

**Utah Legislature  
Executive Appropriations Committee**

**Request for Proposals**

**"Charter Schools"**

**June 28, 2006**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Purpose of Request for Proposals (RFP)**

The purpose of this RFP is to enter into a contract with a qualified person, persons, or entity to:

- 1) obtain information from school district and charter school officials regarding:
  - a) what should be the purpose of charter schools;
  - b) why charter schools in Utah are generally authorized by the State Charter School Board rather than a local school board;
  - c) how charter schools should be governed;
  - d) to what extent should charter schools be exempt from state laws and rules regulating public schools; and
  - e) what training charter school governing board members and administrators need to open and operate a charter school; and
- 2) design and compile the results of a survey of parents of students attending or who have attended charter schools regarding:
  - a) why parents enroll their children in charter schools; and
  - b) why parents withdraw their children from charter schools.

**General Contract Information**

It is anticipated that this RFP will result in a single award contract. The contract amount, the

terms of payment, the length of the contract, and any other relevant terms will be negotiated between the Executive Appropriations Committee (Committee) or its designee and the successful offeror.

## **PROPOSAL SPECIFICATIONS**

### **Background**

The number of charter schools and enrollment in charter schools in Utah has increased significantly recently. A total of 35 new charter schools will have opened during the 2004-05, 2005-06, and 2006-07 school years. The rapid growth in charter schools has had state budgeting impacts. With so many new schools opening each year, the Legislature has had to appropriate state funds for charter schools' startup costs to supplement available federal startup funds. The rapid growth of new charter schools, most of which are authorized by the State Charter School Board, has required additional staffing at the Utah State Office of Education to provide administrative and technical assistance services. Another impact of the growing enrollment in charter schools is the increase in funds provided by the state to charter schools to replace local property taxes. Unlike school districts, charter schools have no taxing authority, so Utah charter schools receive nearly all their revenues from state and federal sources.

In the 2006 General Session, the Legislature imposed a cap on the creation of charter schools while the Executive Appropriations Committee undertakes a broad study of charter schools. For the 2007-08 school year, the State Charter School Board may authorize no more than five new charter schools with a total enrollment of 5000 students.<sup>1</sup>

### **Research Tasks and Questions**

The researcher shall conduct surveys or interviews with school district administrators, local school board members, charter school administrators, and charter school governing board members regarding:

- 1) what should be the purpose of charter schools;
- 2) why charter schools in Utah are generally authorized by the State Charter School Board rather than a local school board;
- 3) how charter schools should be governed;

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<sup>1</sup>*Amendments to the Minimum School Program Budget, S.B. 5, 56th Leg., Gen. Sess. (Utah 2006).*

- 4) to what extent should charter schools be exempt from state laws and rules regulating public schools; and
- 5) what training do charter school governing board members and administrators need to open and operate a charter school.

Questions to address shall include:

- 1) whether current state law specifying the purposes of charter schools is too broad or too restrictive, if so, why and how should it be modified;
- 2) whether charter school authorizers are too lenient or too restrictive in awarding charters, if so, why and how should their policies or practices be modified;
- 3) what are the most important reasons for creating charter schools and what reasons are of lesser importance;
- 4) what criteria should a charter school authorizer use to approve or disapprove an application to establish a charter school;
- 5) whether the number of charter schools starting up each year should be limited, if so, why and what should be the maximum number of new charter schools annually;
- 6) why charter school applicants generally seek authorization from the State Charter School Board rather than a local school board, and what changes in state laws or rules may result in more charter school applicants seeking authorization from a local school board;
- 7) why local school boards have authorized few charter schools in Utah, and what changes in state laws or rules may result in local school boards authorizing a greater number of charter schools;
- 8) what role should parents have in the governance of charter schools their children attend;
- 9) whether charter schools should be required to include parents on their governing bodies, if so, how many, or what percentage, of the positions should be filled by parents;
- 10) what role should the charter school authorizer have in the governance of a charter school;

- 11) what should be the governance structure of a charter school with multiple campuses, i.e., should each campus have a separate governing body;
- 12) from what state laws or rules regulating public schools should charter schools be exempt, and why should charter schools receive those exemptions; and
- 13) what training do charter school governing board members and administrators need to open and operate charter schools and when should the training be provided?

In obtaining information from school district and charter school administrators and board members, the researcher shall use survey or interview methods that provide information that is sufficiently in depth to address the research questions. The researcher shall survey or interview administrators and board members representing a broad spectrum of school districts and charter schools, including school districts and charters schools of different size and in various locations throughout the state.

The researcher shall design and compile the results of a survey of parents of children attending charter schools regarding why they have enrolled their children in charter schools. The researcher shall also design and compile the results of a survey of parents of children who formerly attended a charter school regarding why they have withdrawn their children from a charter school.

The Office of the Legislative Auditor General will obtain mailing lists of parents of children who attend or formerly attended charter schools and will mail out and receive the completed surveys. Surveys will be mailed to parents of all children attending charter schools.

The researcher must provide the Executive Appropriations Committee a written report and be available to make an oral presentation addressing the research tasks and questions.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT CREATING, FORMATTING, SUBMITTING, AND REVISING A PROPOSAL**

### **Issuing Office**

The State of Utah's Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel is the issuing office for this document and all subsequent addenda relating to it, on behalf of the Committee. Inquiries about this RFP should be directed to:

Constance C. Steffen, Policy Analyst  
Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel  
Email: [csteffen@utah.gov](mailto:csteffen@utah.gov)

Telephone: (801) 538-1032  
Fax: (801) 538-1712

## **Submitting Your Proposal**

### **Primary Requirement:**

The offeror's written response to this RFP will be the primary source of information used in the evaluation process. Therefore, each offeror is requested and advised to be as complete as possible in its written response.

### **Number and Deadlines:**

Twenty-five written copies of the proposal and one electronic copy must be received at the following address on or before **July 26, 2005, 5:00 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time:**

Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel  
Utah State Capitol Complex  
W210 House Building  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114

Attention: Constance C. Steffen

Proposals received after that date and time will not be considered.

### **Restrictions on Publicity:**

The successful offeror may not make any announcement about the award of the contract as a result of this RFP without the prior written approval of the Committee or its designee. Except as specifically authorized in the contract, the successful offeror may not use any data, pictures, or other representation of the Utah Legislature in its external advertising, marketing programs, or other promotional efforts.

## **Organization of Proposal**

### **Offeror Information Page**

The first page of the proposal must include the following information in the following form:

*Offeror Summary Information*

**Name:**

**Contact person:**

**Address:**

**Telephone:**

**Fax:**

**Federal Tax ID#:**

**Email:**

***Description of Organization of the Offeror***

Describe your organization, including organizational structure, age of the organization, location of offices, web site, experience, financial stability, and qualifications of key personnel to be assigned to the project.

***List of Owners***

Provide a complete list of owners of the offeror's organization.

***Current references***

List a minimum of five references, including the name of a contact person, name of organization, address, and telephone number.

All proposals must be organized and tabbed with labels for the following headings:

**Executive Summary:** A one to two-page executive summary should briefly describe the offeror's proposal and highlight the major features of the proposal. Persons reviewing the proposal should be able to determine the essence of the proposal by reading the executive summary. Proprietary information requests should be identified in this section.

**Detailed Response:** This section should constitute the major portion of the proposal and must contain at least the following information:

1. A complete narrative of the offeror's assessment of the work to be performed, the offeror's expertise and proposed methodology, and the resources necessary to fulfill the requirements.
2. The offeror's understanding of the desired overall performance expectations. Any proposed options or alternatives should be clearly indicated.
3. A specific point-by-point response, in the order listed, to each requirement in the RFP.

4. A proposed work plan that includes a basic plan and time schedule identifying the activities that must occur to complete your proposal.
5. The research methodology that the offeror will use to accomplish each research task and answer each research question.
6. Each offeror should also assess and provide evidence that the offeror can conduct the research without preconceived conclusions or subjective bias.

**Proposed Budget:**

Please enumerate a detailed draft budget with the proposal.

**Other Requirements:**

The offeror's name must appear on each page of the proposal. Any erasures, cross-outs, alterations, or other changes must be initialed by the person signing the proposal.

The person signing the proposal must be authorized to commit the offeror and to conduct negotiations or discussions if requested or required, or both.

**Modifications to the Proposal after Submission**

The offeror may modify a proposal at any time, in written form, before the closing date listed in this RFP. A proposal may be withdrawn at any time before the award of the contract upon receipt of written notice by the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel.

**Costs of Preparing the Proposal**

The costs of preparing and presenting the proposal (if required) will be borne by the offeror. The Utah Legislature assumes no liability for any costs incurred by any offeror in preparation and delivery of a proposal in response to this RFP, or attendance at any meetings relative to responding to this RFP.

**EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS**

**General Evaluation Criteria**

The Committee or its designees will evaluate the proposals and award a contract. The Task

Force will evaluate each offeror and proposal based upon the following factors:

<b>Points</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
50	Qualifications and experience of the offeror for successfully completing the proposal, including qualifications of assigned staff and adequacy of resources.
30	Evidence of understanding the concepts relating to the RFP and specific responsiveness of the proposal to the research tasks and questions contained in the RFP, including working plans for the project and demonstration of offeror's understanding of the requirements of the contract.
20	Overall cost of the proposed project and its relation to the proposed project activities.

### **Timeline**

It is anticipated that the following timeline will be used in finalizing this contract with the successful offeror, including the delivery of the oral and written presentation of the report to the Task Force:

July 26, 2006	Deadline for proposals to be submitted to the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel
Aug. 2 , 2006	Select successful bidder. The Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel, in consultation with Committee chairs, finalizes details of contract with successful offeror.
Oct. 11, 2006	Delivery of completed written report to the Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel for mailing to Committee members.
Oct. 17, 2006	Oral presentation of completed report to the Executive Appropriations Committee.

### **General Powers of Executive Appropriations Committee**

The Committee or its designee reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any informalities or minor irregularities, or both, and to make the award in the best interest of the Utah Legislature, with or without further discussion or negotiations. Proposals may be reviewed and evaluated by any person at the discretion of the Committee. All materials submitted become the property of the Committee and may be returned only at the option of the

Committee.

### **Clarification of Proposal/Research about Offeror**

The Committee or its designee may contact any offeror to clarify any response, contact any current users of the offeror's services, solicit information from any available source concerning any aspect of the proposal, and seek and review any other information it deems relevant to the evaluation process.

### **Discussions with Offerors (Oral Presentation)**

The Committee or its designee may award a contract based on the initial proposals received without discussion with the offeror. The Committee or its designee may, but need not, require an oral presentation by an offeror to clarify a proposal. If oral presentations are required, they will be scheduled after the submission of proposals. Oral presentations will be made at the offeror's expense.

### **Protecting Proprietary Information**

The proposal of an offeror becomes public information. Certain commercial information (such as nonpublic financial information) may be protected if the information qualifies for protection under Utah Code Ann. §63-2-304. Pricing and service elements are not considered proprietary. An entire proposal may not be marked as proprietary. Offerors must clearly identify in the executive summary and mark in the body of the proposal any specific information that they are requesting be classified as "protected." The executive summary must contain specific justification explaining why the information should be protected. The Committee will determine whether or not to classify information identified as proprietary as "protected" under Utah Code Ann. §63-2-304 and will inform the offeror of its decision.