

**Portsmouth School Department Request for Proposals
Development of a Strategic Plan RFP #17-23**

OVERVIEW

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is soliciting written proposals from professionally qualified contractors to provide services to the Portsmouth School Department for the development of a strategic plan.

Sealed proposals, plainly marked RFP #17-23 “Strategic Planning Services – PSD” on the outside of the mailing envelope as well as the sealed envelope, addressed to the Finance/Purchasing Department 3rd Floor, City Hall, 1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 03801, will be accepted until **December 14, 2022.**

The Portsmouth School Department seeks proposals from qualified consulting firms to facilitate the development of a three- to five-year strategic plan to be implemented starting with the 2023-24 school year.

The highly desirable City of Portsmouth, NH, (population 23,000) is conveniently located to Boston and Portland, Maine, three international airports, the ocean, and an easy drive to the beautiful Lakes Region and the White Mountains. The City’s working seaport, an abundance of locally-owned boutiques, breweries and restaurants, world-class culture, and engaging outdoor activities offer the best of coastal New England.

Portsmouth schools are consistently ranked among the best in the state. We draw educators from far and wide, and many families from New Hampshire and beyond move here specifically for our schools. The Portsmouth School Department is a premier New Hampshire district committed to providing a rigorous and engaging educational experience for all students. All learners are provided rich exposure to the arts, athletics, and extracurricular—and we proudly graduate student’s career or college and citizenship ready.

PROPOSAL PACKAGES

Proposal packages may be obtained from the City’s web site:
<http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/finance/purchasing.htm>. Addenda to this proposal document, if any, including written answers to questions, will be posted to the website under the project heading. Addenda and updates will NOT be sent directly to vendors.

Questions may be addressed to Bridie O’Brien, Purchasing Coordinator at purchasing@cityofportsmouth.com.

BACKGROUND

The Portsmouth School Department (PSD) currently does not have a strategic plan or a K-12 curriculum plan. Our School Board has several long-standing goals for the district, but these have not been revisited in quite some time. PSD started the 2022-23 school year with a new superintendent, a new assistant superintendent, a new high school principal, a new curriculum director at our high school, and a new program director at our alternative high school. We, therefore, find this an appropriate and exciting time to develop a strategic plan that can be implemented for the 2023-24 school year.

PSD comprises five public schools in six buildings including: 3 elementary, 1 middle school, and 1 high school with an alternative high school program in a separate location. We serve an economically diverse student population of approximately 2,500 students from Portsmouth and the neighboring towns of Greenland, Newington, New Castle, and Rye. PSD employs an experienced and dedicated staff with historically high retention. The Department spends approximately \$19,100 per pupil annually.

Student Snapshot:

- Elementary enrollment: 938 students (Dondero, Little Harbour, New Franklin)
- Middle school enrollment: 491 students (Portsmouth Middle School)
- High school enrollment: 1,049 students (Portsmouth High School, including alternative high school program at Robert J. Lister Academy and a Career Technical Program)
- White 79%
- Black/African-American 2%
- Asian 6%
- Hispanic/Latino 6%
- Other/Multi-Racial 7%
- Free/Reduced Lunch 10%
- English Language Learners 3.7% (ELL students speak 32 different languages)
- Special education 17%

Some District Accomplishments:

- 12:1 student-to-teacher ratio is lower than the state average, student achievement is consistently above state averages, and the High School has a 95% graduation rate.
- New Franklin Elementary School was named a 2020 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. DOE, one of only three schools in New Hampshire selected for the honor that year. The school has also received an “exemplary high performing” designation.
- Portsmouth Middle School was named one of three middle schools in the state to receive a state-of-the-art, \$100,000 Don’t Quit! Fitness Center.
- Portsmouth High School encompasses: an award-winning Career Technical Education program, growing dual enrollment opportunities, numerous athletic state championship titles, a highly competitive robotics team, a very successful debate team, and decorated music and drama programs.
- We have established strong partnerships with local organizations in higher education, STEM, housing, food and housing security, mental health, DEI training, early childhood, and service learning.

- We are also proud to offer a 1:1 technology program in grades 3-12, supporting student-centered learning and equitable access.

Some District Challenges:

- Elections every two years change the makeup of the School Board, which sets policy, and the City Council, which has final say on the budget for the School Department
- Current school board goals for PSD have not been revisited in several years, and are not routinely assessed in ways that advance progress towards these goals.
- Lower proficiency in ELA, math, and science among students who are economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and Black and Hispanic students.
- Lower graduation rates and post-secondary enrollment among students with disabilities.
- Higher in-school and out-of-school suspension rates for students who are economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and Black and Hispanic students.

SCOPE OF WORK

Elements of Strategic Planning Process:

- Leader/internal point person in-house, supported by a strong internal team, to facilitate the strategic planning process from start to finish and draft the strategic plan.
- Timetable to complete a strategic plan to implement for the 2023-24 school year.
- Inclusion of all stakeholders (staff, administrators, students, families, community members, school board, etc.) and facilitate “psychological safety” throughout the process.
- Diverse/inclusive stakeholder representation (ELL families, free/reduced lunch families, public housing residents, non-white households, etc.).
- Multiple formats for stakeholders to provide structured input, including both in-person and remote opportunities for participation (ex: focus groups, town halls, surveys, etc.).
- Transparent process with regular stakeholders updates
- Review of existing planning and assessment documents to make use of information previously gathered by the district.
- Identify the district’s current strengths and challenges.
- Consider what a comprehensive communications plan might look like for our district.
- Consider what a comprehensive K-12 curriculum plan might look like for our district.
- Employ both qualitative and quantitative data to guide PSD in developing a clear mission, vision, and values statements that can then inform the creation of priority goals/strategies.
- Include guidelines for resource allocation within the plan.
- Ensure that the strategic plan is adaptable and dynamic, with built-in mechanisms for updates and pivots.
- Outline a process to ensure implementation and evaluation of the strategic plan with measurable key performance-based indicators/metrics.
- Coach members of the senior administrative team on best practices, ways to be more effective in our work as it pertains to communicating our goals and objectives.
- Recommend an accountability and data tracking structure that allows us to evaluate our return on strategic investments.

Deliverables:

- Create clear mission, vision, and values statements using traditional methods or a “portrait of a graduate approach.”
- Identify three to four high-leverage strategic goals.
- Create a three to five year strategic plan to implement starting with the 2023-24 school year.
- Support strategic plan implementation, provide operational plans tied to strategic goals, and provide communication plans for updating stakeholders on implementation progress.
- Recommend or devise a reporting structure/dashboard that allows stakeholders to easily understand our progress towards achieving annual strategic goals.
- Create a long-term plan for biannual stakeholder involvement and meaningful feedback loops.

SELECTION PROCESS**Contents for Proposal:**

For proposals to be considered, said proposal must be clear, concise, complete, well organized and demonstrate both respondent’s qualifications, and ability to follow instructions. The quality of answers, not length of responses or visual exhibits is important. The proposals shall be organized in the format listed below and shall be limited to twenty (20) pages (excluding attachments and appendices) on 8 ½” x 11” paper with all responses bound with tabs separating each section. Respondents shall read each item carefully and answer accurately to ensure compliance with Portsmouth School Department requirements. Failure to provide all requested information or deviation from the required format may result in disqualification.

A. Submittal Letter

Include the RFP’s title and submittal due date, the name, address, and telephone number of the responding firm. Include a contact person and corresponding email address. The letter shall state that the Proposal shall be valid for a 60-day period and that the staff proposed is available immediately to work on this project. The person authorized by the firm to negotiate a contract with the Portsmouth School Department shall sign the cover letter.

B. Description of Firm

This section should provide information regarding the size, location, nature of work performed, years in business, and the approach that will be used in meeting the needs of the Portsmouth School Department.

C. Organizational Structure

Describe your firm’s organizational structure. Provide the names of the professionals who will be responsible for this project. Please provide brief resumes for these individuals.

D. References and Description of Experience

This section should identify similar projects that the firm has completed as outlined in the RFP. Use this section to indicate the areas of expertise of your firm and how that expertise will benefit the Portsmouth School Department. Proposals must include at least two (2) references that reflect work that is similar to the work contemplated in this RFP. References will be contacted.

E. Project Overview

This section should clearly convey the firm’s understanding of the nature of the work related to strategic planning and the general approach that will be used to implement a strategic plan. This section should include, but not be limited to, a discussion of the organization of the project and a summary of the proposed approach. This section should also include expected outcomes from stakeholder engagement during the strategic planning process, timelines for the process, and resource considerations for your firm and PSD. Please also include details on the full range of implementation services your firm offers.

F. Cost

This section must provide a full description of the expected expenditures for the work described in this RFP. Cost proposed must include all consultant fees, preparation of deliverables, travel expenses, printing, etc. A total fee for the project, as well as an itemized cost breakdown for each of the provided services and deliverables, must be included. If the firm offers multiple options for implementation services, please provide pricing information for each option.

Proposal Review:

- Portsmouth School Department will review and examine all proposals received. Those proposals that do not respond to the requirements of the RFP will be rejected.
- Portsmouth School Department, at its discretion, may select a provider outright or select one or more finalists for in person and/or telephone interviews.
- Selection will be made based on the best value to the value, cost, and fit with our district and the quality of the proposal. Portsmouth School Department reserves the right to select a consultant based upon the best fit with the organization, and reserves the right to reject all proposals.
- Portsmouth School Department will reach a decision no later than **December 22nd, 2022.**

Contractor Selection:

The highest ranking applicant will be offered the opportunity to enter into contract negotiations with the Portsmouth School Department. If the parties cannot agree on the final contract terms and scope, the district may proceed to the next highest ranked applicant.

The review team will be composed of:

- Superintendent of Schools
- Assistant Superintendent
- Business Administrator
- Principal

Timeline:

11/21/22	RFP Published
12/14/22	Deadline for Submissions 2:00 P.M.
12/21/22	Committee Completes Ranking Process

RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

The Portsmouth School Department reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive technical or legal deficiencies, and to accept or negotiate any terms of a proposal that may be in the best interest of the district.

By submitting a proposal, the applicant authorizes the Portsmouth School Department to undertake such investigation as may be necessary to verify the Applicant's qualifications and reputation. The applicant may be requested to execute a release(s) in favor of third parties who have information relative to the Contractor's qualifications and reputation. Refusal to execute a release may result in disqualification.

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NONDISCRIMINATION CLAUSE

NONDISCRIMINATION IN CITY CONTRACTS: Any entity that enters into a contract for goods or services with the City of Portsmouth or any of its boards, agencies, and departments and any recipient of city funds shall:

Implement an employment nondiscrimination policy prohibiting discrimination in hiring, discharging, promoting or demoting, matters of compensation, or any other employment-related decision or benefit on account of actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, age, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or marital or familial status.

Not discriminate in the performance of the contract on account of actual or perceived race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, age, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or marital or familial status.