

WILMETTE PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISTRICT 39

Special Education/Response to Intervention Evaluation

Request for Proposal

November, 2019

**615 Locust Road
Wilmette, Illinois 60091**
"Together We Learn & Grow"

Proposals Due: **Thursday, January 15, 2020 by 10:00 AM CST**

Attention: Kristin Swanson, Administrator for Student Services

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1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Public Notice

Wilmette Public Schools District 39 is accepting proposals for a Special Education Evaluation. Specifications and proposal documents are available at the Wilmette Public Schools District 39 Administrative Offices at 615 Locust Road, Wilmette, IL 60091 or may be obtained on our District website, www.wilmette39.org, or by contacting Kristin Swanson at (847) 512-6004 or swansonk@wilmette39.org. All proposal documents are due on or before **Thursday, January 15, 2020 at 10:00 AM CST** at the address listed above, at which time, date, and place the proposals will be publicly opened and the contents announced.

1.2 Request for Proposal Overview

Wilmette Public Schools District 39 (“District 39” or “the District”), is seeking proposals from qualified firms that have successfully conducted evaluations/studies of special education programs and services in public school districts. The purpose of this evaluation is to identify areas of strength and make recommendations for improvements or changes to the District’s policies, practices, or services. The District plans to select a firm to meet the District’s need for information regarding staffing and organization of the special education program personnel, outcomes for students with disabilities, the continuum of services available within the District, as well as strategies to maintain and increase the effective provision of services given the trend of increasing numbers of students with special needs attending school in District 39.

The District intends to award a contract to the most responsive and responsible Proposer. District 39 will consider many relevant factors in selecting the firm to analyze its special education programming and make recommendations for future innovation. In addition to technical capabilities, the selected firm must be financially stable and demonstrate the ability to meet or exceed a high standard of quality. A proven and verifiable commitment to total customer satisfaction and support will be a key factor in the assessment of proposals.

It is intended that this RFP describe the requirements and response format in sufficient detail to secure comparable proposals. Proposers shall submit responses that are complete, thorough and accurate. A Proposer’s failure to comply with all provisions of this RFP may disqualify the Proposer’s response.

This RFP process is designed to prevent biased evaluations and to preserve the competitiveness and integrity of contract awards. All evaluations will use a consistent methodology and set of metrics to score each proposal received. Proposers are to direct all communications regarding this RFP to Kristin Swanson at (847) 512-6004 or swansonk@wilmette39.org. Proposers are not to contact other district administrators or employees directly. Attempts to circumvent this requirement will be viewed negatively and may result in proposal rejection.

1.3 Proposal Due Date

The deadline for proposals is **10:00 a.m. CST on Thursday, January 15, 2020**. Proposals received after that time will not be accepted. Proposals may be mailed, hand delivered, or received via courier.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

The Wilmette Public Schools District 39 (District 39) Board of Education (BOE) in Wilmette, Illinois, is seeking proposals from qualified firms that have successfully conducted evaluations/studies of special education programs and services in public school districts. The purpose of this evaluation is to identify areas of strength and make recommendations for improvements or changes to the District's policies, practices, or services. The District plans to select a firm to meet the District's need for information regarding staffing and organization of the special education program personnel, outcomes for students with disabilities, the continuum of services available within the District, as well as strategies to maintain and increase the effective provision of services given the trend of increasing numbers of students with special needs attending school in District 39.

2.2 District Description – Summary Data

The mission of Wilmette Public Schools District 39 is to nurture, guide, and challenge students to become creative thinkers, collaborators, and responsible, compassionate, and productive citizens of a global society. The Statement of Inclusion articulates our commitment to a safe and equitable learning environment that fosters a mindset of empathy, respect, and belonging.

Wilmette Public Schools District 39 is an elementary district, serving students from preschool through eighth grade. District 39 is primarily located within the Village of Wilmette, encompassing a small section of Glenview and Winnetka, all located in Illinois on the north side of Chicago, IL. There are approximately 3,600 students enrolled in the district, attending one of 6 schools. The 6 schools are organized by grade level, with one school serving preschool through fourth grade, three additional elementary schools serving kindergarten through fourth grade, a middle school serving grades five and six, and a junior high school serving students in grades seven and eight. All students in Wilmette District 39 feed into New Trier High School. District 39 is a member of the Wilmette Community Special Education Agreement, a cooperative with two member districts, District 39 and Avoca School District 37.

District 39 is relatively diverse, with approximately 25% of students reporting racial/ethnic diversity. Of these students, approximately 11% identify as Asian and 7% identify as having two or more races. Four percent of the students are English Learners. Approximately 3% of students are identified as low income, and approximately 13% of students have an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The District's Illinois Report Card for 2018-2019 is available for review at the following link: <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/district.aspx?source=profile&Districtid=05016039002>

The Department of Student Services and Wilmette District 39 is committed to educating and including students within the community, and to that end, services approximately 96% of its 590 students with IEPs within the school district. Approximately 20 students are being educated in programming outside of

the district, including public and private therapeutic day schools and residential facilities. At the preschool, elementary, and middle school levels, specialized instruction is provided through a continuum of services, ranging from push-in services through self-contained programming. Services are tailored to the individual needs of each student, as delineated in the student's IEP. Various forms of collaboration are emphasized at all levels of the organization, from regular meetings to co-teaching arrangements. Paraprofessionals throughout the district assist individual students, teachers, and classrooms.

2.3 Purpose

The Wilmette Public Schools District 39 is seeking proposals from knowledgeable organizations, experienced in special education evaluation. The goal is to comprehensively analyze the special education program, resulting in recommendations for improvement.

3.0 SCOPE OF SERVICES

3.1 Objectives

The special education evaluation/study for District 39 should focus on a variety of aspects of the special education program. The primary questions to be addressed include the following:

- Program Organization and Management
 - To what extent is the special education department organized to provide effective oversight and management of program resources? Are functions logically aligned with reasonable spans of control?
 - To what extent is the department efficiently and effectively staffed both at the central office and at schools? Do support services staff have reasonable caseloads? Do staffing allocations meet student needs?
 - Does the department have clearly articulated program procedures and operating guidelines? What accountability measures are in place to ensure that they are being followed?
 - What data management systems and other technologies are utilized by the department and do they effectively meet the needs of program management and staff?
 - How have program expenditures varied over the past five years relative to student enrollment?
 - How satisfied are parents with program services?
- Student Identification and Placement
 - What are the special education enrollment trends by primary disability and instructional placement setting? Are any student subgroups disproportionality represented in the special education population?
 - Are referral and placement processes consistently followed at each campus? What is the total number of referrals by campus and what percent DNQ?
 - Does the district have an effective Response to Intervention (RtI) program?
 - To what extent do the services provided through WIN (What I Need) meet the needs of students?

- Program Service Delivery and Instructional Practices
 - To what extent are students with disabilities receiving educational benefit from the programs and services provided by District 39?
 - Does the district offer a continuum of services and are students being effectively served in the LRE?
 - What service delivery models are used by the district? Does the district have an effective inclusion program? Co-teaching model?
 - How effective are the specialized programs are offered by the district?
 - Comprehensive Learning Classroom (CLC)
 - Therapeutic Intervention Program (TIP)
 - Social Learning Classroom (SLC)
 - To what extent do the district's behavior management procedures meet the needs of students?
 - How are service decisions made through the IEP process? Are student IEPs compliant and are academic goals rigorous? Do all students that require a BIP have one? Are they compliant? Are IEPs and BIPs implemented in the classroom appropriately?
 - Is the district able to effectively recruit, hire and retain high-quality special education teachers? What percent of special education teachers are dually certified? What is the special education teacher turnover rate?
 - What special education professional development opportunities are available to both special education and general education teachers? Do special education teachers have the opportunity to collaborate and plan with their general education peers? What are the recommendations for continuing professional development?
 - To what extent do the district's summer programming options meet the needs of students?

3.2 Submission Requirements – Proposal Format

In order for the Wilmette District 39 Board of Education to learn more about your organization's qualifications and scope of work, please prepare a written response to the following:

- **General Information:** General information about the Proposer. At minimum, provide principal place of business, other business locations, telephone numbers, names of contact persons and lead personnel, and qualifications of lead personnel.
- **References:** Names of at least five Illinois public school districts in which you have conducted similar evaluations. If there are fewer than five Illinois districts, please provide references for similar districts in other states. Please provide a description of the evaluations you have conducted in these districts.
- **Timeline:** Timeline of activities and major events in the evaluation process, including anticipated length of time from initiation, through each phase and successful completion.
- **Methodology:** Description of the evaluation approach and the methodology to be utilized in order to respond to the areas identified and questions posed. Include information related to the specific quantitative and qualitative data to be collected and analyzed.

- **Process:** Description of the manner in which the evaluation firm will work with the school staff and others. Include information regarding what services you expect from the District (e.g., coordinating focus groups, gathering data, etc.).
- **Final Report:** Description of the format and content of the final report, encompassing summary charts of data analysis completed, findings, and recommendations.
- **Financial Proposal:** Each proposal must include a detailed cost estimation for the project.

The evaluating organization will be responsible for documenting adequate resources to staff the evaluation, specifically:

- The identification of the person(s) who will take primary responsibility for the evaluation. Provide a resume for each person. The expectation is that the person(s) designated as primarily responsible for the evaluation will make the Board presentation upon completion.
- Attendance and a presentation at a Board of Education meeting will be required. It is possible that a presentation will be requested at a Leadership Team Meeting as well, not to exceed two presentations in total. The schedule will be mutually coordinated in advance.

3.3 Evaluation of Proposal

The Board reserves the right to reject any and all proposals submitted and to request additional information from all bidders. The award will be made to the firm that, in the opinion of the District, best meets the specifications of the RFP. The following factors will be considered in evaluating the responses to decide the award of the contract.

- Responsiveness of the proposal.
- Understanding of the work to be performed and proposed procedures.
- Experience of the firm and assigned project team.
- Proposed timeline for completion.
- References
- Fees

3.4 Response Submission

Three (3) hard copies of the Vendor’s Proposal and (1) electronic copy, and any other documents must be received by **10:00 AM CST, Thursday, January 15, 2020**. All proposals must be submitted enclosed in a sealed box or envelope. Each proposal shall be clearly labeled and indexed with appropriate section and subsection numbers as referred to herein.

Submit proposals and mark boxes or envelopes plainly as indicated as follows:

<p>Wilmette Public Schools District 39 Dr. Kristin Swanson Administrator for Student Services 615 Locust Road Wilmette, IL 60091</p> <p>Special Education Evaluation RFP Opening Date: January 15, 2020</p>
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3.5 Timeline of Activities

The following is the anticipated schedule of events for this project. The schedule may change depending on the results of the submitted proposals. The final schedule will be established prior to contracting with the successful vendor.

Date	Activity/Tasks
December 15, 2019	Questions Due
January 5, 2020	Question Responses made Available
January 7, 2020	Intent to Respond Due
January 15, 2020 @ 10:00 AM CST	Proposals Due
January 20-29, 2020	Interviews as Necessary
February 2020	Contract Awarded
March - June	Evaluation and Report
June, 2020	Presentation of Findings to the Board of Education

3.6 RFP Questions

Any questions about this RFP must be raised prior to submission of the Proposal. All questions must be submitted no later than 3:00 PM CST December 15, 2019 to swansonk@wilmette39.org. Please include in the subject line: Student Information System RFP Vendor Question(s). Submitted questions and written responses will be provided to all respondents of the RFP, and posted to the District website, in accordance with the schedule of events.

4.0 BIDDER INSTRUCTIONS

4.1 Confidential and Proprietary Information

District 39 is a governmental entity subject to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act and Illinois public records law. Unless subject to a specific statutory exception, information in the District’s possession is considered public information that is subject to release upon request. Any information in your Proposal that is of a confidential or proprietary nature must be clearly and specifically identified. Such identification shall not limit the District’s right to use such information in the review of the Proposal. Any material submitted by the firm in response to this request that the firm considers confidential and proprietary information and which qualifies as a trade secret or material which can be kept confidential under the Illinois open records law, must be identified on a Designation of Confidential and Proprietary Information list to be appended to the proposal. Proposal prices cannot be held confidential.

4.2 Obligation of Owner

Issuance of this RFP does not create any obligation on the part of District 39 to enter into any contract or undertake any financial obligations with respect to the Special Education Evaluation. There will be no discussions with Firms except for the purpose of clarification of a Proposal until the evaluation of the Proposals has been completed. Any subsequent discussion shall be at the discretion of District 39.

4.3 Disclosures

By signing its Proposal, a Firm affirms that he/she has not given, offered to give, nor intends to give at any time hereafter any economic opportunity, future employment, gift, loan, gratuity, special discount, trip, favor or service to a public servant in connection with the proposal submitted. By signing its Proposal, a Firm affirms that, to the best of his/her knowledge, the Proposal has been arrived at independently, and is submitted without collusion with anyone to obtain information or gain any favoritism that would in any way limit competition or give them an unfair advantage over other vendors in the award of this RFP. Firm shall note any and all relationships that might be construed as a conflict of interest and include such information with the Proposal.

4.4 Preparation

Proposals should be prepared in such a way as to provide a straightforward, concise delineation of capacities to satisfy the requirements of the RFP. Expensive bindings, color displays, promotional material, etc., are not necessary or desired. Emphasis should concentrate on conformance to RFP instructions, responsiveness to RFP requirements, and on completeness and clarity of content. All proposals and accompanying documents become the property of Wilmette Public Schools District 39.

4.5 Modification or Withdrawal of Proposals

Any respondent may withdraw his/her proposal at any time prior to the scheduled closing time for the receipt of proposals, but the respondent may not withdraw his/her proposal for a period of ninety (90) days after the scheduled closing time for the receipt of proposals. Modifications or corrections of a previously submitted proposal are to be addressed in the same manner as the original proposal and will be considered by District 39 if received prior to the scheduled closing time for receipt of proposals. Oral or telephonic (facsimile) modifications or corrections will not be recognized or considered.

4.6 Deviations and Exceptions

Deviations and exceptions from terms, conditions, or specifications shall be described fully, on the proposer's letterhead, signed and attached to the request. In the absence of such statement, the proposal shall be accepted as in strict compliance with all terms, conditions, and specifications and the proposer shall be held liable.

4.7 Late Proposals

Proposals received after the due date and time will not be considered and will be returned unopened to the sender. Regardless of the method used for delivery, respondents shall be wholly responsible for the timely delivery of submitted proposals.

4.8 Presentation/Demonstration

Wilmette Public Schools District 39 reserves the right to require any or all Respondents to either make a presentation or attend/participate in an interview session to gauge their suitability to provide services for this project. If so requested, the Respondent(s) shall make their personnel available within ten (10) calendar days of request. Should a proposer refuse to honor the request for a presentation, demonstration, or interview, it may result in disqualification.

4.9 Price Good for 90 Days

Guaranteed price for ninety (90) days after the date of the proposal opening during which time the Board may act on the proposal.

4.10 Commencement of Work

Commencement of the Work shall be subject to the discretion of District 39 and the District reserves the right to make all decisions regarding such commencement.

5.0 GENERAL CONDITIONS

5.1 Attorneys' Fees

The parties agree that in the event of a dispute, each party will bear its own costs of litigation and attorneys' fees.

5.2 Public Records Act

Proposal openings are public unless otherwise specified. Records may not be available for public inspection prior to issuance of the notice of intent to award the contract.

5.3 Compliance with Applicable Laws and Regulations

The Vendor shall give notices to authorities and shall comply with all federal, state, local laws, ordinances, rules, regulations, and orders of any public authority bearing on the performance of the Work. Where such laws, ordinances, rules and orders are in conflict, the more stringent standards shall apply.

5.4 Non-Discrimination

Wilmette Public Schools District 39 is an equal opportunity employer. The School District shall provide equal employment opportunities to all persons regardless of their race; color; creed; religion; national origin; sex; sexual orientation; gender identity; age; ancestry; marital status; arrest record; military status; order of protection status; unfavorable military discharge; citizenship status provided the individual is authorized to work in the United States; use of lawful products while not at work; being a victim of domestic or sexual violence; genetic information; physical or mental handicap or disability, if otherwise able to perform the essential functions of the job with reasonable accommodation; pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions; credit history, unless a satisfactory credit history is an established bona fide occupational requirement of a particular position; or other legally protected categories.

5.5 Negotiation of Contract

After evaluation of all Proposals received, District 39 reserves the right to enter into negotiations with the Vendor or Vendors that District 39 considers best qualified to meet its requirements. District 39 reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any non-conformity, whenever such actions are in its best interest, as determined solely by District 39.

5.6 Awarding of Contract

Wilmette Public Schools District 39 reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, to waive any technicality in any proposal submitted, and to accept any part of a proposal deemed to be in the best interest of Wilmette Public Schools District 39. A contract, if any awarded, will be awarded to the responsible organization submitting the best Proposal for the Special Education Evaluation, plus any acceptable alternatives complying with the conditions and requirements of the contract that District 39 deems to be in their best interest. Consideration will be given to, but not limited to, the following qualifications:

- Responsiveness of the proposal.
- Understanding of the work to be performed and proposed procedures.
- Experience of the firm and assigned project team.
- Proposed timeline for completion.
- References
- Fees