



## **Request for Proposals: Superintendent Search Firms**

Released April 8, 2021

### **Section I: Purpose**

The Board of Education of the Warren County School District (hereafter “District”) seeks proposals from experienced executive search firms or individuals to provide consulting services for a national search for a superintendent.

### **Section II: Introduction**

The District is beginning its search for a qualified candidate to become its new superintendent of schools as of, or before, August 1, 2021. In order to ensure an orderly transition, the Board of Education wants to finalize a selection for the new superintendent by July 1, 2021. To help in the search for the most qualified candidate the School District is seeking to retain the services of an executive search firm or individual with experience in the recruitment of superintendents for small-sized, rural school districts.

#### **Description of District**

Warren County Schools is a public school district located in Warrenton, NC. It has 1,984 students in grades PK, K-12 with a student-teacher ratio of 13 to 1. According to state test scores, 26% of students are at least proficient in math and 29% in reading. The District’s schools include: Vaughan Elementary, Mariam Boyd Elementary, Northside K-8, Warren County Middle, Warren County High, Warren Early College High, Warren New Technical High.

The mission of Warren County Schools, located in close-knit rural communities with natural and cultural treasures in which children grow and blossom, is to educate students for the future by providing innovative school choices that ensure all students will become globally competitive, productive citizens who have acquired critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and leadership skills through creating and sustaining learning options in unique learning environments, expanding parental choice in the development of K-12 educational options, implementing a challenging, rigorous, and relevant curriculum, retaining a highly qualified and dedicated staff, utilizing community involvement and assets, and providing access to state of the art technology.

Warren County, NC is a community filled with assets. This small, rural county in Eastern North Carolina is less than an hour north of RTP, Durham, and Raleigh NC. It is the birthplace of the

environmental justice movement, home to Eva Clayton, the first African-American woman to represent NC in the US Congress, and home to Soul City, an ambitious project to build a self-determined African American city from the ground up.

The Board of Education uses policy governance as its method of running the district. The superintendent is the board's primary employee, and it is the superintendent's role to evaluate and monitor the rest of the district's staff. The Board uses a monitoring system to measure district and superintendent performance. Information about student performance, district goals, financial data, annual reports, etc., may be found on the District's web site ([warrenk12nc.org](http://warrenk12nc.org)) and at the North Carolina State Board of Education's School Report Card website ([NCDPIreportcard.com](http://NCDPIreportcard.com)).

### **The Opportunity & Goal Of This Moment**

**Big Picture Opportunity:** To be a leverage point in leading the turnaround of a majority African American school district in the rural South. Ten years from now, Warren County could be an example to the rest of the United States around how communities and school districts can come together to make drastic, measurable, sustainable improvements that put a school system on a totally new path to success.

**Specific Opportunity Of This Moment:** To play a crucial role in assisting a school board by providing strategies, processes, and tactics a school board can use to assure the hire of an impactful superintendent that will change the trajectory of the school district & community.

## **Section III: Scope of Work**

We are looking for individuals or firms who have experience and expertise around areas such as:

- Aligning the existing school board
  - Learn from past Superintendent search lessons learned and failures
  - Build a common understanding and rubric of what we are looking for
- Leading a superintendent hiring process
  - In a way that navigates local politics, while building on local assets and having fidelity to best practices of a Superintendent search process

The Board of Education will work with the selected firm or individual to develop a superintendent search process and a timeline for the search activities. At a minimum, the activities will include:

- Develop search criteria that incorporates the District's goals and the leadership characteristics that the BOE and community consider requisite for success
- Demonstrate a candidate identification process that identifies a diverse pool of highly qualified and competent candidates in districts with a similar achievement and community context, reflecting a familiarity with our students' needs
- Advise the Board on a compensation package that facilitates successful recruitment of the type of Superintendent that District needs and desires

- Solicit applications nationally
- Generate a position description with desired qualifications
- Develop an application process for the position
- Advise the Board regarding identification and assessment of candidates
- Assist with logistics of finalist interviews
- Ensure a satisfactory conclusion to the search

Understanding that discretion is of utmost importance to our district and candidates, the search firm will maintain the confidentiality of all information collected as appropriate.

### **Generation of position description and qualifications**

Conduct interviews with and solicit input from school board members, school district staff, community leaders and the general public to develop the qualifications and criteria that will be used to judge superintendent candidates.

### **Advisory Services to the Board of Education**

Develop a search plan and timeline in consultation with the Board. Assisting with the evaluation and interviewing of potential candidates. Ensuring that there is compliance with applicable legal requirements.

### **Identification and Assessment of Candidates**

- Develop and distribute recruitment materials that will encourage qualified candidates to apply
- Conduct a national search that will include advertising the position broadly in print media as well as through an effective web-based strategy
- Conduct personal outreach recruiting to ensure that the applicant pool includes highly qualified candidates with diverse backgrounds and experiences
- Collect all relevant background information on potential candidates so that the strengths and weaknesses of each applicant can be assessed
- Assist the Board with prescreening candidates based on clearly delineated criteria
- Assist the Board in evaluating the applicants against the qualifications and criteria developed to create a group of candidates for interviews
- Assist the Board in assuring that all potential candidates are legally and financially vetted

### **Assist with Logistics of Finalist Interviews**

- Facilitate reference checks/visits by the Board to the community where finalists have recently been employed
- Facilitate community forums and interviews with the finalists

### **Ensure a Satisfactory Conclusion to the Search**

- Assist the Board in contract negotiations with the selected candidate

## Section IV: Proposal Requirements

To allow the Board of Education to fairly judge the merits of each proposal, responses to this RFP shall include a response to each of the items listed below. The Board reserves the right to reject proposals that do not follow this format.

**Cover Sheet** – Include the completed cover sheet that is part of this RFP signed by a person authorized to act on behalf of the company submitting the proposal.

**Executive Summary** – Provide a short summary that demonstrates your understanding of the scope of services required by the School District and why your firm is best able to provide that scope of service.

**Experience and Qualifications** – Provide details on the following:

**Overview of Company** – address, telephone, fax, e-mail; whether company is local, regional, or national; if a multi-office firm, which office will provide the services; areas of expertise and types of searches performed by the company.

**Experience** – For each member of the project team, please provide a description of their experience and education, time with the company, and how their experience suits their role on the team.

**Work Plan** – Provide details on the following:

- The approach to be used to address each search activity listed in Section III: Scope of Work
- Methods you will use to communicate and work with a five-member elected Board of Education
- Methods you will use to identify prospective candidates and promote their interest to apply
- Describe what the major challenges to a successful superintendent search are and how the project team will address them
- Estimate a reasonable timeline that the project team will use to guide the search process
- Describe the Information, services and assistance you will require from the School Board and district staff to enable you to conduct the search

**Cost** – A budget should be provided that will cover all of the work described in Section III: Scope of Work and the Work Plan above. The budget should provide a breakdown of costs in the following areas:

- Estimated cost by each scope of work section
- Estimated hours spent by each member of the project team and their fees  
Estimated travel expenses

- Estimated publishing and advertising expenses
- Estimated postage and other costs to distribute information regarding the vacancy
- Any other expenses

Proposal must also include a maximum price that will not be exceeded to complete the described work. Payment terms should be specified.

**Contract Form** – If you intend to propose a form of professional services contract between you or your company and the school district, please provide a sample copy of such contract form. If you prefer that the school district generate such contract, please so indicate.

**Litigation Record** – Have you been involved in litigation with any of your clients within the last five (5) years? If so, please give the name, date, and jurisdiction of each such matter, and a brief description of the nature of the dispute and the outcome.

**Ensuring Client Satisfaction** – Provide information regarding your philosophy and policies regarding client satisfaction in the event of an unsuccessful search.

**Additional Information** – Should you feel that additional information would help us more properly evaluate your proposal or if you have recommended modifications in the procedures specified herein, please feel free to address such matters under this heading.

## **Section V: Timeline for this RFP**

The following schedule will be used for the implementation of this RFP

Date	Activity
April 7, 2021	Board approves RFP for the search process
April 8, 2021	RFP mailed/e-mailed to prospective search firms known to the district and posts on District website and social media
April 8-14, 2021	Classified ad appears in local & regional newspapers
April 16, 2021	3:00 PM deadline for submission of questions concerning the RFP
April 19, 2021	All questions responded to
April 23, 2021	All RFP proposals due by 3:00 pm
April 23, 2021 (6:00 pm)	Initial screening of proposals and board selection of firms to be interviewed
<b>April 27-28, 2021</b>	<b>Interviews with finalist firms (virtual) conducted and Board approves selection. Selected search firm is notified</b>
May 3-June 11, 2021	Search firm conducts search process and applications due
June 14-25, 2021	Interview process and vote to approve selected candidate
June 25, 2021	Contract negotiations begin for selected candidate
July 1 –August 1, 2021	New Superintendent begins

Note about the RFP Timeline:

The Warren County Board of Education (BOE) has a goal of having a new Superintendent in place on, or before, August 1, 2021. If your firm feels that your scope of work is competitive, but you need to adjust the timeline, the BOE encourages you to still submit. Preference will be given to firms that can meet the ideal timeline.

Questions and proposals should be sent to:

Ebony Talley-Brame, Chairperson of the Warren County Board of Education

[ebrame@warrenk12nc.org](mailto:ebrame@warrenk12nc.org)

Late proposals will not be accepted under any circumstance. Any questions or requests for clarification regarding this RFP should be directed in writing to the contact named above by 3 p.m. on Friday, April 16, 2021. Responses to questions will be posted on the District's website as they come in (all answers posted by April 19th) located at [www.warrenk12nc.org](http://www.warrenk12nc.org).

## **Section VI: General Conditions**

The District reserves the right to waive, modify, or otherwise vary the conditions or requirements herein and may accept or reject any and all proposals as the Board of Education, in its sole discretion, deems to be in the best interest of the District. The District may, notwithstanding the terms herein, negotiate the terms of any response to this RFP. The District shall not be bound to accept the lowest priced proposal, but may accept such proposal, if any, as the Board of Education determines to be in the best interests of the School.

## **Section VII: Evaluation Rubric**

The following rubric will be used to *assist* the District in making their choice.

<b>Executive Summary</b>	15 points
<b>Project timeline</b>	20 points
<b>Firm experience, record, and portfolio</b>	15 points
<b>Work Plan</b>	40 points
<b>Cost proposal</b>	10 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 POINTS</b>

# Cover Page

## Response to Request for Proposals

This proposal is submitted on behalf of:

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

The above listed consulting firm hereby submits its proposal and agrees to furnish services to Warren County School District in accordance with this Request for Proposals and the response prepared by the consultant.

The Consultant has carefully reviewed this Request for Proposals and the Consultant's response and understands that the District will not be responsible for any errors or omissions on the part of the Consultant.

Consultant agrees that the District reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals and to waive any irregularity or informality in any proposal received.

The attached proposal shall be considered an irrevocable offer and shall be valid for ninety days from the date the proposals are required to be submitted.

The undersigned hereby affirms that he/she is an authorized agent for the company submitting this response.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Consultant/Authorized Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title of Consultant/Authorized Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Consultant/Authorized Agent

*(Fill this page in and include as the cover of your response.)*