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# MANCHESTER PROUD REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF MANCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

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AUGUST 13, 2018  
MANCHESTER PROUD

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# Executive Summary

Manchester Proud (MP), a New Hampshire Voluntary Corporation, is seeking proposals from qualified consulting firms, to perform a comprehensive assessment of the Manchester School District (MSD) and its individual schools, and to provide recommendations based upon this assessment for strategies MSD should implement to improve student outcomes and opportunities.

MP is a community-driven organization, launched in the spring of 2018 to privately fund and support the implementation of a new strategic plan for MSD. MP believes a compelling, innovative plan, generated through community engagement and research, can provide the goals and inspiration Manchester's schools need to excel. MP also believes that the strategic plan must be **by and for the people of Manchester**. As such MP has decided to break the planning process into two (2) phases. Phase I will consist of a comprehensive assessment of MSD and its individual schools, including recommendations for high-impact strategies for MP and MSD to consider in Phase II; Phase II will consist of building the strategic plan and its component parts (e.g., vision, strategies, budget, etc.). **This Request for Proposals (RFP) is seeking qualified firms for Phase I only.**

**The objective in Phase I is to build a comprehensive and nuanced picture of the current state of MSD and its schools, neighborhoods, and human capital.** In Phase I there are essential questions to explore around strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks. The data and information gathered in answering these questions will highlight where MP should focus during Phase II as it engages the Manchester community in defining an aspirational vision for how students learn and on developing the innovative, high-impact strategies that the city will implement to realize this vision.

# Section I – Overview

## Introduction

Manchester Proud (MP), a New Hampshire Voluntary Corporation, is seeking proposals from qualified consulting firms, to perform a comprehensive assessment of the Manchester School District (MSD) and its individual schools and to provide recommendations based upon this assessment for strategies MSD should implement to improve student outcomes and opportunities. This assessment will constitute Phase I in a multi-phase project to create a community-centric strategic plan for MSD to go into effect with the **2020-2021** School Year.

## Background

Manchester, New Hampshire faces a once in a generation, perhaps once in a lifetime, opportunity to secure a brighter future for all of its children, all of its residents, through a community-wide initiative to raise its public schools to greater excellence.

Overall, Manchester is a thriving community with plentiful resources. Manchester's Millyard is a world-class tech hub, with businesses like the Advanced Regenerative Manufacturing Institute (ARMI) and PillPack rekindling the City's inventive spirit. Manchester is surrounded and supported by exceptional colleges and universities. Manchester is also teeming with impactful, well-run nonprofits. The City's growing diversity offers a wealth of talents and richness of cultures unique in New Hampshire, and cause for celebration.

Manchester Public Schools have amazing potential. They too, could become thriving, world-class educational hubs. But for Manchester's schools to thrive, they must be supported by the community - recognized for the critical role they play in readying kids, and therefore all of Manchester's people, for the future. More and more residents from across Manchester are feeling that the time has come to work together to ensure the schools can truly deliver for each and every student in every neighborhood. There is strong recognition among the public that if the people of Manchester do not strive together to ensure the schools are truly delivering for every student, in every neighborhood, the City will miss an extraordinary opportunity to build on its most essential assets. In the absence of action, Manchester's ability to compete for qualified employees in the face of critical workforce shortages and its ability to attract a diverse citizenry will certainly be compromised. Manchester's future depends upon public schools that not only educate and train the students but are a source of pride and vital asset in the recruitment of outside talent.

## **Manchester Proud**

**MP is committed to financing, overseeing, and then supporting the implementation of a community-centric, strategic plan for MSD.** MP began as an ad-hoc gathering of local business and education leaders, wanting to better understand Manchester's public schools and partner with others to create opportunities for school advancement. Upon learning that MSD needed a new strategic plan, MP's work was brought into focus. MP believes a compelling, innovative plan, generated through community engagement and research, can provide the goals and inspiration Manchester's schools need to excel. Such an engaging, inclusive, and creative planning process can bring the people of Manchester together as a community. MP is thrilled to begin this process by kicking off Phase 1 – the assessment of MSD and its schools this fall – in preparation for the building of a comprehensive strategic plan.

MP has no affiliations, political or otherwise. MP's founders and board consist of leading members of the business, education, nonprofit, and civic communities and they provide both governance and stewardship for funds. However, the real work of MP will be performed by Work Groups of various sizes and durations, formed to address specific initiatives, and populated by a diversity of students, school administrators and parents, as well as business and organization leaders from across our community. These work groups will ensure the **strategic plan is truly by and for the people of Manchester** and can be implemented by its education professionals, district administration, and community partners. Additional information on MP can be found in **Appendix 1**.

## **Reaching Higher New Hampshire**

To support its efforts, MP has contracted with **Reaching Higher New Hampshire (RHNH)**, a nonpartisan education policy nonprofit that supports high-quality public education for all students in New Hampshire. RHNH provides two services to MP: first, it serves as general project manager for MP, with responsibility for coordinating and supporting both the MP Board and all of the community-led Work Groups; and second, RHNH leads community engagement efforts to gather feedback, build public involvement with the planning process, and ultimately, create a public mandate to implement and support the new strategic plan for MSD. RHNH will work closely with the chosen consulting firm to meet MP's mission and goals. Additional information on RHNH and the community engagement work can be found in **Appendix 2**.

# Manchester School District

**MSD is the largest and most diverse school district in New Hampshire.** MSD's 22 schools (14 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, 3 high schools, and 1 career education high school) educate approximately 13,800 students. The student population is approximately 57% White, 23% Hispanic, 9% African-American, 5% Asian, and 5% multi-race. Approximately 58% of MSD students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Approximately 18% of MSD students have an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

MSD has experienced significant changes to its student population. In 10 years, the percentage of Manchester's students who are from lower-income families has increased by over 60% (from ~36% to ~58%); the percentage of students who are English language learners has increased by 75% (from ~8% to ~14%); and the percentage students of color has increased by close to 80% (from ~24% to ~43%). These changes are occurring within the context of overall decreasing enrollment, with total enrollment down from ~16,300 in school year 2007-2008. Of note, over the last approximately 10 years, several neighboring towns have built their own high schools and/or ended enrollment partnerships with Manchester, resulting in a significant loss of students. This has impacted the statistics noted above.

MSD has a number of innovative efforts currently underway. MSD is in the midst of a redistricting process in order to simplify student pathways and optimize district resources. MSD is also currently implementing three significant grant-funded works: first, West High School is conducting a comprehensive redesign process; second, MSD has formed an Equity Review Team to conduct stakeholder engagement to address barriers to opportunity for students, particularly students of color and students from low-income families; and finally, MSD is one of two districts nationwide to receive support from the Buck Institute for Education to expand project-based learning professional development opportunities district-wide. MSD also partners with a range of high-impact organizations, including City Year, the Manchester Health Department, the YMCA, and the Boys and Girls Club, on a range of initiatives to support student achievement and wellness. Additional information on these partnerships and initiatives, and on MSD more generally, is available in **Appendix 3**. (Note: firms that express an interest in submitting a proposal will gain access to a cloud-based folder that contains additional information on MSD).

MSD is the largest and oldest school district in New Hampshire. It is governed by a 15-member Board of School Committee (BOSC) that is elected every two years. The Mayor serves as chairperson of the BOSC. The BOSC does not control city funds; that is managed by the Board of Alderman and the Mayor.

# The City of Manchester

Manchester is the largest city in New Hampshire, and in Northern New England. The population is approximately 111,000. Manchester is the most diverse city in New Hampshire. The city's population is approximately 79.6% White (compared to 91.2% for New Hampshire on average), 8.9% Hispanic, 6.1% African-American, and 4.8% Asian. Approximately 13.2% of Manchester's population is foreign-born. This diversity is reflected in city's cultural richness and in the over 60 languages spoken by MSD students.

Manchester is an old mill-town which has experienced a resurgence in growth and activity in recent years. Manchester is home to five different colleges and universities and has one of the largest populations of college students of any city north of Boston. Manchester is an emerging tech scene, with startups such as Dyn (acquired by Oracle in 2017) and PillPack (acquired by Amazon in 2018) leading a renewal of activity in the millyard. Manchester is also home to the Advanced Regenerative Manufacturing Institute (ARMI), a multi-million-dollar public-private partnership to seed and grow industrial capacity for the large-scale manufacturing of engineered tissues and tissue-related technologies.

## Purpose

The learning environment for Manchester's students is changing rapidly and diverging more starkly from the environment that Manchester's public service infrastructure was designed to serve. Manchester has a process for allocating resources, channels for delivering those resources, a physical infrastructure, and a culture, that in significant ways remain rooted in the City's past; Manchester was once a more homogenous and affluent municipality. As a result, the schools, which are at the leading edge of the change, face a complex challenge in serving all students. Absent structural and sustained transformation, Manchester risks worsening opportunity gaps, diminishing opportunities for students to pursue advanced and enriching coursework, and unsustainable pressure on students, educators, and families. There are critical engines for change emerging, however, that could drive Manchester towards a long-term aspirational vision.

MP is championing a sustained, community-driven transformation in how Manchester educates its students, engages its families and community-members, and supports its educators and other school staff. Phase I of this work involves **building a comprehensive and nuanced picture of the current state of MSD and its schools, neighborhoods, and human capital**. There are essential questions to explore around strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks. The data and information gathered in answering

these questions will drive MP's work in Phase II, where the focus will be on engaging the Manchester community in defining an aspirational vision for how students learn and on developing the innovative, high-impact strategies that the city will implement to realize this vision. With this Request for Proposals (RFP) MP seeks qualified consulting firms to perform the **Phase I assessment and provide recommendations for Phase II.**

## Section II – General Instructions

### Instructions for Submission

Interested firms are invited to submit a proposal in the format provided. The complete proposal, together with any and all additional materials, shall be submitted no later than **12:00 noon on Friday September 14, 2018.**

- 1. Required Notification of Intent to Apply** - Any firm interested in submitting a proposal needs to notify MP of its intent by no later than **5:00 p.m. on Tuesday September 4, 2018** by sending an email to [outreach@manchesterproud.org](mailto:outreach@manchesterproud.org) containing the name of your firm and point of contact (with name, phone number, and email address at a minimum).
- 2.** For each firm that sends a Notification of Intent email, MP will create a unique Google Drive Folder and give your firm's point of contact the ability to upload files to the designated folder.
- 3.** Your firm's final proposal needs to be uploaded to your designated Google Drive Folder by 12:00 noon on Friday September 14, 2018.
- 4.** When you have uploaded your firm's final proposal, with all the required components, please send an email to [outreach@manchesterproud.org](mailto:outreach@manchesterproud.org) alerting MP to your submission.

It is the firm's sole responsibility to ensure that their response is received prior to the scheduled closing time for receipt of statements of qualifications. No corrected or resubmitted proposals will be accepted after the deadline. Faxed responses are not appropriate for submission and will not be accepted or considered.

All requirements must be addressed in your proposal. Non-responsive proposals will not be considered. All proposals, whether selected or rejected, shall become the property of MP. Firms are responsible for checking the website periodically at <http://www.manchesterproud.org> for any updates or revisions to the RFP.

This RFP does not commit MP to award a contract or pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response to this request. MP reserves the right to accept all or part of any responses or to cancel in part or in its entirety this RFP; and to reject any or all proposals, in its sole discretion. MP further reserves the right to accept the response that it considers to be in its best interest.

## **Informational Webinar and Requests for Information**

Firms interested in making a submittal are directed not to make personal contact with individual members of MP. Any such contact will constitute grounds for disqualification of consideration.

MP will host a webinar on **Monday August 20, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.** to review the RFP and respond to questions.

Interested firms can **register for the webinar** at the following link:

[https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_CHvAHZtTjGFm3KeMEB4hQ](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_CHvAHZtTjGFm3KeMEB4hQ).

Any follow-on or additional questions about the RFP, its content, proposal format or any other questions deemed necessary to submit a qualified proposal must be submitted via email to [outreach@manchesterproud.org](mailto:outreach@manchesterproud.org).

## **Section III – Scope of Services**

### **Introduction**

MP believes **the only way to sustain transformation in learning in support of MSD’s students is to maintain community engagement around a shared, aspiration vision over which the community feels genuine ownership.** MP is committed to engaging the Manchester community in the planning process, with community-members, including school staff, business leaders, students, parents, and others, possessing meaningful voice and decision-making authority. The selected firm for Phase I must demonstrate such commitment.

Consistent with MP’s belief, the scope of work for this RFP includes a number of distinct features.

First, the firm selected for Phase I (this RFP) will need to be **adept at working alongside of and with a diverse range of partners, including and importantly, MP work groups, RHNH, and the staff,**

**students, and families of MSD’s schools.** The firm will need a seamless working relationship with RHNH around community engagement and the integration of community input into the Phase I assessment and recommendations. The firm will also need to incorporate input and data from MSD’s ongoing initiatives around project-based learning, redistricting, and equity. These efforts will occur in parallel with the Phase I assessment and so the firm will need to work closely with the teams leading those initiatives. Finally, the firm will need to demonstrate and maintain a commitment to the community-centric values and spirit of MP.

## **General Principles for Engagement:**

1. Uphold MP’s commitment to equity, inclusivity, transparency, and accountability.
2. Ensure input and participation from educators and other school staff, including the MSD administration, BOSC members, the Manchester Mayor, as well as students, families, and community-members, are critical components of Phase I.

Successful applicants will submit a proposal designed to address the following. Please compose the proposal by identifying each bulleted service:

## **General Key Tasks:**

1. Generate and adhere to a project scope, sequence and schedule.
2. Work with MP, MSD’s leadership and planning team(s), RHNH, and others as directed by MP.
3. Integrate, support, and inform RHNH’s community engagement efforts to fulfill the agreed upon scope of work for the Phase I comprehensive assessment.
4. Integrate consideration for the key strategic initiatives and grant-funded work already underway in MSD to fulfill the agreed upon scope of work for the Phase I comprehensive assessment.
5. Provide regular progress updates to MP that can be made publicly available while respecting appropriate, relevant, privacy laws, policies, and practices.

## **Data Collection & Analysis Key Tasks:**

### **District-Level Work:**

6. Conduct analysis of MSD's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) as an educational organization, including an assessment of district budgeting, management and operations - the layer of organizational functioning that connects MSD's schools with district-wide leadership and guidance regarding curriculum, instruction, and other elements of district work.
7. Review pertinent BOSC policies and incorporate analysis into recommendations for policy changes.
8. Review Manchester's City Charter, with a similar lens as with #7 above, towards identifying impediments and opportunities from a policy perspective.
9. Assess governance dynamics between and among critical district stakeholders including MSD administrative leadership, the BOSC, the Board of Alderman, the Mayor, and other City agencies, to develop a picture of strengths and needs regarding governance and operations with key education decision-makers; involve and integrate BOSC feedback and participation with this assessment.

### **School-Level Work:**

10. For each school, investigate and develop a comprehensive set of the indicators for students falling off-track / behind their peer group that are most prevalent and powerful; this shall include academic as well as social emotional measures.
11. Integrate community-level data, such as data on housing, safety, health, and employment, collected by RHNH and other partners such as the Manchester Health Department, to build school and neighborhood profiles that outline risks and opportunities for student success.
12. Identify any specific strategies or interventions that appear to have significant success in improving student outcomes and could have lessons for other schools in the district.

### **Student-Level Work:**

13. Review relevant quantitative and qualitative data on student outcomes and opportunities to develop an understanding for how student outcomes and opportunities differ across varying segments of the student population and to provide recommendations for strategies MSD could implement to improve outcomes – key questions to explore:
  - a. Are there leading indicators for students falling off-track that are unique to or most powerful for specific student populations?
  - b. How does leveling manifest itself in terms of student trajectories over time, with particular attention towards the frequency with which students are placed in levels and how often (and under what conditions) placement changes over time?
  - c. Are there specific strategies or interventions currently being implemented at one or more schools that demonstrate significant success in terms of student outcomes for specific student populations?
  - d. What are the most salient challenges and opportunities related to inclusion, equity, and opportunity as pertains to various student sub-groups, in particular students of color, students with disabilities, English-language learners, and students from low-income families?
  - e. What are the most significant opportunities and barriers to ensuring all students have access to challenging and enriching coursework and learning experiences?

### **Educator and other School Staff-Level Work:**

14. Assess critical personnel factors such as recruitment, retention, professional development opportunities, and opportunities for teacher and others school staff leadership in order to develop a nuanced picture of opportunities and challenges with respect to human capital; provide recommendations for policy and other changes to MSD's human capital management.

### **Data and Community Engagement Integration:**

15. Work with MP and RHNH to analyze and incorporate community feedback and engagement into the district and school assessments.
16. Synthesize data and input from MP and RHNH regarding themes from student, community, staff, and BOSC input; in the final report for this project, (a) explicitly state how recommendations contained in the report respond to the themes issues identified during the community engagement process, and (b) explain how executing those recommendations will foster and help

institutionalize ongoing community engagement as a strategy for holding MSD accountable for acting on issues identified and sustaining those lines of communication.

## **Deliverables:**

1. Regular updates to MP (with specific intervals based upon a timeline agreed to by MP).
  - a. The updates will include a verbal presentation to the MP Champion's Council (Board) along with accompanying slides or word documents summarizing the information; and,
  - b. The information will include updates on progress towards completing the Key Tasks as outlined in Section III, as well as a dashboard showing the drawdown of billing, benchmarked against the budget contained in your proposal.
2. Final report including:
  - a. SWOT assessment for MSD (with benchmarks against other New England cities and other New Hampshire school districts); this section will include findings relative to Key Tasks #6 (SWOT analysis), #7 and #8 (policies), and #9 (governance) as outlined in Section III;
  - b. School / neighborhood profiles and risk matrix for each individual school; this section will include findings relative to Key Tasks #10, #11, and #12 (school-level analyses) as described in Section III;
  - c. Assessment of MSD's strengths and weaknesses in providing all students with equitable opportunities to succeed; this section will include findings relative to Key Tasks #13 (student-level analysis);
  - d. Assessment of overall human capital management, with particular attention towards opportunities for educators for support and professional growth; this section will include findings relative to Key Task #14 (educator and other school staff analysis); and,
  - e. Recommendations for strategic initiatives to explore in Phase II; this section will include a description – as per Key Task #16 – as to how recommendations contained respond to the themes issues identified during community engagement process, and how executing the recommendations will foster and help institutionalize ongoing community engagement as a strategy for holding MSD accountable for acting on issues identified and sustaining those lines of communication.

Note: Consistent with MP's vision for authentic community involvement, all deliverables should be crafted so as to build and sustain community engagement with the overall planning process.

# Section IV – Substance and Contents of the Proposal

## Core Competencies

1. The consultant’s experience conducting comprehensive, system-wide assessments of urban school districts;
2. The consultant’s experience with analyzing governance structures within large, complex, and diverse educational systems;
3. The consultant’s understanding of equity (racial-ethnic/socioeconomic/gender, other) and how it impacts teaching, learning, and systems-level decision-making; and,
4. The consultant’s experience with strength-based school-community strategy development, working with full range of stakeholders, including and especially educators and other school staff, as partners in the planning process.

## Content of the Proposal

To be considered, said proposal must be clear, concise, complete, well organized and demonstrate both respondent’s qualifications, and its ability to follow instructions. The quality of answers, not length of responses or visual exhibits is important. The proposals shall be organized in the format listed below and shall be limited to **forty-five (45) pages excluding attachments and appendices, at font size no smaller than 11, with clear headings dividing each section.** Failure to provide all requested information or deviation from the required format may result in disqualification.

## Submittal Letter

- a. Include the RFP’s title and submittal due date, the name, address, and telephone number of the responding firm. Include a contact person and corresponding e-mail address.
- b. Within the letter, the firm must provide a response to these questions: “Why are you poised to do this work?” and “Why are you interested in taking on Phase 1 of this complex project?”
- c. The letter shall state that the Proposal shall be valid for up to a 60-day period. The person authorized by the firm to negotiate a contract with MP shall sign the cover letter.

## **Description of Firm**

- a. This section should provide information regarding the size, location, nature of work performed, years in business and the approach that will be used in meeting the needs of MP.

## **Organizational Structure**

- a. Describe your firm's organizational structure.
- b. Provide the names of the professionals who will be responsible for this project, specifying the roles or assignments each individual will play or provide for this project. Please identify for each individual the specific allocation of time that will be given to this project as well as their availability during the time period proposed to complete this project. Please provide brief resumes for these individuals as attachments to your proposal (will not count towards the 45-page limit).
- c. Please identify if your firm intends to contract with any outside groups or individuals, or hire internally to staff up, as part of the work for this project. If this is the case, please provide names, allocation of time, and costs associated with any such outside groups or individuals.

## **Description of Philosophy of Public Education**

- a. In this section please provide a brief overview of your firm's philosophy towards education and how it informs your interest in this project. What does teaching and learning mean to you? How does it relate to community?

## **References and Description of Experience**

- a. This section should identify similar projects that the firm has completed as outlined in the RFP. Use this section to indicate the areas of expertise of your firm and how that expertise will benefit Manchester Proud, and to **demonstrate proficiency in the Core Competencies outlined in Section IV.**
- b. Include at least three (3) school districts where your firm has completed projects where the districts have demographics and student performance outcomes similar to those of MSD. Please provide the names of individuals familiar with your work that can be contacted by MP and its project manager, RHNH. Please provide the final report or comparable product for at least two (2) of these projects. (Note: these final reports or comparable products will not be counted in the 45-page limit for proposals.)

## **Project Overview / Workplan**

- a. This section should clearly convey the firm's understanding of the nature of the work related to the Phase I comprehensive assessment and the general approach that will be used to implement this work.
- b. This section should include, but not be limited to, a discussion of the organization of the project and a summary of the proposed approach addressing the **Key Tasks outlined in the Section III.**
- c. This section should include a timeline for activities to be completed as part of your proposal assuming a start date of **mid-October 2018** and a completion date of no later than **February 28, 2019**; description of activities should include employees responsible for the work along with the scope, location, and rationale for the work.

## **Cost**

- a. This section must include an all-inclusive lump sum and detailed budget for the work described in this RFP, with monthly projections for the duration of the proposed timeline. Any costs in addition to the lump sum, such as expenses for mileage, tolls and room and board must be specified and itemized separately and in detail in the final proposal.
- b. Please provide the hourly rate(s) for any additional work performed outside of the agreement and asked for by MP. Any additional work outside the scope of work must be approved in writing by MP.

# **Section V – Selection Criteria and Process**

## **Selection Criteria**

Firms submitting proposals are advised that all proposals will be evaluated to determine the firm deemed most qualified to meet the needs of MP. The selection criteria will include, but not be limited to, the following items:

1. Demonstrated understanding and responsiveness to the RFP.
2. Proposals and experience of firm and personnel named in the proposal.
3. Demonstrated proficiency in the four core competencies outlined in the RFP.
4. Satisfaction of previous clients. As noted in Section IV, provide at least three (3) references that reflect similar demographics and student performance, and are similar to the work contemplated

in this RFP. Include the scope of work for each reference. (Note: scope of work for each reference will not be counted in the 45-page limit for proposals.)

5. Oral interview (if applicable).
6. Completeness and quality of the proposal.
7. Cost.

## **Selection Process**

A MP Consultant Selection Work Group will evaluate and select those firms deemed to be the most highly qualified to perform the required services. The MP Consultant Selection Work Group may choose to interview any, all, or none of the respondents as may be in the best interest of MP. If interviews are held, selected firms will be notified as to place, time, date and purpose of the interview. The names of all firms submitting proposals and the names, if any, selected for interview shall be public information. At the conclusion of the RFP process, the contents of all proposals become public information. Firms that have not been selected will be notified after the conclusion of the selection process.

## **Timeline:**

1. Webinar: Monday August 20, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. EST
2. Deadline for submitting Notification of Intent: 5:00 p.m. EST Tuesday September 4, 2018
3. Deadline for submissions: 12:00 noon EST Friday September 14, 2018
4. Window for interviews: Monday September 24 – Friday September 28, 2018
5. Selection and Notification: Monday October 1 – Friday October 5, 2018
6. Estimated start date: Monday October 15, 2018

# Appendix 1 – Manchester Proud

## VISION – PLAN – ACHIEVE

*Manchester Proud is a community-based movement committed to:*

- *Bringing Manchester together to create a shared VISION of what our public schools can be*
- *Creating an innovative, comprehensive, strategic PLAN to guide us to our Vision*
- *Ensuring that our Plan to enable all of our students to ACHIEVE greater success is fully realized*

Manchester Proud began as an ad-hoc gathering of local business and education leaders, wanting to better understand our public schools and partner with others to create opportunities for school advancement. Upon learning that the Manchester School District (MSD) needed a new strategic plan, its work was brought into focus. A compelling, innovative plan can provide the goals and inspiration Manchester's schools need to excel, and an engaging, inclusive, creative planning process can bring us together as a community.

On May 14, 2018, Manchester Proud presented to the Manchester Board of School Committee (BOSC) on a proposal for Manchester Proud to privately fund and support a new, community-centric strategic plan for MSD. The BOSC voted unanimously to approve the proposal, providing a critical endorsement for Manchester Proud to proceed in its work with confidence.

Manchester Proud has no affiliations, political or otherwise. Manchester Proud is empowered by a fundamental belief in the strength of working together, inclusively, equitably, openly, objectively, and with determination. Manchester Proud's sole agenda is to build a stronger Manchester through the excellence of its public schools.

The founders have chosen to organize Manchester Proud in the spirit of a community movement. Manchester Proud is registered as a New Hampshire Voluntary Corporation, with a Board of Directors, in order to establish the legal authority needed to appropriately steward funds and contract with firms and agencies as necessary. However, the real work of Manchester Proud will be performed by Work Groups of various sizes and durations, formed to address specific initiatives, and populated by a diversity of

parents, students, teachers, business and organization leaders from across our community – ensuring that the plan is truly by and for the people of Manchester.

Manchester Proud's community-based approach will bring in parents, students, educators, and a diversity of community members to help shape and drive a collaborative, strategic planning process. The community engagement will include the deep canvassing of neighborhoods, and all manner of stakeholder workshops, focus groups, town halls, and gatherings/celebrations. Manchester Proud will partner with MSD, the BOSC, principals, teachers and staff, and students and families, in the development and implementation of a clear, comprehensive, and compelling plan for the future of Manchester's schools.

## Appendix 2 – Reaching Higher NH

Reaching Higher New Hampshire’s mission is to foster support for high standards in all of our public schools, giving all New Hampshire children the opportunity to prepare for college, for immediate careers, and for the challenges and opportunities of life in 21st Century New Hampshire. Reaching Higher New Hampshire (RHNH) serves as a nonpartisan 501c3 public education policy resource for New Hampshire students, families, educators, and elected officials.

Established in 2015, RHNH has been deeply involved in supporting and expanding innovation (such as Performance Assessments for Competency Education and Extended Learning Opportunities) and community-engagement (such as education town halls, student voice projects, and parent engagement) in public education to improve outcomes for all NH students and families. Its staff consists of experts in education policy, community and political engagement, communications, and project management. Its Board of Directors represents a highly respected bipartisan coalition of education, community, business, and political leaders All believe in the fundamental value proposition of public education and the essential need to ensure every child is held to high standards and has access to an exceptional public education.

### Community Engagement Overview for Manchester Proud

Consistent with Manchester Proud’s vision for a strategic plan that is **by and for the people of Manchester**, RHNH will spearhead a community engagement campaign that will not just gather input and feedback for the development of the plan, but also catalyze community involvement and ownership for the implementation of a new vision for Manchester’s schools. Beginning in June 2018, RHNH will prioritize the development of avenues for engagement in the visioning, planning, and implementation processes that will support sustained, *not transactional*, community engagement in Manchester schools. RHNH’s process will focus on relationship-building, open dialogue, inclusivity, and distributed power, ensuring all community members have agency, voice, and support in becoming a part of the vision for the future of the district. This will necessitate identifying and strengthening new and existing local capacities. In addition to surveying educators in all our schools and other stakeholders, for example, RHNH will hold a series of workshops that surface and explore essential perspectives and needs - while also serving as opportunities to identify group leads and contacts, and build skills in non-judgmental listening, focus group and workshop facilitation, and approaches to consensus-building - each of which will be integral to the success not only of the planning effort, but of the subsequent implementation process.

RHNNH's community engagement efforts will align with the two Phases of the strategic planning process as described in this RFP.

Phase I community engagement will consist of outreach to a broad spectrum of Manchester community-members, including activities such as 1:1's with school leaders, deep canvassing all of the neighborhoods around Manchester's elementary schools, and listening sessions and presentations with specific communities such as faith-based communities, immigrants and refugees, business leaders, and students. The goals in this phase are to gather input and establish baselines for community perceptions of and level of involvement with the district and individual schools; generate additional awareness of Manchester Proud's efforts and conduct volunteer recruitment; and establish relationships with a network of individuals and groups across the city so as to enable follow-on engagement efforts. This phase will unfold alongside of a comprehensive assessment of MSD and its schools by the selected consulting firm.

Phase II community engagement will consist of continued outreach and listening sessions but will mark a transition to more targeted workshopping where community members help build a new vision for education in Manchester and identify specific strategies and approaches the city should undertake. The goal with this phase is to ensure community members actively shape the development of the new strategic plan and to generate commitment from community-members to take on new and meaningful roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the plan.

Critical to the overall plan for community engagement is an intentional feedback loop between Phases I and II. In Phase I, community-members will help articulate the critical needs and potential strategies for improvement and then in Phase II there will be clear connections made between the strategies ultimately selected for implementation and the feedback and input from stakeholders. In order to solidify community ownership over a new vision for learning in Manchester and to build a public mandate for a new strategic plan for MSD, community-member engagement has to shape every phase in ways that are clear and easy to communicate.

## Appendix 3 – MSD Initiatives / Partnerships

Below is an outline of major initiatives and key partnerships currently active in MSD. The list is not an exhaustive list of partnerships or programs at every school.

**Redistricting** – The district is exploring a potential redistricting the plan. Detailed information is available [here](#).

**Project-Based Learning** – In December 2017 Hewlett-Packard awarded the Buck Institute for Education a grant to build capacity for districts to implement quality project-based learning; Manchester is one of two districts that will participate in the project. The grant will enable professional development to spread the practices currently active at Parker-Varney Elementary School throughout the district. The goal is the large-scale diffusion of high-quality project-based learning throughout the district. Partners on this project include Waipahu-Honolulu (the other school district), Ed NorthWest, and the Christensen Institute. This initiative is a central component of a district effort to create a West Side Ecosystem, expanding project-based learning and other innovations such as No Grades No Grades.

**Community Schools** - In 2014/2015, the Manchester Health Department, the Manchester School District, the Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester, the YMCA, and others partnered to launch a community schools effort focused at a select group of elementary schools (Beech Street, Gossler, Bakersville, and Wilson). As part of the initiative, two Masters-level Family Success Coordinators and four bilingual Community Health Workers work with students. Some of the key barriers to learning identified through focus groups as part of this initiative include lack of knowledge about where to find services, the cost of services, and transportation.

**Equity Review Team** - In December 2017 Nellie Mae Education Fund awarded MSD a grant to focus on equity barriers to education. Partners on this initiative include the Center for Collaborative Education, Plymouth State University, and the New Hampshire Department of Education. The goal is to identify the barriers to opportunities for students farthest from opportunity, including but not limited to – free and reduced lunch, English language learners, students with disabilities, and students who have experienced trauma. With this initiative the Equity Review Team will use community forums to facilitate community outreach and grassroots engagement to get the right people at the table.

**Attendance initiative with the Boys and Girls Club** – In 2017 Manchester School District launched a partnership with the Boys and Girls Club (Club) where the district shares real-time attendance data with the Club to help identify causal factors behind students missing schools and then provide direct supports to those students and families. As part of this effort, there is a new committee consisting of community stakeholders to monitor attendance issues and review attendance systems, policies and procedures in place at city schools.

**West High School Redesign** – In October 2017 the Barr Foundation awarded West High School \$300,000 to “support the redesign process for Manchester West High School in New Hampshire as part of the Education Program’s regional project aimed at nurturing the development of high school models that leverage the wider learning ecosystem.” Partners on this initiative include Catholic Medical Center, the Center for Collaborative Education and Big Picture Learning. The goals are to:

- redesign High School experience into competency based;
- enable anytime learning / out of school learning / experiential learning;
- promote and strengthen Community Partnerships; and,
- advance equity.

**City Year** – City Year Corps members serve in 8 elementary schools in Manchester. There are typically between 60 and 70 corps members working in the schools during the school year. City Year has been an active partner in Manchester for almost a decade and moved its headquarters to Manchester in 2010. City Year is also a leader in the city on efforts to improve data-sharing and coordinated efforts around attendance, engagement, and absenteeism.