



MAGNOLIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Request for Proposal to Provide

Back Office Services

Due Date: March 23, 2020

I. Overview

Magnolia Public Schools (“MPS”), a public charter school management organization in the State of California and headquartered in Los Angeles, California is seeking to outsource its back office services.

MPS is a network of 10 high-performing public charter schools that serve over 3900 students in Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego Counties. The schools are authorized by the Los Angeles Unified School District (4), Los Angeles County Office of Education (4), San Diego Unified School District (1) and the California Department of Education (1). For more than 15 years, MPS has delivered high quality education emphasizing science, technology, engineering and math. MPS is regularly recognized as having some of the top-performing schools in the nation with MPS Science Academies (Reseda and Van Nuys) ranked among the top high school in the country by U. S. News and World Report and the Washington Post.

Having our students achieve their potential is an imperative for MPS, and as such each MPS charter petition delineates specific charter school’s annual goals, including goals to be achieved in the state priorities, core academic skill goals, and goals for lifelong learning and interpersonal skills. The charter petitions also describe specific actions to achieve those goals, measurable pupil outcomes, and methods for measuring pupil outcomes.

MPS has the most urgent priorities of ensuring that MPS’ operations are efficient, effective, transparent, and able to sustain the level of education for which the school is known. Given the past financial challenges and audits surrounding some of MPS’ sites and its home office, other high priorities include ensuring that MPS is positioned to have stable cash flow, ample liquidity, and financial and operational capacity. It is with these goals in mind that we are soliciting for the provision of back office services beginning in FY 2020-21.

MPS currently contracts with Delta Manage Solutions for back office services. The following systems are in place:

- Accounting, Schoolability/Escape
- Procurement authorization and document control, Schoolability/Escape
- HRIS and Payroll, Paycom

II. Required Services

Magnolia Education & Research Foundation (“MERF”) provides a variety of support services to MPS sites, including but not limited to the services identified in the list that follows. It is our expectation that the selected firm will collaborate, communicate and integrate seamlessly with MERF staff including the chief executive officer, chief financial officer and chief operating officer, among others.

In an effort to standardize assumptions across all potential service providers (“Provider”), MPS proposes that for purposes of this request for proposal (“RFP”), Provider should assume that all services provided in the table below (“Externally Provided Services”) and within the “Scope of Services” in Section IV (which may be redundant) encompass MPS’ expectation as to services to be provided.

Externally Provided Services	Internally Managed Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounts payable • Accounts receivable • Payroll related reports (i.e tax reports, Retirement, EDD etc) • Cash flow management • Debt Management • Training on tools and processes • Budget preparation, coordination, consolidation, finalization, and Board presentation • Monthly Financial Reports preparation and presentation (Board and Management) • Adopted and Revised Budgets, Interim reports and Unaudited Actuals • Financial forecasts and analysis • Starting/closing a charter school • Regulatory reporting compliance (including Title 1) • California Public Attendance Data; Student Data Testing, etc. • Local Control Funding Formula • Local Accountability Plan • Annual Audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payroll • Facilities management • Strategic planning • MSA-wide financial & budget leadership • Data strategy development: strategic alignment a& project prioritization • Risk Management; Insurance • Supporting leadership team on financial aspects of programmatic issues • Staffing of Board Finance Committee • All Other reporting requirements with regard to financial integrity • Internal Controls/Processes • Exemplary leadership in school finance • Testifying to MPS’ financial integrity

III. **Timetable for Implementing Back Office Support**

Following is the proposed timetable for selecting a Provider to work with MPS beginning fiscal year 2020-21.

ACTIVITY	ANTICIPATED DATE
Request for Proposal Issued	January 22, 2020
Proposal responses due at 12:00 pm	March 23 , 2020
Selection Period	March 23-30, 2020
Interviews Scheduled	3 rd Week of March, 2020
Recommendation and Board Approval	3 rd Week of April, 2020
Notification to firms	4th Week of April, 2020
Contract Start Date	July 1, 2020
Full Services Start Date	July 1, 2020

IV. **Scope of Services to be Provided**

MPS expects to award a contract for a two-year or three-year period with two (2) one-year options. The contract will be for a fixed price or it may permit for cost escalation by an agreed upon price index. Services will be provided under the contract only after approved by MPS' Board of Directors.

Under the direction of the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Financial Officer, the selected Provider must be able to provide a comprehensive scope of financial activities in lieu of their provision by MERF. Such activities include but are not limited to:

- Timely payment of all vendor obligations
- Timely and quality support to school site and home office personnel
- Responsiveness to vendor inquiries
- Setup and maintenance of all MPS files with appropriate third-party controls and accessibility by MPS staff
- Advise with respect to collection and reporting of Title I and other categorical funds
- Budget preparation and presentation as required
- Upkeep of accurate cash flow on a monthly basis or as needed Provision of financial and sensitivity analyses if requested
- Assistance to MPS on quantifying the implications of strategic initiatives, if

requested

- Attendance at Board Finance Committee and other meetings as requested by CEO and CFO
- Appropriate establishment for MPS pursuant to guidance from the State
- Process funding adjustments and journal vouchers
- Budget check and posting payroll transactions
- Assist with preparation of annual financial audit and tax/information returns
- Timely submission of all required forms and reports submitted to the appropriate state agencies
- Provide advice as to best financial practices
- Render advice to MPS as to appropriate use of state and federal funding sources
- Timely and qualitative grant reporting, as required
- Timely preparation and presentation of monthly financial statements; timely review with executive staff as requested
- Support for growth and development of new charter schools

V. Questions and Submission

Please feel free to direct questions preferably by email to Alfredo Rubalcava, Chief Executive Officer or Ms. Nanie Montijo, Chief Financial Officer.

All proposals are due ***no later than 12:00 p.m. on Monday, March 23, 2020.***
Please deliver three (3) bound copies in care of the MERF address and one (1) copy by email:

Alfredo Rubalcava
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VI. Proposal Format

Proposals may not exceed 20 pages including any graphics (*excluding examples as requested in C. 2 and C. 3 below*). The services provided, qualifications and experience and reference portions will be weighted more heavily than the cost of service delivery. Proposals are to include the following content:

A. **Executive Summary**

Summarize the key elements of your submission including designated agents and those authorized to bind the Provider.

B. **Approach to Working with MPS**

Clearly articulate how your firm intends to approach this engagement and serve MPS as a partner in your delivery of the Scope of Services enumerated in the foregoing section.

C. **Vendor Qualifications and Experience**

- (1) State the size of the firm, the size of the staff, the location of the office from which the work on this engagement is to be performed, and the number and nature of the professional staff to be employed in this engagement.
- (2) Provide a summary of the firm's experiences over the past five (5) years in providing directly relevant services. In addition, provide samples of deliverables in the following areas: monthly financial statements, a presentation prepared for Board of Directors, and an example of a directly relevant value-added recommendation made to a client. *These items may be provided in an Appendix (and not included in the 20-page count).*
- (3) Provide the two (2) most recent annual audited tax related financial statements for your firm. Financial statements submitted with this RFP are not subject to disclosure as public records.

D. **Qualifications and Experience of Key Personnel**

- (1) Identify the person that will be principally responsible for working with the MPS and leading this engagement. Elaborate upon the role, responsibilities and communication and presentation skills of this individual.
- (2) Provide professional resumes of key personnel to be directly assigned to MPS engagement.
- (3) Discuss other commitments of key personnel and how these commitments will affect their availability to MPS.

E. **Provision of Core Services**

Based upon your knowledge of MPS, respond to the following:

- (1) What does your organization generally consider the core services provided in this engagement?
- (2) Based on your firm's capacity or specialties, what would you provide above and beyond the scope, if any?
- (3) Describe your philosophy with regard to enhancing clients' organizational and financial capacity.
- (4) How does your organization protect intellectual property and confidential and sensitive information?
- (5) How have you addressed clients' concerns about over reliance on back office service providers? How do you propose to bifurcate the roles so that this is not an issue of sensitivity for MPS?
- (6) Disclose relationships that have been terminated and the circumstances around such terminations.

F. **Technological Resources**

In keeping with MPS' commitment to mitigating and eliminating risks associated with manual processes, please respond to the following:

- (1) Describe your systems and your methodology for ensuring technological integration with MPS using the existing Schoolability Financial Software.
- (2) Provide a timeline for complete and orderly transition for MPS.
- (3) Identify typical challenges involved with such a transition and describe solutions deployed with other. Be open about sharing any technological issues that remain unresolved after transitions.

G. **Internal Controls and SSAE 16 (SOC 2).**

Please ensure that your response incorporates discussion of the systems in place, practices and procedures, internal controls, third-party controls and reporting requirements that have been brought to prior engagements. Discuss how you envision the MPS interface and recommended best practices.

Enumerate any requirements of MPS that will be associated with the delivery of SSAE 16 report?

H. **References**

Provide three (3) references of clients for whom you have provided a similar scope of services over the past three (3) years. Please include full name, position, telephone number and email address and a description of the engagement vis-à-vis MPS.

I. **Insurance Requirements**

MPS will require that the service organization possess certificates of insurance evidencing required coverage and the minimum as indicated below. MPS will require that Provider procure and maintain for the duration of its engagement with MPS insurance against claims for injuries to persons or damages to property which may arise from or in connection with the performance of work by the Provider, its agents, representatives or employees. It is required that broad coverage include the following:

- (a) Commercial General Liability on an occurrence basis for bodily injury and property damage including products completed operations, personal injury and advertising injury with limits no less than \$2,000,000 per occurrence.
- (b) Automobile Liability with limits no less than \$1,000,000 per accident for bodily injury and property damage;
- (c) Workers Compensation Insurance as required by the State of California with Statutory Limits, and Employer's Liability Insurance with limit of no less than \$1,000,000 per accident for bodily injury or disease.
- (d) Professional Liability (Errors & Omissions) Insurance appropriate to Provider's profession of financial services with no limits less than \$2,000,000 per occurrence or claim, \$10,000,000 aggregate.
- (e) Given the foregoing requirements, please provide a statement as to willingness and ability of your firm to provide the required minimums.

J. **Conflicts of Interest**

Please disclose each of the following:

- Any violations of federal, state or local regulations/laws within the past three (3) years;
- All pending or current litigation;
- Arrangements with other firms that may pose a potential conflict of interest to the MPS engagement; any arrangements that are likely to be made in order to deliver the MPS engagement; and
- If none of the above apply, provide a statement to that effect

K. Cost Proposal

Please present cost options under both 2-year and 3-year service contract alternatives, plus annual cost after the initial contract ends. Proposals should include all standard costs associated with providing the services described in the Scope of Work.

- Proposals may include a compensation that includes the hourly rate for each individual who would be assigned to MPS and a cost by category for all major activities.
- Be clear as to any services that might be typically provided with such an engagement as MPS and which may fall outside your cost proposal. If there is none, ensure that you make a statement to that effect.
- The firm's normal compensation method should be provided.

VII. Evaluation of Proposals and Negotiations

Overall responsiveness and representations made within the RFP, as well as your firm's ability to connect with the MPS team are important factors in the overall evaluation process. Therefore, we will likely short list two firms to be invited for interviews with MPS selection team. MPS will select a firm that has the highest suitability for the work with MPS and the overall desirable approach. At that point, MPS will negotiate with the firm to determine final pricing and contract.

VIII. Award

MPS reserves the right to reject any and all proposals; to waive any informality in the proposal process; and to accept the proposal that appears to be in its best interests.

IX. Appendix

2018-19 Audited Financial Report
2017-18 Audited Financial Report

End of Request for Proposal