

14. Contract for Student Special Education Evaluation Teams and Center (\$1,875,000)

Action Item - 14

Title: Contract for Student Special Education Evaluation Teams and Center (\$1,875,000)

Board of Education Meeting Date: 9/19/2024

Action Under Consideration:

The Administration recommends that the Board of Education authorize The School District of Philadelphia, through the Superintendent or his designee, to execute and perform a contract, subject to funding, as follows:

With:

Birch Agency, Inc
EDU Healthcare, LLC
Progressus Therapy, LLC, Invo Healthcare
Soliant Health, LLC

Purpose:

Provision contracted fully staffed student special education evaluation and IEP preparation team and licenses for use of space for a center

Start date: 9/20/2024

End Date: 9/19/2025

Compensation not to exceed:

\$1,875,000

Separate Compensation by Contractor:

Entities chosen to provide services will be paid out of the aggregate amount not to exceed \$1,875,000

Location:

The student evaluation and IEP team will be established at a District site at a location that is convenient to families and students

Renewal Option:

Number of Options: 4; Duration of each option: 1 year

Maximum Compensation authorized per option period:

All entities will be paid out of the aggregate amount of the greater of \$1,875,000 or 110% of prior year

Description:

Why is this contract needed?

IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) requires the District to evaluate students for eligibility for special education services within 60 calendar days when:

- A student is thought to have a disability

- When a parent requests an evaluation and the District agrees an evaluation is warranted
- Biennial for students with ID and in Out-of-District placement
- Triennial re-evaluations for students already identified and receiving services

30 days after the student's initial evaluation or re-evaluation, IDEA requires the District to convene an educational planning meeting and prepare a new IEP (Individualized Education Program).

In order for the District to remain in compliance with IDEA in response to the increased demand for student evaluations and IEPs, a fully staffed contracted student evaluation team needs to be established at a District property or school conveniently located for families and students in Philadelphia. A license agreement for the use of the space will be entered into between the chosen contractor and the District. While the District is seeking authorization to contract with multiple providers/contractors, the District may only end up contracting with one of the contractors at any given time. The evaluation teams will be staffed by the chosen contractor with a school psychologist to provide special education assessments, and a full IEP team including a general education teacher, special education teacher, hearing specialist, speech, OT, PT and vision therapists, nurse, and social worker. With District collaboration, evaluation teams and student caseloads will be fully managed by the selected contractor.

How will the success of this contract be measured?

The success of the special education evaluation teams will be measured by the Office of Diverse Learners based on the number of IDEA compliant evaluations and IEPs completed, and the quality, professionalism and work performance of contracted staff. Parents and guardians will be surveyed to determine satisfaction with the contractor's services.

When applicable, is this an evidence-based strategy? If so, what evidence exists to support this approach?

Similar programs have been operated with success in other large city school districts including Chicago Public Schools.

When applicable, was a larger community of District community members and/or stakeholders involved in this selection process? If so, what groups and how?

Consistent with the District's competitive procurement process, the selection process resulting in the qualification of these contractors included a committee of District staff with relevant programmatic and fiscal expertise who reviewed and evaluated contractors' RFQ responses.

Which Goal and/or Guardrail does this Action Item support?

This action item supports Goal 1: that every student reads on or above grade level, and Goal 2: that every student performs on or above grade level in math. Student evaluation teams provide families and every student with resources needed for timely assessments and educational planning to ensure academic success. In addition, this action item supports Guardrail 3 by partnering with parents and families to ensure that they have easy access to timely student assessments and educational planning resources.

Does this Action Item support a specific strategy/intervention identified in the Strategic Plan?

This action item supports Specific Strategic Action 3.8. Evaluation teams will help ensure that the District audits and improves compliance with student IEPs. The specific special education and related services outlined in each IEP reflect the individualized needs of each student. Compliant IEPs, enable students to receive the appropriate supports for learning and to have improved educational outcomes.

Funding Source(s)

FY25 IDEA

Office Originating Request:

Special Education and Diverse Learners