

**DETERMINATION AND FINDING
FOR A SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT**

AGENCY: District of Columbia Public Schools
Office of Specialized Instruction – Early Childhood Education Division

CAPTION: Tools of the Mind Curriculum

PROPOSED CONTRACTOR: Third Sector New England

CONTRACT NO. GAGA-2015-C-0045

FINDINGS

1. AUTHORIZATION:

D.C. Code 2-354.04.5 and 27 DCMR, Section 1304 and 1700

2. MINIMUM NEED:

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Office of Specialized Instruction – Early Childhood Education (OSI-ECED), has an immediate need to procure the services of Third Sector New England to continue Tools of the Mind curriculum at 39 Title I elementary schools.

3. ESTIMATED COST:

The estimated cost is \$355,000 for the proposed base year contract from date of award through 7/7/16.

3. FACTS WHICH JUSTIFY A SINGLE AVAILABLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT:

The District of Columbia Public Schools, Office of Early Childhood Education has an immediate need to continue the Tools of the Mind curriculum currently in place in 39 Title I elementary schools for school year 2015-2016. The Tools curriculum is comprehensive and aligned to the District of Columbia Public Schools kindergarten Readiness Standards, the Kindergarten Common Core Standards (for ELA and Math), and the revised Head Start Child Outcomes framework.

Background and history of this vendor with DCPS

The Office of Specialized Instruction- Early Childhood Education Division (OSI-ECED) is responsible for supporting the provision of high quality early childhood education at 59 Title I elementary schools in DCPS. ECED is working to ensure that all DCPS early childhood students are successful in kindergarten and beyond.

In 2010, DCPS procured the *Tools of the Mind* curriculum (Tools) for a pilot study of its efficacy in prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms. Over the last 4 years, Tools has been adopted as the curriculum of choice by 39 elementary schools for their prekindergarten programs and implemented in 44 kindergarten classrooms at Title I schools. The *Tools of the Mind* curriculum is trademarked to Dr. Deborah Leong and Dr. Elena Bodrova, developers of the curriculum, whom have thus only granted the Third Sector New England (TSNE) - Tools of the Mind, the ability to implement the curriculum in school districts across the country. This makes TSNE-Tools of the Mind the sole provider of the curriculum.

DCPS expanded this pilot to include 150 additional classrooms for the 2011-2012 school year. This was maintained through a contract, GAGA-2011-C-0117, with the Metropolitan State College of Denver for the *Tools of the Mind* curriculum with the option to extend for two years. The *Tools of the Mind* curriculum is trademarked to Dr. Deborah Leong and Dr. Elena Bodrova, developers of the curriculum, whom had previously granted the Metropolitan State College of Denver the sole privilege to implement the curriculum in school districts across the country. Since that time, Dr. Leong and Dr. Bodrova have sought different financial relationships and are now working with the Third Sector New England (TSNE) - Tools of the Mind as they work to become their own non-profit organization. Therefore, TSNE- Tools of the Mind has become the only authorized provider of the curriculum on behalf of Dr. Leong and Dr. Bodrova. Therefore, we were unable to continue our relationship with the Metropolitan State College of Denver and a new contract was established in 2013 with Third Sector of New England.

In school year 2010-2011, DCPS' prekindergarten (for three and four year olds) programs at all Title I schools (40 percent or more of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch) underwent significant changes and reforms, namely implementation of the Head Start School-Wide model. DCPS has integrated locally funded prekindergarten and Head Start requirements as a strategy to ensure that all students meet higher standards related to early childhood services. This necessitated implementation of a formative assessment in all prekindergarten classrooms, and therefore, the need for a research-based curriculum. OSI-ECED found a curriculum that was comprehensive, aligned to the District of Columbia Public Schools Kindergarten Readiness Standards and the revised Head Start Child Outcomes framework. Further, DCPS sought an early childhood curriculum that had proven results in improving the self-regulation skills of three, four, and five year-old children. The *Tools of the Mind* curriculum is the only widely known curriculum aligned to the abovementioned standards that also focuses on self-regulation in early childhood.

The Proposed Vendor's Unique Qualifications:

The *Tools of the Mind* curriculum began in 1993 at Metropolitan State College of Denver (now Metropolitan State University of Denver) when Dr. Elena Bodrova and Dr. Deborah Leong began working together in early childhood classrooms to improve children's ability to learn and to teach educators new techniques for working with children. Dr. Bodrova came to the United States from Russia, where she had studied with students and colleagues of Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky and had worked on the application of Vygotskian-based teaching methods in preschool and kindergarten classrooms.

The first priority of Drs. Bodrova and Leong was to create Vygotskian-based instructional strategies that would work in U.S. classrooms, which have different cultural demands than those in Russia, where the strategies were first developed. They crafted activities that teachers would be able to implement and that formed a coherent whole—with both a consistent theoretical framework and an internal logic.

In 1996, Drs. Bodrova and Leong collaborated on a book, *Tools of the Mind: The Vygotskian Approach to Early Childhood Education*. Today this book is recognized as a classic for its down-to-earth explanation of the Vygotskian approach and how it can be applied in classrooms. The second edition was published in 2007, and has been translated into several languages.

Tools of the Mind has been the subject of numerous research studies, ranging from single district evaluations to multi-site, nation-wide implementations. In 2001, *Tools* was named an “exemplary educational intervention” by the International Bureau of Education, a UNESCO program. The November 30, 2007 issue of Science Magazine presented the results of research on cognitive control from a study conducted in *Tools of the Mind* classrooms by the National Institute for Early Education Research. In 2012, *Tools of the Mind* was included in the 2013 CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Formerly administered out of the Center for the Improvement of Early Learning at the Metropolitan State University of Denver, the program now operates as an independent non-profit and is housed at the Third Sector New England. As proprietor of the Tools of the Mind curriculum, TSNE-Tools of the Mind retains the sole right to develop, provide, and facilitate professional development and trainings on the Tools of the Mind curriculum.

DCPS has determined the need to continue the curriculum in 39 Title I schools for the 2015-2016 school year in order to continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum on a large scale. There is also a need to have the option to extend the relationship with the Tools of the Mind team through the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years. Therefore, DCPS OECE believes it is in the best interest of DCPS to continue our work with the Tools of the Mind team through TSNE-Tools of the Mind as we continue to explore the effectiveness of the *Tools of the Mind* curriculum for our early childhood students.

In light of the above findings a sole source award is in the best interest of DCPS and would be the most efficient and cost-effective procurement method.

CERTIFICATION BY THE DCPS PROGRAM OFFICE:

I hereby certify that the above findings are correct and the anticipated cost to DCPS is fair and reasonable.

Date

Office of Specialized Instruction - ECED

CERTIFICATION AND DETERMINATION

Based on the above certified findings in accordance cited authority, I hereby determine that it is not feasible or practical to invoke the competitive bidding process under Section 402 or 403 of the District of Columbia Procurement Practices Reform Act of 2010 (D.C. Law 18-371; DC Code 2-354 and 27 DCMR 1304 and 1700).

Date

Chief Procurement Officer