

WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM REVIEW

#26-025-RFQ | June 4, 2026

Posted	June 4, 2026
Question deadline	June 11, 2026 @3:00PM
Submission due	June 18, 2026 @3:00PM **Due date extended to 7-6-26 @3:00PM
District contact	Tom Scarice, Superintendent, tscarice@westportps.org ; Elio Longo, Chief Financial Officer, elongo@westportps.org Westport Public Schools, 110 Myrtle Avenue, Westport, CT 06880

1. Introduction

Westport Public Schools (the "District") is soliciting statements of qualifications from qualified firms, organizations, or consultant teams to conduct a comprehensive, system-level review of the District's PK-12 special education programs and services, including transition and 18-22 programming where applicable. The District seeks an experienced review team with demonstrated special education program-review expertise, including individuals who have held leadership roles in special education, pupil personnel services, student services, or comparable public-school special education systems, preferably in Connecticut.

This Request for Qualifications ("RFQ") is intended to identify qualified respondents. The District may subsequently invite one or more shortlisted respondents to submit a detailed proposal, work plan, timeline, deliverables, and fee proposal through a separate Request for Proposals ("RFP") or negotiation process.

This RFQ is not a contract offer, and no contract will exist unless and until the District and the selected respondent sign a written agreement approved by the District. The District reserves the right to modify, cancel, or withdraw this RFQ at any time; to reject any or all submissions; to waive informalities; and to request clarification or additional information from respondents.

2. Background and Purpose

The District is undertaking a comprehensive special education program review through a two-pronged approach. While state-led required monitoring will address procedural compliance issues, this review is intended to focus primarily on the extent to which the District's continuum of services aligns with student needs, supports placement in the least restrictive environment, and results in positive outcomes and experiences for students.

The District has invested in a broad continuum of supports across grade levels and programs, including early intervention and RTI structures, inclusive instructional settings, resource and intensive supports, related services, emotional/behavioral and mental-health supports, specialized programming, and transition/18-22 services. The District seeks an external partner to help answer whether these services are appropriately aligned to student needs, implemented consistently across schools, supportive of LRE, and associated with meaningful student outcomes.

Community feedback has emphasized the importance of examining family satisfaction, IEP service-delivery fidelity, outplacement criteria and trends, resource allocation, special education spending patterns, outplacement costs, early identification and intervention, cross-school consistency, paraeducator training,

mental health and behavior supports, access to electives and extracurricular activities, physical and programmatic accommodations that affect participation, and transitions across levels.

3. Anticipated Areas of Review

The final scope, methodology, deliverables, timeline, and fee will be developed through a subsequent proposal process with shortlisted respondents or through negotiations with one or more qualified respondents. The District anticipates that the eventual review may include examination of the following areas:

- The District's PK-12 continuum of special education services, including transition/18-22 programming where applicable.
- Alignment among student needs, IEP services, placement, LRE, progress monitoring, and academic, behavioral, functional, social/emotional, and transition-related outcomes.
- Service-delivery fidelity and consistency across schools and programs.
- Early identification, intervention, MTSS/RTI, referral, and evaluation pathways.
- Family experience, satisfaction, and communication, including the ability to design, administer, analyze, disaggregate, and report a districtwide survey of families of students with disabilities.
- Stakeholder engagement (e.g. focus groups, interviews) with administrators, special education and general education teachers, related service providers, paraeducators, students where appropriate, and families.
- Staffing models, professional learning, training, and support for special education teachers, related service providers, paraeducators, substitutes, and other staff supporting students with disabilities.
- Onsite school-building visits and classroom/program observations across levels, settings, and specialized programs.
- Access to academic courses, electives, extracurriculars, nonacademic opportunities, and programmatic/physical accommodations that affect participation.
- Behavioral, mental-health, social-emotional, and therapeutic supports.
- Outplacement trends and opportunities to strengthen in-district capacity where appropriate.
- Resource allocation, staffing patterns, special education spending patterns, outplacement costs, and cost-effectiveness at a system level.
- Actionable, prioritized recommendations for improvement.

4. Scope Boundaries

The review shall focus on system-level program effectiveness. Unless expressly added by written agreement, the selected respondent shall not be expected or authorized to:

- Investigate or adjudicate individual student disputes, parent complaints, staff complaints, retaliation allegations, or personnel matters.
- Conduct a full ADA/facilities accessibility audit, although the respondent may identify programmatic or physical-access barriers that affect participation by students with disabilities.
- Conduct a full fiscal or budget audit, although the respondent may review resource allocation, special education spending patterns, staffing patterns, outplacement costs, and cost-effectiveness at a system level as part of the program review.
- Publicly identify individual students, families, staff members, or confidential student records.
- Contact District employees, Board members, families, students, or community members outside District-approved engagement processes.

5. Desired Qualifications

The District expects each respondent to demonstrate, at a minimum, the following qualifications:

1. Districtwide PK-12 or K-12 special education program-review experience, preferably in public school districts comparable to Westport.
2. A review team that includes individuals who have held leadership roles in special education, pupil personnel services, student services, special education administration, state education agency special education work, RESC special education leadership, or comparable roles, preferably in Connecticut public schools or Connecticut special education systems.
3. Familiarity with IDEA implementation, LRE, Child Find/referral/evaluation systems, IEP quality, CT-SEDs/EdSight or comparable Connecticut data systems, and Connecticut district operating realities.
4. Demonstrated ability to design, administer, analyze, disaggregate, and report family survey results in a confidential and accessible manner.
5. Demonstrated ability to conduct onsite school-building visits and classroom/program observations across a continuum of placements and services.
6. Demonstrated ability to conduct focus groups with administrators, special education and general education teachers, related service providers, paraeducators, students where appropriate, and families
7. Strong quantitative and qualitative research methodology, including triangulation, pattern-finding, outcome analysis, disaggregation, and system-level reporting.
8. Strong project management and demonstrated capacity to complete comparable reviews within a four- to six-month timeline.
9. Demonstrated ability to protect student and family data, including FERPA-aligned safeguards, secure handling of student records, data suppression where appropriate, and aggregate/de-identified reporting.
10. Ability to provide practical, prioritized, actionable recommendations and implementation support.

6. Submission Requirements

Statements of qualifications shall include the following information at a minimum. Responses should be clear, concise, and organized in the order listed below.

I. Executive Summary

- Briefly summarize the respondent's understanding of the District's needs, qualifications, differentiators, and ability to support a system-level special education program review.

II. Firm or Organization Profile

- Provide a narrative history of the firm/organization, legal status, ownership or governance structure, location(s), and relevant public school consulting experience.

III. Relevant Project Experience

- Provide at least two relevant PK-12/K-12 special education program reviews or comparable system-level special education engagements. For each, include district or client name, location, scope, timeline, deliverables, outcomes, and client reference.
- Provide sample reports or excerpts where permissible, with confidential information removed.

IV. Proposed Project Team

- Provide an organization chart and resumes/biographies for all key personnel.
- Identify which team members have served in special education leadership, pupil personnel services, student services, state agency, RESC, or comparable roles.

- Clearly define roles, responsibilities, anticipated availability, and onsite availability for each key team member.
- Identify any subcontractors and the scope of work they would perform.

V. Qualifications-Based Approach Statement

- Describe, at a high level, the respondent's general approach to system-level special education program reviews.
- Describe experience conducting family surveys, stakeholder engagement, site visits, observations, data analysis, benchmarking, and system-level reporting.
- Describe experience analyzing resource allocation, staffing patterns, special education spending patterns, outplacement costs, and cost-effectiveness at a system level

VI. Timeline Capacity

- Confirm the respondent's capacity to complete a comparable review within four to six months and provide examples of similar project timelines. A detailed project calendar may be requested during a subsequent proposal phase.

VII. Data Privacy, Confidentiality

- Describe FERPA-aligned safeguards, data storage and transfer protocols, access controls, data suppression rules, de-identification practices, survey anonymity/confidentiality, record retention/destruction practices, and any experience using data-sharing agreements.

VIII. Optional Fee Context

- The District is not requesting a full fee proposal at this RFQ stage. Respondents may provide general fee-structure information or representative price ranges for comparable projects if they believe it would assist the District in understanding scale. Final pricing may be requested during a subsequent proposal phase.

7. Shortlisting and Subsequent Proposal Process

After reviewing submissions, the District's Administration may shortlist one or more respondents for interviews, request additional information, or invite shortlisted respondents to submit detailed proposals. Any subsequent RFP may request a detailed methodology, project calendar, staffing plan, deliverables, fee proposal, insurance documentation, and proposed contract terms. Only shortlisted respondents may submit any subsequent RFP.

8. Questions and Amendments

Questions regarding this RFQ must be submitted in writing by e-mail to the contact listed below by June 11, 2026, 3:00PM. Responses to questions will be provided in writing. No oral interpretations or clarifications shall be binding on the District. The District may issue addenda or clarifications as it deems appropriate.

Contact:

Tom Scarice, Superintendent, Westport Public Schools tscarice@westportps.org;

Elio Longo, Chief Financial Officer, Westport Public Schools elongo@westportps.org

9. Communications and No-Contact Requirement

Respondents are prohibited from contacting any District employee, officer, Board of Education member, student, family, or official concerning this RFQ except as expressly authorized in this RFQ. A respondent's

failure to comply may result in disqualification. This restriction does not prohibit ordinary-course communications unrelated to this RFQ.

10. Right of Rejection, Clarification, and Negotiation

The District reserves the right to reject any or all submissions; to waive informalities or irregularities; to request clarification or additional information; to interview one or more respondents; to negotiate scope, terms, fees, timeline, and deliverables; and to select the submission that the District determines to be in its best interest. The District is not obligated to select the lowest-cost respondent.

11. Confidentiality, Compliance, and Independent Contractor Status

The selected respondent shall operate as an independent contractor and shall protect all student, family, staff, and District information obtained through this engagement. The respondent shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, and policies applicable to its work, including confidentiality and student privacy requirements. The selected respondent may be required to execute a confidentiality agreement, nondisclosure agreement, data-sharing agreement, or other District-approved privacy documentation before accessing student records or other confidential information.

12. Submission Deadline and Delivery

One electronic copy of the statement of qualifications, including all required attachments, must be received no later than 3:00PM, July 6, 2026. Respondents shall also submit 2 hard copies in a sealed envelope/box clearly labeled "Special Education Program Review #26-025-RFQ" by the same deadline.

Submit materials to:

Tom Scarice
Superintendent of Schools
Westport Public Schools
110 Myrtle Avenue
Westport, CT 06880
tscarice@westportps.org