

Chisholm School District School Board Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at 5:00 PM
Addendum to the Regular Meeting
Chisholm School Board Room

I. Action Agenda

A. Motion to approve the consulting agreement between Hibbing,
Chisholm, and the Watson Consulting Group. 2

Attachments:

Engagement Letter Hibbing Chisholm Collaboration Watson 03312023 2

March 31, 2023

Board Chair John Berklich, Hibbing ISD 701
Board Chair Robert Rahja, Chisholm ISD 695
Superintendent Rick Aldrich
Superintendent Adrian Norman

RE: Chisholm School District and Hibbing School District Collaboration

Dear Board Chairs Berklich & Rahja and Superintendents Aldrich & Norman:

The Watson Consulting Group (Watson Consulting) is pleased to receive your invitation to submit this engagement letter to **Chisholm School District ISD 695** and **Hibbing School District ISD 701** (Chisholm, Hibbing or Districts) for management services related to the Districts' interest in pursuing and identifying areas and services for collaboration between the two Districts. This letter describes our understanding of your objectives for completing this consultation effectively.

THE DISTRICT OBJECTIVE(S)

I am pleased to be asked to assist the two Districts explore collaboration possibilities between the two Districts. What is collaboration?

“Collaboration occurs when people from different organizations (or units within one organization) produce something together through joint effort, resources, and decision making, and share ownership of the final product or service.”

Collaboration is not an initiative to pursue consolidation. These initiatives are and have been undertaken and implemented by and engaged two or more units of local government including school districts and cities with goals directed at adding services, expanding opportunities, and improving the economics involved. In most instances with school districts, collaborative consideration is focused one underlying theme – “*what can we do for students*”.

While watching recent webcasts of special meetings (work sessions) conducted by each School Board regarding the subject of collaboration and the interest in “sitting down together for a discussion” focused on the above theme.

OUR SUGGESTED APPROACH AND WORK PLAN

The approach to undertaking these collaborative initiatives can be organized in a number of manners. Noting that the two Districts have existing collaborative services, I see that as an important starting point that recognizes the existing cooperative and collaborative relationship.

My initial thoughts that you might consider consist of the following tasks:

1. Conduct one or two separate sessions with each School Board and Administration,
 - a. identify and prioritize (a) strengths, (b) limitations and areas for betterments, and (c) opportunities with collaboration focused on the theme – “*what can we do for students*”,
 - b. Provide information about collaboration, cooperation, and consolidation and their differences,
 - c. Provide examples of collaborative initiatives – services and structure;

2. Conduct one or two work sessions with a working group consisting of the two Board Chairs, two (2) other members of the two School Boards and the two (2) Superintendents,
 - a. consider the individual District “scoping” for possible collaboration and determine a recommendation to be shared with each District,
 - b. Formulate a recommendation(s) considering each District identification of their (a) strengths, (b) limitations and areas for betterments, and (c) opportunities with collaboration focused on the theme – “*what can we do for students*”; and
3. Conduct one (1) final meeting/work session of the combined School Boards and Superintendents to complete and present a report that addresses areas for collaboration.

I will handle all matters consistent with the terms of this engagement letter. Certainly other tasks and matters may be identified during the engagement. Any change in the engagement scope or details identified in this letter, may be the subject of a separate proposal or a modification to this engagement letter. We will prepare a letter that once approved will authorize the change.

ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE

I am prepared to commence this engagement in later April with a targeted completion in June, following and based on the Districts’ approval and commitment to proceed.

OUR QUALIFICATIONS AND PROJECT TEAM

Our Experience with Minnesota Public Education and School Districts

Our services to public education have been an integral part of our management services practice since 1978. We have made a demonstrable commitment to serve Minnesota school districts and public education through skilled and experienced professionals who can address the important financial, operational, and organizational issues in public education. We have terrific references.

Project Team

Watson Consulting Project Team and Responsibilities

A review of our engagement organization will illustrate the level of experience our professionals bring to this engagement and how we will efficiently work with the District. The following narrative summarizes the role and experience of our key engagement member(s).

Thomas N. Watson, CMC -- Principal Consultant and Engagement Manager

As the Principal Consultant and a Certified Management Consultant, I will serve as the Engagement Manager and principal consultant. I have extensive experience in education, State and local government, and exempt and business organizations in areas of strategic management, financial management, operations and organizational analysis, management studies, and systems. I have been active in government as an employee, a Mayor and Council member, and a management consultant. For thirty-seven years I have/had appointments as an adjunct professor of finance and strategic management at three Twin Cities’ universities. I have private business clients whom we assist with similar situations and services.

I have experience assisting the Hibbing School District primarily with the 2020 strategic planning initiative and the recent work on the District student transportation contracts.

Affirmative Action

Watson Consulting is a small business with fewer than twenty employees, the minimum for having an Affirmative Action Certificate. We do, however, comply with affirmative action laws.

Indemnification

The District agrees to indemnify and save The Watson Consulting Group and Thomas N. Watson, Owner and Principal, harmless from any claims involving personal injury, property damage or other damages arising out of, or in the course of, providing our management services to the District consistent with the terms in this engagement letter. Further we acknowledge that this engagement includes only those services described in this engagement letter. Based on our normal policy, our liability under the terms of this engagement, if any, shall not exceed the amount of fees we have collected for our services.

ENGAGEMENT COSTS

We undertake improvement engagements with expected benefits that will exceed engagement costs. We believe that our services are an investment with favorable returns rather than merely a cost.

Professional Fees

Our professional fees, quoted on a not to exceed basis, are based on the hours budgeted to complete each identified task, extended at our standard rates with a professional fee discount we provide our school district clients. The estimated hours necessary to complete this engagement in a thorough, professional manner are based on the identified scope of work.

We will complete this engagement covering:

- tasks as proposed in this engagement letter with professional fees that will not exceed \$7,200. We only bill for actual hours incurred up to the “not to exceed” amount.

Engagement Expenses

We are also reimbursed for actual engagement expenses incurred on your behalf such mileage, report and document production and direct engagement support services. We will seek every opportunity, where appropriate, throughout this engagement to use District personnel and services, and thereby reduce the engagement expenses we might otherwise incur.

Engagement Billings

It is our practice to submit our billings semi-monthly. We appreciate receiving your payment within ten working days thereafter.

We look forward to working with the District to achieve your objectives for quality bus services. We appreciate your seeking our services and look forward to this opportunity to assist **Chisholm School District ISD 695** and **Hibbing School District ISD 701**. If you have any questions, please 612-751-0124.

Sincerely,
The Watson Consulting Group
Thomas N. Watson
Thomas N. Watson, CMC
Principal