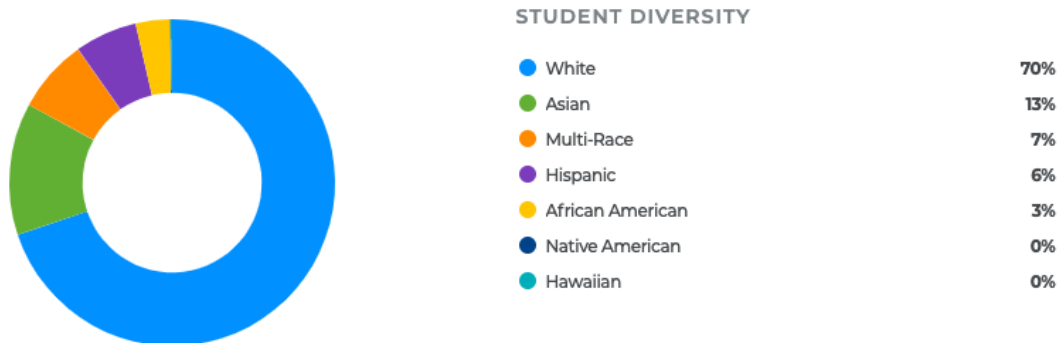

Request for District Equity Proposal
RFP

Overview

Arlington Public Schools' (APS) mission is to educate students by promoting academic excellence, empowering students to achieve their maximum potential, and preparing students for responsible participation in an ever-changing world. The APS vision for students as learners and global citizens outlines what the district wants all students to know and be by the time they graduate from Arlington High School. This requires that all students experience a coherent curriculum aligned with the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks and that supports the development of critical thinking, social-emotional, and relationship skills. Students are supported in their development by highly qualified teachers, who engage in continuous professional learning. This vision informs the strategic initiatives, instructional decisions, and budget requests in the multi-year plan.

Below is a breakdown of the demographics of Arlington Public Schools students as of October 1, 2021:



Other subgroups include our students with high needs (26.4%), students who are economically disadvantaged (9.1%), English Language Learners (4.1%), and special education students (15.1%).

In June 2021, the Arlington Public Schools hired a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The next strategic step involves hiring a qualified outside provider to conduct a district equity audit. The audit's purpose is to understand the drivers and obstructions behind the gaps in students' achievements and opportunities, as well as to fully understand the challenges, identify best practices, and align resources to meet the needs of our BIPOC students. Like many other

public schools, we are working to close the academic achievement gap between our White, Asians, and Latinx and African American students. The district had a Curriculum Audit completed in January 2021 which reviewed many key curricula as of the 2019-2020 school year. (There remain new and revised curricula, some of which were not included in this audit, to be reviewed.) The district has made significant efforts to increase and sustain a diverse staff. Currently, 93.9% of teachers identify as white. As Dr. Elizabeth C. Homan, Superintendent of Arlington Public Schools, states, "we are a district where dedicated and talented staff are committed to ensuring an equitable, inclusive, and engaging education for every student" to promote the District's mission and vision that all Arlington students will be a global citizen.

Scope of Work

Arlington Public Schools is seeking a consultant/organization that has previously worked with public education institutions and has completed an equity audit. The consultant/organization will review the district through a lens that assesses programs, policies, teaching practices, hiring practices, discipline procedures, equitable resources, and root causes, which may obstruct achievement gaps for BIPOC students. After that, the consultant/organization will report their findings and will include suggestions, recommendations, and a strategic plan to implement diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism throughout the district.

Specific objectives include:

- Conduct focus groups with students, families, teachers, principals, central office staff, and community partners. Provide a detailed report on common themes that emerge.
- Review targeted intervention supports, as well as academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs. Identify strengths, challenges, opportunities, and effectiveness.
- Review Arlington Public Schools policies and practices as outlined in the School Committee Policy, APS Employee Handbook, and the Student Handbook(s). Submit recommendations based on identified best practices.
- Review and identify current strategies and practices that promote equity or that create inequity and identify best practices and submit recommendations.
- Assess the leadership team's readiness to address institutional racism and equity.
- Review professional development offerings related to equity, diversity, and anti-racism with a focus on creating schools free of bias, prejudice, and discrimination. Make recommendations and suggestions for improving programs to support staff readiness for this work.
- Provide detailed analysis of district data (Panorama, MCAS) relative to student academic performance and enrollment based on practices such as tracking, discipline, attendance, social-emotional needs, graduation rates, extracurricular activities, special education, and English Learner classification. Disaggregate the data by race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, and English language proficiency.
- Review current efforts to recruit and retain BIPOC staff. Provide recommendations on improving staff recruitment and strategies to support a diverse workforce by creating a welcoming, anti-bias work environment. Recommend methods used by other districts

that have successfully increased the diversity of their teaching pool. Strategies should cover recruitment, onboarding, cohort development, and staff retainment.

- Review curriculum to ensure it is fully representative of our diverse community. Provide recommendations on how to increase diverse representation within the curriculum. Recommend supports to increase diverse student representation in advanced classes and programming.
- Review family and community engagement practices and recommend strategies for creating a safe and welcoming environment for families of color and non-English speakers.

Project Timeline

Arlington Public Schools will solicit proposals and price quotations from consultants beginning on November 29, 2021. All proposals and seal price quotations must be received physically by the Arlington Public Schools Business Office no later than 1PM on December 13, 2021. The Business Office is on the 6th floor at 869 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA 02476.

Arlington Public Schools stakeholders will review proposals and interview consultants. The winning proposal will be referred to the Business Office to finalize the contract. The work of the equity audit is scheduled to begin in January 2022.

Proposal Submission Requirements

- A work plan describing methodologies, approaches, and roles and responsibilities for how the work will be accomplished
- A detailed description of deliverables and outcomes
- Timeline for all work plans
- Estimated costs
- Evidence of experience providing consulting services, including audits or assessments related to racial equity/diversity/inclusion/cultural competency
- Experience and philosophy regarding your work as part of a multicultural/multiracial team
- Relevant experience in the education/nonprofit and philanthropic sectors
- Short biographies, including professional training, of the proposed project team members
- A sample list of past and current clients in the public schools
- Contact information for a minimum of 3 relevant references

Communication

- The Consultant shall work collaboratively with the Superintendent and Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion throughout the process and keep them informed about what is occurring at each audit stage.
- The Consultant shall complete a written summary of findings, make recommendations and suggestions, and include a strategic plan for publication.

Consultant Conditions

Travel expenses are not included as a separate allowable expense. Travel is considered overhead to the consultant.

Minimum Evaluation Criteria

- a. The Proposer must be available to execute this contract by January 2022
- b. The Proposer is available to make a presentation and be interviewed at a scheduled meeting no earlier than December 14, 2021 and no later than December 20, 2021.

Comparative Evaluation Criteria

1. Proposer's Experience

Highly Advantageous: The Proposer has five (5) or more years experience in conducting successful equity audits with public school systems, other educational institutions, and other non-profit organizations, and during the past five (5) years has concluded at least three (3) successful equity audits, one (1) of which must have been for a district of similar size and demographics as Arlington.

Advantageous: The Proposer has at least three (3) years experience in successful equity audits and has concluded at least two (2) successful equity audits with Massachusetts public school systems.

Not Advantageous: The Proposer has fewer than three (3) years experience in successful equity audits and has concluded only one (1) successful equity audit with Massachusetts public school systems.

Unacceptable: The Proposer has fewer than three (3) years experience in equity audits and has not concluded any successful equity audit with Massachusetts public school systems.

2. Evaluation of the Proposed Plan:

Highly Advantageous: The proposal contains a clear and comprehensive plan that addresses all the objectives stated in the Scope of Service and Proposal Submission Requirements.

Advantageous: The proposal contains a clear plan that addresses most of the project objectives stated in the Scope of Service and Proposal Submission Requirements.

Not Advantageous: The proposal does not contain a clear plan.

Unacceptable: The proposal fails to meet the objectives stated in the Scope of Service and Proposal Submission Requirements.

3. Evaluation of Presented Materials

Arlington Public Schools may schedule interviews with any Proposer. Interviews will be ranked as follows:

Highly Advantageous: Proposer for this project was present, clearly stated a plan of action, demonstrated excellent communications skills, presented other personnel with experience and skills who will be assigned for the duration of this project, demonstrated awareness and understanding of the goals and objectives of the Arlington Public Schools, and successfully responded to all questions from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Consultant Selection Committee.

Advantageous: Proposer for this project was present, outlined a plan of action, demonstrated excellent communication skills, presented other personnel with experience and skills who will be assigned for the duration of this project, demonstrated awareness and understanding of the goals and objectives of the Public Schools of Arlington, and successfully responded to most of the questions from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Consultant Selection Committee.

Not Advantageous: Proposer for this project was present but did not present a plan of action, or was unable to communicate effectively, or presented other personnel who did not have the experience and skills to work on the project, did not demonstrate awareness and understanding of the goals and objectives of the Public Schools of Arlington, and/or would not be assigned for the duration of this project or did not successfully respond to questions from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Consultant Selection Committee.

Unacceptable: Proposer for this project was not present and did not present a plan of action, or was unable to communicate effectively, or presented other personnel who did not have the experience and skills to work on the project, demonstrated awareness and understanding of the goals and objectives of the Public Schools of Arlington, and/or would not be assigned for the duration of this project or did not successfully respond to questions from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Consultant Selection Committee.

4. Evaluations of Interview Presentation:

Highly Advantageous: The Proposer's presentation was clear, well organized and demonstrated both effective communication skills and an understanding of the particular needs of the Arlington Public Schools community.

Advantageous: The Proposer's presentation was clear, well organized and demonstrated effective and sensitive communication skills.

Not Advantageous: The Proposer's presentation was disorganized or did not demonstrate effective communication skills.

Unacceptable: The Proposer's presentation demonstrated a clear lack of communication skills.

Any questions regarding the proposal should be directed to both Michael Mason, Chief Financial Officer at mmason@arlington.k12.ma.us and Margaret Credle Thomas, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, at mthomas@arlington.k12.ma.us.

All proposals should include a signed statement of non-collusion.

CERTIFICATE OF NON-COLLUSION
MANDATORY

The undersigned certifies under penalties of perjury that this bid or proposal has been made and submitted in good faith and without collusion or fraud with any other person. As used in this certification, the word "person" shall mean any natural person, business, partnership, corporation, union, committee, club, or other organization, entity, or group of individuals.

Dated: _____

Name of Company or Corporation

Authorized Official's Signature

BIDDERS/RESPONDENTS MUST SUBMIT THIS FORM FULLY COMPLETED.