

Request for Proposal

**Strategic Plan Update for the
Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School**

June 2013



Purpose

This RFP has been created to assist in the selection of an outside consultant and/or organization to assist with the facilitation of a process to develop an updated strategic plan for the Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School (ANCS). The plan should reflect the work of the school's initial strategic plan (approved by the school's elementary campus board in 2010) but also encompass the school community as it exists today, now a merged, two campus school serving students in grades K-8 (see background section below). The goal is to have an updated version of the strategic plan presented to the school's Governing Board by March 2014.

Background

History of ANCS

The Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School (ANCS) is a K-8 charter school with two campuses formed by the merger of two successful charter schools that have been operating in the Grant Park/Ormewood Park neighborhood during the past decade. Neighborhood Charter School (NCS) opened in 2001 serving kindergarten through fifth grade students. Atlanta Charter Middle School (ACMS) opened in 2005 serving sixth through eighth grade students. Both schools stood as centers of community education excellence in southeast Atlanta, gaining recognition from the Georgia Department of Education and the Governor's Office of Student Achievement for outstanding student performance on state assessments. The merger of these two schools establishes a framework for sharing resources between the former ACMS and NCS, while jointly pursuing a common goal of continuing to providing a innovative small school alternative choice within the Atlanta Public Schools that actively involves families from the diverse neighborhoods of southeast Atlanta.

ANCS is a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES), a national network of schools focused on creating schools that are intellectually challenging, personalized, and democratic. CES schools are brought together by a shared commitment to 10 Common Principles that guide teaching, learning, and decision-making at each school. Numerous studies have shown that students in CES schools demonstrate a high level of progress academically and personally.

ANCS is racially and economically diverse, serving a student population that is representative of the city of Atlanta. Families from around the community were actively involved in planning for the merger of the precursor schools and have been involved in the governance of the school from the start.

Merging into a single school with two campuses beginning with the 2011-12 school year has provided ANCS students with the educational benefits of a K-8 school. Students and teachers can build more lasting relationships. Teachers from the elementary and middle grades can work more closely to articulate a rich and engaging educational program across the grade levels that reflect the CES Common

Principles since teachers will know from where students are coming and to where they are going. In addition to the educational benefits, parent involvement increases as families make an investment of time and energy into a school for nine years rather than for three years (at a middle school) or six years (at an elementary school). Governance is also strengthened since ANCS is able to cultivate board and parent leadership over a longer period of time. Finally, the management of the school and its financial position is more robust by sharing resources smartly and effectively.

ANCS is open by lottery admissions to students in kindergarten through eighth grade zoned for the Atlanta Public Schools. For the 2013-14 school year, the school expects to serve a total of approximately 675 total students and employ a faculty/staff of approximately 90.

For more information about the school, please visit our website at atlncs.org.

Strategic Plan

In the spring of 2010, the Neighborhood Charter School (one of the two precursor schools to ANCS) completed a comprehensive strategic planning process. Although the process centered on NCS, the results of this process continue to hold relevance for ANCS as a merged school, though the school seeks to update the plan in a comprehensive way so as to reflect the new merged school community.

In fulfilling its mission, the Neighborhood Charter School's board of directors engaged a consulting firm to manage and facilitate a strategic planning initiative, which formally began in December 2008 and concluded in February of 2010. In addition to planning, startup and ongoing project management, the strategic planning initiative included three critical phases: execution of an environmental scan; execution of a strategic planning retreat to prioritize goals and begin strategy formulation; and development of strategic initiatives and project milestones. To gain insight into the school's current assets, challenges and priorities, the consulting firm engaged a broad spectrum of internal and external constituents in environmental scan activities, which included one-on-one interviews, focus group sessions, and an electronic survey. The NCS board adopted the completed plan in February of 2010.

Proposal Requirements

The scope of work for this process is expected to begin in August 2013 and conclude in March 2014, though there is some flexibility in this time frame. The proposal should focus on the following required components:

- *Project Planning and Initiation* – this component should outline the steps for developing agreement on the approach to planning and activities necessary to confirm expectations with the ANCS Governing Board and school leadership

- *Environmental Scan* – this component should center on the process of understanding the current environment within which ANCS exists and any factors that may influence the school in the near future through the perspectives of both internal and external constituents
- *Establish Future Goals* – this component should outline the ways in which consultant will work with ANCS to establish short and long-term goals and priorities and should be directly tied to the environmental scan
- *Develop Plan* – this component should specify the process of articulating the priorities and milestones to guide the school’s strategic initiatives for the next 3-5 years, including the role of the consultant in writing the actual plan vis a vis ANCS board members and school leadership

The deliverables for this project include (1) environmental scan report and (2) updated strategic plan.

The proposal submitted in response to this RFP should include the following parts and should not exceed 10 pages (exclusive of appendices):

1. Executive Summary
2. Approach and Methodology
3. Project Deliverables - Describe experience drafting and completing environmental scan and strategic plans. Samples may be included in appendix
4. Project Management Plan
5. Detailed Pricing

Additional appendices may be submitted to include the following

Appendix A: References - Provide three current references for which you have performed similar work.

Appendix B: Staffing - Include resumes and relevant experience of you and any key staff and management personnel that will be involved in this project.

Appendix C: Company Overview - Provide the following for your company:

- Official registered name
- Key contact name, title, address (email and postal), direct telephone and fax numbers.
- Person authorized to contractually bind the organization for any proposal against this RFP.
- Brief history, including year established and number of years your company has been offering educational consulting services.

Appendix D: Sample Reports - Include sample reports as attachments to the proposal to provide an example of the types of reports that will be provided for this project.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will serve as the main factors in evaluating all submitted proposals and in the selection of a consultant and/or organization for this project:

1. Completion of all required responses in the correct format.
2. The extent to which vendor's proposed solution fulfills requirements laid out in this RFP.
3. The consultant's stability, experiences, and record of past performance in delivering such services.
4. Availability of the consultant with the required skills and experience for the specific approach proposed.
5. Overall cost of proposal.

ANCS may, at its discretion and without explanation to the prospective consultants and/or organizations, at any time choose to discontinue this RFP without obligation to such prospective consultants and/or organizations.

Submission of Proposal and Selection Timeline

Consultants/organizations invited to submit a proposal should do so no later than **Friday, July 26 at 5:00 PM**. Proposals should be submitted electronically via email to Matt Underwood, ANCS Executive Director, at munderwood@atlncs.org. Any questions regarding the RFP may also be submitted to Matt Underwood.

The selection of a consultant and/or organization is expected to be made by August 23, 2013. All consultants/organizations who submit a proposal will be notified at the conclusion of the selection process.