and Contractor will be liable to ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT for any and all cost, liabilities, damages, and penalties (including attorney's fees, court, and settlement expenses) resulting from such breach, unless ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT provides Contractor with a written waiver of the specific insurance requirement.

(j) None of the requirements contained herein as to the types, limits, or ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT's approval of insurance coverage to be maintained by Contractor are intended to and shall not in any manner, limit, qualify, or quantify the liabilities and obligations assumed by Contractor under the Contract Documents, any other agreement with ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT, or otherwise provided by law.

(k) Failure of Contractor to provide insurance as herein required or failure of ALLENTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT to require evidence of insurance or to notify Contractor of any breach by Contractor of the requirements of this Section shall not be deemed to be a waiver of any of the terms of the Contract Documents, nor shall they be deemed to be a waiver of the obligation of the Contractor to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the indemnified parties as required herein. The obligation to procure and maintain any insurance required is a separate responsibility of Contractor and independent of the duty to furnish a copy or certificate of such insurance policies.

EXHIBIT D

Allentown School District

TERMINATION CLAUSE

1. Vendor Violation or Breach of Contract Terms

In addition to other terms stated in the Contract, Vendor at no cost to the District shall promptly correct any errors, omissions or defects in any product, services, or other item Vendor is required to deliver. The District reserves the right to reject any item reasonably determined by the District as containing errors, omissions or defects or otherwise failing to conform to the Contract. If Vendor fails to make corrections within a reasonable time, in addition to any other remedies available at law or in equity, District may at its option: (1) Make corrections and offset the cost of correction against any balance remaining owed to Vendor, and Vendor shall reimburse the District for any cost in excess of the balance. (2) Terminate the Contract, in which case Vendor at no cost to District shall remove any tangible items provided to date. (3) Accept delivery not in accordance with the Contract, instead of requiring removal or correction, in which case the contract sum will be reduced as appropriate and equitable. Such adjustment shall be affected whether or not final payment has been made. Duties and obligations imposed by the Contract and the rights and remedies available thereunder shall be in addition to and not in limitation of duties, obligations, rights and remedies otherwise imposed or available by law or in equity. No action or failure to act by the District shall constitute a waiver of a right or duty afforded them under the Contract, nor shall such action or failure to act constitute approval of or acquiescence in a breach thereunder, except as may be specifically agreed in writing. ***This term shall apply without regard to the Contract amount.***

Does Vendor agree? YES _____ Initials of Authorized Representative of Vendor

2. District Termination for Cause and for Convenience

In addition to other terms stated in the Contract, District reserves the right by written notice to terminate the Contract effective on a future date specified in the notice, with or without cause. Cause means violation or breach of any Contract terms. If the Contract is terminated without cause, the District shall pay the Vendor for any product, services, or other item Vendor is required to deliver and which has been satisfactorily delivered prior to termination. If the District has paid the Vendor for goods or services not yet provided as of the date of termination, the Vendor shall immediately refund such payment(s). ***This term shall apply without regard to the Contract amount.***

Does Vendor agree? YES _____ Initials of Authorized Representative of Vendor

Addendum 1 - RFP - Marketing - Issued 1/30/2026

Q&A

Scope of Work 3.1 and 3.2 include research, auditing, and development of brand strategy and identity, as well strategic planning. The remaining scope items mostly relate to implementation and ongoing development/management of the plans/recommendations developed in 3.1 and 3.2. Is it okay to provide an overview of capabilities for each area, with budget and plan to be developed as part of the initial scope?

Response: Yes

Related to the above, the RFP notes that pricing should be for the complete scope with no additional fees or add-on services. Are there deliverables in 4.3-4.8 that need to be included as part of the initial scope?

Response: As noted in the RFP, Section 4 Deliverables, proposer are responsible for providing the deliverable as defined in Section 4 as part of their proposal and cost structure.

Do you have a budget or parameters for the work?

Response: No. Vendors responses will dictate budget.

How many key stakeholders are there?

Response: The Allentown School District is the prime stakeholder.

How many agencies were included in the RFP process?

Response: As this is a publicly bid proposal and posted on the district website, that is difficult to determine until such time all bids are received.

Are agencies outside of Pennsylvania included in the RFP, and would the ideal agency be located in the Lehigh Valley?

Response: See the above response.

Is the District's existing executive communications partner eligible to apply for this solicitation as well?
Response: As this is a public bid, all are welcomed to respond to this RFP.
Can the District clarify its budget for paid media to help us understand the level of paid media strategy, planning, and monitoring that will be needed?

Response: No. Vendors responses will dictate budget.

How much of the scope does the District anticipate can be completed remotely? What expectations does the District have regarding in-person work?

Response: The work to be performed by the selected vendor is not contemplated to be on-site or in-person, with the exception of in-person meetings or virtual meetings.

Is travel reimbursable?

Response: All costs should be accounted for in your proposal.

Section 5.10 asks for a clear identification of items not included in the base cost, while Section 9 indicates that all costs must be included in the cost proposal. Can you clarify this? Are Other Direct Costs (ODCs) reimbursable?
Response: See the above response.

I hope you are doing well! I am working to respond to your RFP, but I have two questions. Is there a budget or budget range in mind?

Response: No. Vendors responses will dictate budget.

I was also curious if there is a local preference.
Response: As this is a public bid, all are welcomed to respond to this RFP.