



The Public Schools of Springfield Massachusetts

SEA Springfield
Education
Association
Helping Teachers Teach

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
SPRINGFIELD VOLUNTARY
PILOT SCHOOLS

Spring 2008

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Springfield Public Schools and Springfield Education Association
Voluntary Pilot Schools
Spring 2008
Request for Proposals

1. Overview

The Springfield Public Schools (SPS) and the Springfield Education Association (SEA) are sponsoring the establishment of innovative pilot schools within SPS. The purpose of establishing pilot schools is to provide models of educational excellence that will help to foster widespread educational reform throughout all Springfield Public Schools. The Pilot Schools are a voluntary model, based on teacher empowerment, parent engagement, and student achievement. The parties hope to improve dramatically the educational learning environment and thereby improve student performance. (Memorandum of Agreement between SPS and SEA, March 2007)

Through this Request for Proposals, the Springfield Public Schools and the Springfield Education Association are seeking proposals to possibly launch up to three voluntary, innovative Pilot Schools in Springfield, to begin in September 2008 or 2009. Through a unique partnership and Memorandum of Agreement between the district and teachers union, these schools will have autonomy over budget, staffing, governance, curriculum, and the school calendar to better meet students' needs.

The underpinning philosophy of Pilot Schools is that urban public schools can best educate students when schools are provided maximum control over their resources in exchange for accountability for performance. Each partner has agreed to allow approved Pilot Schools to be free from constraints in order to be more innovative. Pilot Schools are exempt from district policies and mandates. Teachers who voluntarily work in Pilot Schools may adopt work rules that are different than in the SEA contract, as long as these work rules are included in an "election-to-work agreement (EWA)" that is approved by the governing board and SEA membership at the Pilot School in a secret ballot vote. All Pilot School teachers receive union salary, benefits, and accrual of seniority within the district.

Pilot Schools focus upon increased teacher empowerment and a culture of shared decision making. Teachers voluntarily choose to work at Pilot Schools; when hired, they sign what is called an "election-to-work agreement (EWA)," crafted by each individual school, which stipulates the work conditions for the school for the coming school year. The EWA must identify any work conditions or rules that are different from the contract. This agreement is revisited and revised annually by each school with teacher voice in decision making.

Pilot Schools' governing boards have increased authority over traditional school councils. Each school's governing board sets the school's vision, hires and participates in the annual evaluation of the principal (with the superintendent having final authority), votes on the annual election-to-work terms for SEA members, and approves the annual budget. Pilot School governing boards consist of the principal; faculty, parent, and student representatives; and community members (higher education, business, and community agencies). Faculty, parent, and student representatives are elected by their peers, while community members are selected by the overall governing board.

2. Springfield Pilot School Autonomies

1. **Staffing:** Pilot schools have the freedom to hire their staff in order to create a unified school community. This includes:
 - Deciding on staffing patterns and job descriptions which best meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of students
 - Hiring staff that best fit the needs of the school, regardless of their current status (member of the district or not, although every teacher hired becomes a member of the local teachers union) consistent with DOE licensure regulations.
 - Excessing staff (into the district pool) whose positions are not needed at the school or have asked to be moved from the Pilot school (as long as they have satisfactory evaluations)
2. **Budget:** Pilot schools have a lump sum per pupil budget in which the school has total discretion to spend in the manner that provides the best programs and services to students and their families. This includes:
 - A lump sum per pupil budget, the sum of which is equitable to other district schools within the grade span
 - The district has itemized all central office costs, and allows Pilot schools to choose to purchase identified discretionary district services or to not purchase them and include them in the school's lump sum per pupil budget.
3. **Curriculum and Assessment:** Pilot schools have the freedom to structure curriculum and assessment practices to best meet students' learning needs. While all Pilot schools are expected to administer any state-required test, these schools are given the flexibility to best determine the school-based curriculum and assessment practices that will prepare students for state assessments. This includes:
 - Schools are freed from local district curriculum requirements (as long as the school's curriculum meets or exceeds in rigor that of the district, and is aligned to the state frameworks in core academic subjects).
 - Graduation requirements are set by the school, not by the district (as long as the school's curriculum meets or exceeds that of the district), with an emphasis on competency-based, performance-based assessment.
4. **Governance and Policies:** Pilot schools have the freedom to create their own governance structure, while following state requirements on school councils. This includes:
 - The school's governing board takes on increased governing responsibilities, including the school vision, principal selection and evaluation (with the superintendent having final authority), budget approval, and setting of annual work conditions with the approval of the SEA members in the Pilot school by Secret ballot vote.
 - Pilot schools have the freedom to decide on the professional development in which faculty engage, including the ability to bank all professional development and parent conferencing hours and use them in different time periods as outlined in the current workplace agreement..
 - The school has flexibility to be freed from all district policies, and set its own policies that the school community feels will best help students to be successful, as long as they meet or exceed those of the district, or in the case of promotion, have a sound rationale for divergence. This includes policies such as promotion, graduation, attendance, and discipline policies.
5. **School Calendar:** Pilot schools have the freedom to set longer school days and calendar years for both students and faculty provided that the SEA employees who are required to work additional hours/days will be compensated as defined in the MOA. In particular, research supports a correlation between faculty planning time spent on teaching and learning and increased student achievement. Scheduling which allows for summer and school year faculty planning time contributes to a more unified school community and educational program. This includes:
 - Organizing the school schedule in ways that maximize learning time for students and planning time for faculty (e.g., longer days Monday through Thursday in order to have half-days for students on Fridays, enabling faculty to have a significant planning and professional development block every Friday afternoon) as outlined in the workplace agreement. For any additional hours employees will be paid at the per-diem rate for instructional time and a stipend that will be based on at least the minimum hourly rate multiplied by the number of hours required for non-instructional time..

3. Types of Pilot Schools

Up to three voluntary Pilot Schools may be approved for start-up in September 2009 (a September 2008 start-up is possible if the proposal demonstrates that the design team will have capacity to start up as a Pilot school at this earlier date. These schools may span PreK-12 and be either (1) an existing SPS school whose SEA faculty votes by a minimum of 80% positive vote to convert to Pilot status, or (2) a new start-up school, as long as there is a facility to house the school identified and approved by SPS in advance of a proposal submission.

Proposed conversion Pilot schools may include any existing grade span, and also propose serving additional grades as long as there is an acceptable facilities plan to address expansion. Start-up schools may roll out by grade year by year in any sequential combination of grades, or roll out all grades at once. It is recommended that Pilot schools enroll no more than 500 students at full capacity, regardless of grade span.

4. Design Teams

Every proposal must be submitted by a design team, whether it be a conversion or start-up school. Design Teams should include representation of educators, parents, and community members, and at the secondary level, students. For conversion schools, Unit A members shall be elected by their peers, Unit B members elected by their peers, and parents chosen by the PTO. Once the representative team is established it will meet to select community representatives to the team. The Design Team process and product must adhere to the SPS and SEA Memorandum of Agreement on the Establishment of Pilot Schools, as well as this RFP.

5. Student Assignment

Pilot schools will be open to students in accordance with the SPS student assignment plan.

6. SEA Members in Pilot Schools

Employees at pilot schools who fall under the jurisdiction of the SEA contract throughout the school system will maintain their full status as members of the SEA bargaining unit and as employees of the district. These employees shall accrue seniority in the system and shall receive, at a minimum, the salary and benefits established in the SEA contract.

All employees shall work in Pilot Schools on a voluntary basis and upon request shall be granted a transfer to a regular SPS school at the end of any school year. Pilot Schools shall continue to follow state and federal laws and regulations, but shall otherwise strive for a model of collaboration and shared decision-making at the school site, embodying freedoms from locally imposed constraints. No SEA member may be laid off or forced to work in an area outside of their license as a result of the existence of Pilot Schools. The Principal of a Pilot school can not exit PTS teachers who have unsatisfactory evaluations.

7. Pilot Governing Boards

A. Each pilot school shall be governed by a Governing Board. The number of educators on the Governing Board shall be one more than the total of the parent, community and school administration members on the Board (at Putnam Vocational-Technical High School, SEA faculty representation should be evenly divided between academic and vocational staff). The responsibilities of the Governing Board are as follows: set the school vision, approve the annual budget, approve the annual election-to-work agreement prior to approval by the SEA members in the Pilot School, recommend the hiring of the principal, and manage the annual principal evaluation, with the understanding that the Superintendent ultimately completes the evaluation of the principal. The SEA and Springfield Administrators Association representatives to the

Governing Board should be elected by members of each bargaining unit in a secret ballot election administered by the President of the SEA or SAA respectively, or their designee.

B. The Governing Board of each pilot school shall also develop an internal appeals process to allow any staff member to raise issues, concerns, or problems. The internal appeals process shall be submitted to a SPS-SEA Steering Committee for approval. The internal appeals process shall be provided in writing to all SEA staff members. Issues concerning the Election to Work Agreement or the SEA contract not resolved at the school level may go to mediation before being filed at Step 3 of Article 32, Grievance Procedure. If not resolved at Step 3, the Association may bring the grievance to arbitration.

8. Election-to-Work Agreement for Each Pilot School

The teacher work year schedule (including length of work year, length of work day, professional development time in and out of school, and summer work) shall be developed initially by the Design Team and then reviewed annually by the Governing Board of each Pilot school and approved by secret ballot vote of the SEA members at the Pilot School, in the form of an "Election to Work Agreement." The Design Team shall ensure that each Pilot school has a process of developing the election-to-work agreement that ensures faculty input prior to consideration by the Governing Board) Prior to submission of the final Pilot School application, the faculty at a conversion Pilot school must approve the Election to Work Agreement by 75% in a secret ballot vote,

This document should include the following information:

- ◆ the length of the school day and school year;
- ◆ the amount of required time beyond the regular school day;
- ◆ any additional required time during the summer or school vacations;
- ◆ any other duties or obligations beyond the requirements of the SEA contract, and
- ◆ the working conditions or rules that are different from the SEA contract.

In subsequent years, the Election to Work Agreement must be approved by the Governing Board no later than February 15 of the previous school year. Once approved by the Governing Board, the affected SEA bargaining unit staff must vote by a simple majority to approve the Election to Work Agreement prior to it taking effect. If a simple majority vote is not reached, through a secret ballot vote administered by SEA representatives, the Agreement will be returned to the Governing Board for reworking and re-approval, and a subsequent SEA bargaining unit staff secret ballot vote will occur. If an Election to Work Agreement for an upcoming school year has not been approved by March 15, the previous year's schedule shall remain in place. Approved agreements shall be given to all SEA bargaining unit staff in the school, and to newly hired SEA staff prior to his/her employment at the Pilot School. All SEA employees in a pilot school must sign the annual election-to-work agreement. All SEA employees in Pilot Schools will be required to work the full work day/work year as prescribed by the terms of the approved Election to Work Agreement and the approved individual pilot school proposal. SEA employees who are required to work additional hours above and beyond the Agreement between the Springfield School Committee and the SEA, as defined in the Election to Work Agreement, must be paid for these additional hours with money secured by the Pilot School, not compensated by the District . For any additional hours employees will be paid at the per-diem rate for instructional time and a stipend that will be based on at least the minimum hourly rate multiplied by the number of hours required for non-instructional time. .

9. Budget and Funding

All Pilot schools will receive a lump sum budget that is equal to the actual number of students times the average school-based SPS cost per student at the grade level served. In calculating their budgets, Pilot Schools shall budget the actual salaries of faculty that they hire.

10. Compliance with State and Federal Laws

Every approved Pilot School must comply with all federal and state laws and regulations and court orders, including those relating to diversity of students and teachers, special education, and English Language Learners. Their operating agreements shall acknowledge the Superintendent's and the School Committee's responsibilities to ensure the quality of education offered, protect the rights and interests of students and staff, and oversee the expenditure of public funds.

11. School Accountability and Quality Reviews

All approved Pilot Schools are required to engage in a School Quality Review (SQR) process after the first three years of operation (school self study in the spring of Year Three and external review in the fall of Year Four), and then every five years thereafter. This review involves all school community members in conducting a Self-Study process, which entails collecting evidence, in the form of a school portfolio, to document progress toward attaining the Pilot Schools benchmarks. Once completed, an external team conducts a comprehensive three-day school visit. The external team submits a final report to the school, and then, along with a response letter from the school, to the SPS/SEA Steering Committee for review and approval.

12. Application and Selection Process

The RFP will be released on May 12, 2008. Initial applications are due November 1, 2008 for start-up September 2009. Proposals must demonstrate the feasibility of opening by the target date. All proposals will be reviewed by the SPS/SEA Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will recommend initial proposals to be selected for the full RFP process by December 1, 2008. Schools chosen at that time will then need to comply with the Design Team requirements and will be expected to have the final work agreement completed on January 15, 2009. The RFP will be due on February 1, 2009. The plans will then go to the SPS/SEA Steering Committee and School Committee.

13. Informational Sessions

The SPS/SEA Steering Committee will hold an Informational meeting on May 28, 2008. Participants will learn more about Pilot Schools, the application process, and timeline for rollout of Pilot schools.

The SPS/SEA Steering Committee will hold one session for schools that have been chosen to write Final Applications.

Agreed:

For Springfield Public Schools:

For Springfield Education Association

//s Joseph Burke

Superintendent

//s Timothy Collins

President

Date: May 7, 2008

Date: May 7, 2008

**Springfield Public Schools and Springfield Education Association
Springfield Pilot Schools
Fall 2007**

INITIAL Pilot School Application

The Springfield Public Schools and Springfield Education Association request initial proposals for the approval of voluntary Pilot Schools in accordance with the conditions stipulated in the Pilot Schools Guidelines. The proposals should be organized according to the following format. Please submit five copies, along with a cover letter.

1. Overview of the School

Provide a brief summary of the proposed school that includes:

- Name of the school and location
- Whether the school is a start-up or conversion
- Desired opening date of the school – September 2008 or September 2009
- Grade span of the school
- Total enrollment at full capacity, and the roll-out plan and timeline
- What will make the school unique
- Time frame

2. School Vision

Describe the school vision/mission and philosophy for the proposed Pilot School. What do you expect your students to know and be able to do upon graduation from your school?

3. Key Characteristics and Innovations

Describe the key characteristics and innovations of the school being proposed, including how the school will be organized and structured, the school calendar and daily schedule for both faculty and students, the proposed class sizes and teacher-student loads, how students and faculty will be grouped for instruction, and methods for supporting students.

- How will the Pilot autonomies be used to create innovative practices that will benefit students and families?

4. Design Team Process for Involvement

Describe the process that you have to ensure staff involvement in a collaborative or consensus driven process. Describe the process you (will have) used to develop your Design team

- Who constitutes the Design Team that is proposing to establish the Pilot School?
- How have you solicited ideas from current staff and parents?
- How do you make decisions?
- Describe the scope of community interest and participation in your proposed Pilot school.
- Provide evidence of community support. Attach any letters of support
- Provide evidence of the Staff's vote to accept the Pilot School idea.

5. Pilot School Research

Describe the process your school and team have used to review the literature on Pilot Schools. In what ways have you learned from the experiences of other Pilot schools, especially the Springfield schools?

Final Pilot School Application

1. Overview of the School

Provide a brief summary of the proposed school that includes:

- Name of the school and location
- Whether the school is a start-up or conversion
- Desired opening date of the school – September 2009
- Grade span of the school
- Total enrollment at full capacity, and the roll-out plan and timeline
- What will make the school unique
- Time frame

2. School Vision

Describe the school vision/mission and philosophy for the proposed Pilot School. What do you expect your students to know and be able to do upon graduation from your school?

3. Key Characteristics and Innovations

Describe the key characteristics and innovations of the school being proposed, including how the school will be organized and structured, the school calendar and daily schedule for both faculty and students, the proposed class sizes and teacher-student loads, how students and faculty will be grouped for instruction, and methods for supporting students.

- How will the Pilot autonomies be used to create innovative practices that will benefit students and families?

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- How have you solicited ideas from current staff and parents?
- How do you make decisions?
- Describe the scope of community interest and participation in your proposed Pilot school.
- Provide evidence of community support. Attach any letters of support
- Provide evidence of the Staff's vote to accept the Pilot School idea.

5. Curriculum and Instruction

Describe the following:

- Describe the core academic curriculum for all students, as well as electives. How is the curriculum designed to be academically challenging for all students?
- Describe the school's instructional philosophy and what teaching will look like in your school.
- How will you involve community resources to enhance the curriculum?
- How will your school address the needs of diverse learners, for example, students with special needs students and English Language Learners?

6. Student Assessment and Graduation Requirements

- Describe your school's philosophy for student assessment, and the proposed plan to assess student performance beyond the MCAS to provide data that will assist in improving instruction and tracking student progress.
- Describe the proposed graduation requirements from your school.

7. Professional Development and Support

- Describe the proposed plan for providing faculty with professional development, how the plan will be developed annually, and the schedule in which professional development will occur.
- Describe the proposed plan for ongoing teacher support, including supervision and evaluation.

8. Student Support

- How will you provide appropriate support services, such as academic and personal counseling, for students who need it, including special education students and English Language Learners?
- How will you provide health services?

9. Family and Community Involvement

- How will you ensure family engagement in the school that focuses on supporting student learning and achievement?
- How will families be involved in their child's educational plan?
- What types of community and university partnerships will you form to enrich the school and the curriculum?

10. Administrator and Staffing Plan

- What is the proposed staffing plan for the school, and why?
- What is the proposed administrative structure, and why?

11. Pilot School Governance Structure

- Describe how the school will be governed.
- Who will be on the governing board (e.g. staff, parents, students, community members, partners, etc.) and what are its responsibilities?
- Who will have day-to-day decision-making authority?
- Describe the process for gaining faculty and parent input into decisions.
- How will you solicit ideas from staff and parents?
- How will you make decisions?

12. Election-to-Work Agreement

- Describe the work conditions that will be included in the school's election-to-work agreement for SEA faculty, including the length of the school day and school year, the amount of required time beyond the regular school day, any additional required time during the summer or school vacations, and any other duties or obligations.
- Describe the dispute resolution process that will be in place for teachers.