

**WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:
WSSDA STRATEGIC PLAN FACILITATION
RFP NO. 2026-005**

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
Issued March 18, 2026**

BACKGROUND:

This RFP was issued on February 25, 2026, and submissions will be due March 25, 2026. It was posted to WSSDA's contracting opportunities Web page and disseminated via the State of Washington Electronic Business Solutions (WEBS) system to potential vendors. In addition, notice of the RFP opportunity was communicated during the last week of February and the first week of March in the Seattle Daily Journal of Commerce.

This package of Questions and Answers is being shared with organizations that sought clarification on the RFP.

THIS PACKAGE INCLUDES QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS REGARDING:

- A. Background, Purpose, and Objective**
- B. Project Scope**
- C. Proposal Contents**
- D. Evaluation and Contract Award**

A. Background Purpose and Objective

1. Approximately how many school districts currently utilize your services?

WSSDA serves all 295 public school districts in Washington. Participation in WSSDA services varies, but our membership includes all 1,477 elected or appointed school directors (school board members) in the state.

2. Which service channels or offerings are most frequently used by your member districts?

Our most frequently used service channels typically include professional development offerings, policy services, and legislative advocacy resources. Levels of engagement vary by district size, needs, and cycles of board activity, but these areas consistently see broad participation.

3. *In Section 1.2, the objective is described as “the creation of a strategic plan to guide the association’s trajectory for the next five years (2026–2031).” In Section 1.3, however, the scope emphasizes reviewing the existing 2017 vision, mission, equity statement, and goals, and then developing objectives, benchmarks, and monitoring tools tied to that direction. To ensure our proposal aligns with the Board’s expectations, could you clarify the intended scope of change for this engagement? Specifically, are you seeking:*

- **a comprehensive redevelopment of the strategic framework (i.e., potential revision of the vision, mission, equity statement, and overarching goals), or**
- **a validation/refinement of the existing vision, mission, equity statement, and goals, with the primary emphasis on updating the strategic/action plan (objectives, benchmarks, monitoring tools, etc.) within the current framework?**

The Board is seeking a comprehensive redevelopment of the strategic framework that may include potential revision or replacement of the vision, mission, equity statement, overarching goals, and monitoring tools.

4. Could you please clarify the intended deliverable for this project? For example, is the expectation a comprehensive five-year strategic plan? Strategic framework?

The Board envisions a comprehensive strategic plan that sets clear direction for the next several years. We are open to whether the final product is framed as a full five-year plan, a strategic framework, or a similar model. We welcome the consultant’s guidance on the format that will best support clarity, usability, benchmarks, and long-term relevance.

5. Additionally, are you seeking to update or refresh the existing Action & Accountability Plan as part of this engagement?

We are not specifically seeking an update to the existing Action & Accountability Plan as part of this engagement. However, we do want the consultant to help the Board assess which elements of the current plan remain relevant and how it might align with the new strategic plan. Updates to the Action & Accountability Plan may be considered as a subsequent step depending on the outcomes of the strategic planning process.

6. How do you define the distinction between the Strategic Plan and the Action & Accountability Plan?

In general, the Strategic Plan provides high-level direction, priorities, and long-term goals for the organization with identified benchmarks to measure progress towards goals. The Action & Accountability Plan has historically functioned as an implementation and monitoring tool that translates those priorities into specific actions and measures.

7. Are there specific gaps you've identified in the current Action & Accountability Plan — particularly related to implementation?

We have not identified specific gaps in the Action & Accountability Plan, but we recognize that its usefulness has varied over time.

8. Since the ED's performance evaluation is supposed to connect back to each of the 8 goals, will you provide the template for that document?

You can find our policy, procedures, and forms related to the Executive Director's evaluation at [Operating Policy - WSSDA](#) and perform a search for "evaluation."

9. What methods or mechanisms do you currently use to engage members and gather feedback (e.g., surveys, advisory groups, convenings, etc.)?

WSSDA currently engages members through multiple channels, including surveys, committees, and convenings of membership during our annual conferences and regional meetings. These existing mechanisms may serve as useful platforms during the strategic planning process. We also anticipate recommendations for methods to ensure member voice during the strategic planning process as part of an applicant's RFP response.

B. Project Scope

1. Is the Board able to share an estimated budget range for this project? This will help us tailor our response to the scope of work while maintaining a workplan that is in line with the organization's budget constraints.

The Board has established a budget of \$30,000 for the strategic planning project.

2. Does the Board wish for in-person planning meetings as part of the strategic planning process, virtual meetings, or a combination of both?

The Board intends to conduct this work through a combination of in-person and virtual meetings in accordance with times presented in the “Board Availability” document. We do not anticipate holding these meetings in a hybrid model due to barriers it presents in equitable participation and experience of the meeting attendees.

3. Are there specific Board meeting schedules, annual assemblies, or other key association events that should inform the proposed project timeline and facilitation cadence?

WSSDA hosts its Annual Conference in November that brings its members together from around the state. The annual [General Assembly](#) provides an opportunity for WSSDA members to vote on legislative and permanent positions and bylaw changes. The WSSDA events calendar is here: [Events Calendar](#). We have also included the “Board Availability” document for your reference.

4. Will all staff and board be participating in the strategic planning process?

Yes, we envision all staff and the full WSSDA Board participating in the strategic planning process. However, we expect the level of participation to vary for each individual, with some parts of the process only including the 7-person leadership team as staff representatives.

5. Has a strategic planning committee been established to support this project? If so, how many members are on the committee and what roles or organizations do they represent?

At this time, a formal strategic planning committee has not been established. The Board will determine the most effective governance structure for supporting this project once a consultant is selected. We anticipate including a mix of Board members and staff, but final composition is still under consideration.

6. Beyond a committee, which stakeholders do you anticipate engaging in the strategic planning process (e.g., school board members, superintendents, district administrators, or other partners)?

We expect the process to include engagement with school board members as the primary stakeholders, but we also anticipate gathering input from superintendents, district administrators, and partner organizations where appropriate. The consultant’s recommendations regarding scope and methods of engagement will help the Board refine the final stakeholder list.

7. Are there any particular member groups or constituencies the Board would like to prioritize for engagement (e.g., newly elected board directors, long-serving members, small or rural districts, large urban districts) to ensure their perspective is represented?

Yes. While we want all members to feel welcome to contribute, the Board would benefit particularly from ensuring that perspectives are gathered from groups whose experiences, needs, or contexts may differ significantly. This includes newly elected school directors, long-serving and experienced members, members who are unengaged with WSSDA and those who are highly engaged, and directors from small, rural, or remote districts as well as those from larger suburban and urban districts. Ensuring a balanced mix from these constituencies will help us capture the full range of challenges and opportunities our members face.

8. Who is the primary audience for the final deliverable for the final deliverable — the agency, the Board, or both?

The primary audience for the final deliverables includes both the Board and WSSDA staff. The Board will use the plan to set direction and make governance-level decisions, while staff will use it to guide operations, priorities, and implementation. We want the plan to be clear and practical for both groups, as well as easy to communicate clearly to our members.

9. Who will be responsible for overseeing and managing implementation of the plan (e.g., the Executive Director, the Board, or a shared responsibility)?

We anticipate that implementation responsibilities will be shared. The Board will oversee progress at a governance level, while day-to-day execution of the plan will be led by the Executive Director and staff. Defining these roles clearly is one of the outcomes we hope the strategic planning process will help solidify.

10. Could WSSDA clarify expectations for the final strategic plan deliverable? Is there a preferred final format, level of detail, and/or additional companion materials (e.g., *implementation templates, dashboard framework, communication materials*) to embed in the proposed scope of work?

At this stage, the Board is open to recommendations regarding the final format and level of detail for the strategic plan deliverable. We anticipate a clear, accessible, and actionable plan that can be easily communicated to members and stakeholders. While we do not have a rigid template, we expect the plan to include core elements such as vision, strategic priorities, goals, and measurable outcomes. In addition, we would welcome guidance from the consultant on supplemental materials that could strengthen implementation. This may include items such as implementation templates, a dashboard or monitoring framework, and communication materials that help translate the plan into practice. These companion pieces are not mandatory, but we see them as potentially valuable components that can be incorporated into the scope of work depending on the consultant's recommendations.

11. Could WSSDA provide additional clarity on how the Board envisions the Action & Accountability Plan and incorporating the existing strategic direction into the new plan moving forward? *Should the strategic plan build upon and update the existing Action & Accountability Plan, incorporate its elements directly into the new plan, or maintain it as a separate implementation and monitoring tool aligned to the strategic plan?*

The Board views the Action & Accountability Plan as an important resource that provides historical context and operational detail, but we do not see it as prescriptive for the new strategic plan. We are seeking a clear understanding of how the two frameworks might relate in the future, and we are open to the consultant's recommendations. Broadly, our expectation is that the new strategic plan will set the high-level direction and priorities for the organization. We expect the consultant to help the Board determine what elements – if any – of the existing Action & Accountability Plan remain relevant, what may need updating, and whether maintaining it as a separate but aligned tool—or consolidating components into the new plan—would best support clarity and effectiveness.

12. Regarding items B, C & D from the project scope:

- **Can you indicate the degree of current understanding by WSSDA Board members of these items?**

As with many organizations, the WSSDA Board includes members with a wide range of experience. Several Board members have been engaged with WSSDA in multiple capacities over many years, while others are newly elected and have joined within the last six months. As a result, the level of understanding related to items B, C, and D in the project scope varies across the Board. Part of the consultant's role will be to help create the conditions during the process for a shared baseline of knowledge so the Board can engage in strategic planning from a common foundation.

- **What is the desired outcome (i.e., define “understanding”)?**

By “understanding,” we mean that Board members collectively develop a clear, accurate, and aligned grasp of the key organizational, environmental, and operational factors that will inform strategic decision-making. We want all Board members—regardless of tenure—to be able to speak to these elements with confidence, use the information to guide future conversations, and make informed decisions about long-term direction and priorities.

- **How do you envision this will intersect with the Strategic Planning process?**

This foundational understanding is intended to support, not replace, the strategic planning work. We see these activities as complementary. Establishing a shared knowledge base early in the process will enable the Board to engage more deeply and efficiently in strategic discussions. It will also help ensure that decisions are grounded in a common frame of reference, reducing the likelihood of misalignment and helping the consultant guide the Board through a focused and productive planning experience.

13. Regarding Item E from the project scope: to what degree are you hoping to engage WSSDA members in this process?

Our intent is to engage WSSDA members at a level that ensures their voices meaningfully inform the process without creating unnecessary burden on districts or on WSSDA staff or the Board. We want member engagement to be intentional, structured, and genuinely reflective of the lived experiences of school directors across Washington.

14. Regarding Item G of the project scope: the language in this section makes it sound like you don't want the new strategic plan to diverge much from the existing plan's strategic direction since you are asking the consultant to help the Board identify how the existing strategic direction can be incorporated into the new strategic plan, but it would be helpful to know if that's an expected parameter because that affects the work plan.

It is not intended to restrict the new strategic plan from evolving or shifting direction. Rather, the intent is to ensure that, as the Board explores new priorities or emerging needs, we also take a thoughtful look at which elements of the current strategic direction remain relevant and valuable. In other words, we are not expecting the new plan to simply mirror the existing one. We want the consultant to help the Board discern what should be carried forward, what may need to be reframed, and what should be left behind based on member input, environmental shifts, the Board's long-term vision, and clarity for WSSDA staff to implement it. So, while continuity is welcome where it makes sense, it is not a required parameter. The Board is open to meaningful evolution in the strategic direction, and we recognize that this flexibility should be reflected in the consultant's work plan.

C. Proposal Contents

1. Are resumes requested as part of the response?

Resumes are not required as part of the RFP response. However, we welcome information about the qualifications and experience of the proposed project team, whether provided through resumes or an equivalent format.

D. Evaluation and Contract Award

1. Does the Board prefer consultants based in the State of Washington?

The Board's preference for consultants is primarily based on their expertise rather than location. However, it is preferred that the consultant has a thorough understanding of the K-12 education system in Washington State and awareness of the issues faced by school board directors in this region. Consultants are expected to hold a valid Washington State business license or be able to obtain one.

2. Will the selected consultant have access to existing member feedback or engagement data to help inform the strategic planning process?

Yes. The selected consultant will have access to existing member feedback and engagement data to help inform the planning process. This may include survey results, previous listening session summaries, and other relevant insights gathered from members in recent years.

3. What is the expected due date for the final strategic plan? Should our proposed work plan include implementation support following the strategic plan's submission?

We have set the project timeline to be completed by April 30, 2027. We are leaving at the discretion of the proposer as to whether the work plan includes implementation support following the plan's submission. At this time, WSSDA has not decided whether it will need those services, and it could be contingent upon how the process develops and the project budget.