



SCHOOL BOARD ACTION REPORT

DATE: June 15, 2017
FROM: Dr. Larry Nyland, Superintendent
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For Introduction: June 28, 2017

For Action: July 5, 2017

1. TITLE

Award contract RFP04772 to Thoughtexchange by Fulcrum Management Solutions, Inc. for the Community Engagement Platform.

2. PURPOSE

This Board Action Report recommends approval of contract RFP04772 for a Community Engagement Platform for the District to use to reach out and gather input from its stakeholders. Adoption of a two-way Community Engagement platform will support implementation of the new district engagement model and toolkit.

3. RECOMMENDED MOTION

I move that the School Board authorize the Superintendent to execute contract RFP04772 with Thoughtexchange in the amount of \$325,725 for a district-wide Engagement Platform over a three-year period, from 2017-2020, in the form of the draft agreement attached to this Board Action Report, with any minor additions, deletions, and modifications deemed necessary by the Superintendent to take any necessary actions to implement the contract.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Background: Engaging families, staff, labor partners and community members in the life and decisions of the district is vitally important to the success of our students. While we have multiple means of communication going out from our schools and central office, we know we need to improve our 2-way outreach and engagement with families and the community. Currently, the District gathers feedback from the community via face-to-face community meetings, emails, and surveys. However, these methods usually end up reaching a vocal but limited segment as opposed to all pockets of the community. The District hopes to identify a solution that will supplement these methods and help gather community feedback to inform key District issues and decisions as well as build trust in the district's solutions. This project directly relates to this year's Superintendent SMART Goal 5 and is a key element in the proposed 2017-18 SMART Goal 4: Engagement/Collaboration.

A project team, consisting of members from the Community Engagement Taskforce and the central office, was formed to gather requirements and charter the project goals. The project goals are:

- Increased engagement with the community; specifically with families who historically have not been engaged.
- Increased trust in the District through increased transparency.
- Informed decision making by District leadership based on community feedback.

The recommended, 3 year contract (2017 – 2020) is the result of an advertised competitive solicitation, in which the District sought proposals for an engagement platform. A request for proposals (RFP) was created and released to the public on April 24, 2017. Three companies submitted an RFP response in which the top two companies, Bang My Table and Thought Exchange, were requested to provide an in-person demo of their product. The in-person demos were held on May 25 and 26 with the finalist notified on June 13. Since that notification, the final contract has been negotiated and is ready for your approval.

Alternatives: The following alternatives have been considered to increase community engagement.

1. **Conduct more in-person community meetings:** While the District could continue to hold more in-person community meetings, what the taskforce has seen is that it continues to receive the same levels of participation from the community, and continues to hear from the same vocal segment. We need to look for a solution that can supplement our existing methods and help reach communities that have historically not engaged.
2. **Status Quo (Do Nothing).** This is not recommended as we know that with our existing methods we are unable to reach out to a large number of stakeholders and continue to hear from the vocal minority, leaving behind families who have not been engaged in the past.

Research: The team reached out to other school districts such as Spokane, Highline, and Kent, to learn about their experience and success in using Community Engagement Tools. Additionally, the team including Task Force representatives conducted informal demos with different vendors to gain a better understanding of the scope and breadth of tools available to help build requirements for the kind of tool that would be appropriate for the District and supplement its existing community engagements methods.

5. FISCAL IMPACT/REVENUE SOURCE

Fiscal impact to this action will be no more than \$340,000 in expenses over a period of three years.

The revenue source for this motion is General Fund, using part of the \$11 million in Smart Goal funding approved by the Board for 2016-17.

Expenditure: One-time Annual Multi-Year N/A

Revenue: One-time Annual Multi-Year N/A

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

With guidance from the District's Community Engagement tool, this action was determined to merit the following tier of community engagement:

- Not applicable
- Tier 1: Inform
- Tier 2: Consult/Involve
- Tier 3: Collaborate

This action and recommendation is an extension of the 2016-17 Community Engagement Taskforce. For six months, central office staff and Director Harris co-sponsored a representative Taskforce to refine and finalize a SPS Community Engagement Model and supporting tools. The members of this taskforce include representation from the schools, central office, and parents/community members and community partners. The racial equity tool was used to populate the team. The taskforce aided in identifying the business requirements behind this tool and were also part of the RFP process and aided in the evaluation of the engagement platforms.

7. EQUITY ANALYSIS

The Communications Department used the Racial Equity Tool and related questions to set vendor selection criteria and outcomes with feedback from the Community Engagement Task Force. Selection criteria reflected our desire for racially equitable outcomes (i.e. ability of tool to help solicit representative feedback) as well as our desire to build trust with our community and make better decisions. Using the Racial Equity Tool, the team also collected data from other districts on how the tool has helped address racial inequities in engagement (or not) and analyzed unintended consequences of using a technology solution. One concern from the Task Force members and staff was related to translations. ThoughtExchange has been used successfully in Highline to both broaden community engagement but also bring forward the perspectives of the Latino community, who previously were less engaged in district decisions. Like Highline, if ThoughtExchange is adopted, District translators will translate the engagement platform in the top required languages. A Spanish portal will be automatically provided as one aspect of the vendor solution. Additionally, the tool has built-in functionality for Google translate that allows users to translate the page content and community feedback in their native language (as supported by Google).

The Task Force and staff were also concerned that a technology solution may create a barrier for some families rather than make engagement more inclusive. Authentic community engagement is dependent on relationship and culturally responsive practices. The engagement process that ThoughtExchange is built on (i.e. sharing ideas – identifying what matters to our community, building community consensus, and sharing back) is reflective of best practices in culturally and linguistically diverse communities. During discussions with districts and the vendor, multiple examples of how the engagement process has been adapted successfully to reach and support underrepresented stakeholders were shared (i.e. Somali and Amish families). For example, the

tool functionality can be replicated in a paper-based approach to ensure cultural responsiveness. Finally, while the Thoughtexchange tool can help support gathering representative feedback and build community consensus, it needs to be employed within the context of the Community Engagement Toolkit. Once data is gathered, the tools and prompts in the toolkit guide the engagement facilitator to evaluate if proposed solutions ensure educational equity and what steps could/should be taken to address unintended consequences. The Community Engagement Toolkit is supported by a series of centrally provided trainings including: Why, What How; Creating and Inclusive Engagement Plan; Evaluating Engagement and Closing the Loop.

Adoption of Thoughtexchange is more than selection of a technology solution. In working with this vendor, we will be purchasing a service and expertise in community engagement. The Engagement Platform will be available to all district stakeholders including staff, families and partners.

8. STUDENT BENEFIT

Students will benefit because by using this tool we can better engage representative families and improve our decisions both at the central and school levels. Through authentic two-way engagement, we will be able to develop solutions that better meet the needs of our families, students and community.

9. WHY BOARD ACTION IS NECESSARY

- Amount of contract initial value or contract amendment exceeds \$250,000 (Policy No. 6220)
- Amount of grant exceeds \$250,000 in a single fiscal year (Policy No. 6114)
- Adopting, amending, or repealing a Board policy
- Formally accepting the completion of a public works project and closing out the contract
- Legal requirement for the School Board to take action on this matter
- Board Policy No. _____, [TITLE], provides the Board shall approve this item
- Other: _____

10. POLICY IMPLICATION

Per Policy No. 6220, Procurement, any contract over \$250,000 must be brought to the Board for approval.

11. BOARD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

This motion was discussed at the Operations Committee meeting on June 15, 2017. The Committee reviewed the motion and moved it forward to the full Board with a recommendation for consideration.

12. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Upon approval of this motion, the contract will go into effect with the following established timelines for full implementation:

Project Kick-off	July 2017
Solution Design and Integration	July 2017 – August 2017
Training	August 2017
Go-Live	August 2017

13. ATTACHMENTS

- Engagement Platform RFP04772
- Thoughtexchange RFP response
- Thoughtexchange SOW
- Thoughtexchange Services Agreement
- Thoughtexchange Terms of Service