

School Board Action Report

“Every student achieving, everyone accountable”



DATE: June 16, 2009

FROM: Dr. Maria Goodloe-Johnson, Superintendent

LEAD STAFF: Cathy Thompson, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction and
Kathleen Vasquez, High School Alignment Project Manager

STRATEGIC THEME/

FOCUS AREA: Improving Academic Achievement/High School Alignment

TITLE AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION

RFP 04948, Award of contract for Consulting Services for College Readiness Diagnosis For Introduction: June 3, 2009
For Action: June 17, 2009

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION/EVALUATION

The following are key deliverables for this project:

- Report proposing revisions of high school course offerings: Fall 2009
- Curriculum alignment for mathematics: Completed
- Professional development for mathematics: Most training complete by June 2011
- Curriculum alignment for language arts: Complete by December 2009
- Professional development for language arts: Most training complete by June 2011
- Curriculum alignment for science: Complete by December 2009
- Professional development for science: Most training complete by June 2011
- Curriculum alignment for social studies: Complete by June 2010
- Professional development for social studies: Most training complete by 2011
- Curriculum alignment for world languages: Complete by December 2009

RECOMMENDED MOTION

I recommend approval of the following motion:

I move that the Seattle School Board award the contract for this project to **Education First Consulting** to support the high school curricula alignment work called for in the Seattle Public Schools Strategic Plan in the amount of **\$756,300** for work beginning June 2009, ending August 2011.

ISSUE

Using private grant funding, Seattle Public schools must contract with an outside consultant for support in four major areas: (1) develop a new master program of studies for Seattle's high schools to ensure equal access to college/work preparatory courses; (2) revise SPS high school course offerings to align to essential skills and knowledge for college readiness; (3) realign high school core content courses to college-ready standards; and (4) provide professional

development for core content teachers to ensure a rigorous college-ready curriculum in core contents.

Seattle Public Schools has been functioning for the past decade as individual school sites with little central coordination of curriculum. The curriculum audit recommended a systemic and comprehensive approach to district curriculum as a fundamental requirement for the significant advances in academic achievement to which the District is committed.

As part of a system-wide effort to increase the number of Seattle Public School graduates prepared for college and work, Seattle Public high Schools must align curricula across all SPS high schools in core academic subjects. Each SPS high school student should undertake a rigorous core curriculum that provides the foundation of knowledge and skills for a student to be successful in college and the 21st century workforce. Presently, there is no guarantee that students receive the same content in a course with the same name nor is there a guarantee that students within or across schools are held to the same standards and expectations.

The work outlined in this project will support the District as it works with teachers to strengthen curricula in all core subject areas and ensure that every student has access to the courses needed to be prepared for college and work.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) for consulting services for college readiness assessment was advertised in May of 2009. **Education First Consulting** received the highest rating under the established criteria.

BEST PRACTICES

National standards suggest that system coordination of curriculum, materials and courses is best practice in establishing ends – where is the district headed and what is needed to get there (the mission, standards, goals and priorities, objectives for students, and student assessment). Schools then make site-level decisions about how to meet the ends – what are the best strategies for that school, student and staff.

RESEARCH AND DATA SOURCES

Research clearly shows that this level of effort to establish a systemic and comprehensive approach to district curriculum is an absolute requirement for the significant advances in academic achievement to which we are all committed.

Rigor at Risk: Reaffirming Quality in the High School Core Curriculum, ACT, recommends that districts improve high schools by: specifying a core curriculum core; aligning core curriculum to college-readiness standards; providing teacher support; expanding access to a high-quality, vertically aligned core courses; and measuring results at the course level.

The Challenge of College Readiness by David Conley, Education Leadership offers the following strategies to increase the number of college-ready students: align high school curriculum and instruction with college expectations; develop high quality syllabi in all courses; implement senior seminars; and add missing content to high school courses.

POLICY IMPLICATION

Seattle School Board Policies:
CO1.00, CO2.00, CO3.00, C)7.00, C10.00,
G45.00

FISCAL IMPACT/REVENUE SOURCE

This contract uses grant funds received from the Alliance for Education and there is no impact on the District's general fund.

Expenditure: **One-time** **Annual**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The development of core curriculum and the revision of course descriptions is the work of the instructional staff of Seattle Public Schools.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

Approval of this action allows the curriculum alignment work in all core content areas at the high school level to move forward.

ATTACHMENTS

[Request for Proposal](#) and [Addendum](#)
[Scope of Work](#)