

# Marion County Public Schools

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Every Student, Every Day*

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July 2, 2018  
(Via Email)

Hershel Lyons, Chancellor  
Division of Public Schools  
Florida Department of Education  
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1502  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400  
[Chancellor.Lyons@FLDOE.org](mailto:Chancellor.Lyons@FLDOE.org)

Dear Chancellor Lyons:

Please see the below responses to your request for additional information regarding the external operator the School Board of Marion County, Florida (hereinafter referred to as "School Board" or "School District") selected, Educational Directions, LLC (hereinafter "Educational Directions").

- 1. Provide the outside entity/external operator's evidence of a demonstrated record of effectiveness per statutory requirement.**

Educational Directions is a mid-sized educational consulting company celebrating 20 years of service to educators. Most of Educational Directions' lead coaches were once principals, assistant superintendents, or worked for a state department of education. Their coaches average over 35 years of service to education and over 15 years with Educational Directions.

Educational Directions approach reshapes the way a school thinks about "work." Their focus on defining and acting on "the right work" produces improved performance in each student. Their professional development training focuses on what the learner needs to have achieved at specific times in the school year and strategies for preparing schools to provide those experiences to learners. In the schools, their coaches help apply those strategies to the school's specific circumstances and needs.

## Track Record

Educational Directions has worked in several other counties in Florida. In total, they provided academic management to 20 different schools in Florida, worked with the state to create a cognitive and non-cognitive data room protocol for schools, offered over 150 professional development sessions, and provided coaches for over 70 schools. They also provided over 50 complete academic reviews of priority schools.

Dr. Heidi Maier  
Superintendent

Nancy Stacy  
District 1

Beth McCall  
District 2

Bobby L. James  
District 3

Angie Boynton  
District 4

Kelly King  
District 5



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During the early implementation of Race to the Top, Educational Directions collaborated closely with the Florida Department of Education. They modified their Academic Review process and integrated their data capture protocols to meet the needs of state audits. They collaborated on a school data tracking protocol still used today.

This table demonstrates the results of third-party engagement in Florida schools three years prior to Educational Directions engagement and the impact of Educational Directions in the final year.

School	County	Three years prior	Two years prior	One year prior	ED third-party operator year
<b>Elementary School</b>					
PALMETTO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	Polk	D	D	D	C
NORTH SHORE ELEMENTARY	Duval	F	F	D	B
<b>Middle School</b>					
CRYSTAL LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL	Polk	F	D	D	C
DENISON MIDDLE SCHOOL	Polk	D	D	D	C
SHELLEY S. BOONE MIDDLE SCHOOL	Polk	F	D	D	C
WESTWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL	Polk	F	D	D	C
<b>High School</b>					
A. PHILIP RANDOLPH ACADEMIES	Duval	F	F	C	A
WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL	Duval	D	D	D	C
WILLIAM M. RAINES HIGH SCHOOL	Duval	F	D	D	C
JEAN RIBAUTL HIGH SCHOOL	Duval	F	D	C	A
EDWARD H. WHITE HIGH SCHOOL	Duval	D	D	D	C

Nationwide Educational Directions worked in five states and with the US Army. They worked with more than 20 counties and provided almost 300 professional development sessions. They completed more than 200 academic reviews and climate audits nationwide.

- 2. Explain the role of the outside entity/external operator in the recruitment, selection, and placement of instructional personnel with proven experience and capacity to serve students who may need intensive remediation and instruction. Include specific information about the external operator's authority in this area.**
- 3. Explain the role of the outside entity/external operator in the recruitment, selection, placement, training and oversight of the school leadership team, including specific information about the external operator's authority in these areas. Provide evidence the school leadership team has a proven record of success in turnaround schools and the qualifications to support the students served.**

Educational Directions will determine the level of district support needed. The selection and/or retention of administration and staff outlined during the selection process is dependent on what is needed for the school after conducting our needs assessment. Educational Directions has full autonomy regarding staffing, curriculum, and professional development for this school. *See Section 8(d) of the fully executed contract provided to the DOE which explicitly gives primary management of all personnel to Educational Directions.* The School District will work with the external operator to support these efforts.

In hiring, the Evergreen and Educational Directions will be looking for several attributes for the "right fit":

- Candidates will have to have VAM scores acceptable to the state.
- Prior knowledge of working in a similar type of school and a track record of success will be preferred.
- Candidates must also be willing to learn the approach Ed Directions will utilize to help the school.
- Candidates must have a positive approach and willingness to work as a team.

The Marion County School District will work with the external operator to support these efforts. Educational Directions has been working with the Evergreen since May. They have completed an initial needs analysis of the school and will be involved in summer SIP planning.

Educational Directions will provide just-in-time professional development throughout the year. The professional development will start in the summer for data tracking and opening school. Professional development is based on Educational Directions' Rhythm of the Learner Year (RLY). Strategies and tools will be taught a few weeks prior to a learning window, and these ideas will be reinforced in PLCs and modeled in classrooms.

Educational Directions will provide professional development, a needs analysis, leadership coaching, content coaching, and data coaching. As the external operator, they will work

collaboratively with the School District but will ultimately have governance of the school and autonomy in major decisions including hiring, curricula, and school policies.

For school leadership, Educational Directions is pleased with the current principal, Wayne Livingston, who has shown the ability to move Evergreen in the right direction. In working with him this summer, Mr. Livingston has been collaborative and open to some of the innovative processes Educational Directions utilizes in the summer work to prepare for the opening of school. Educational Directions has indicated that the new assistant principal and some of the other leadership team that will remain all seem to be good fits. As such we foresee no changes in school leadership at this time as we prepare for the leadership professional development and the finalizing of the opening of school planning.

As for the current leadership team Mr. Wayne Livingston has a passion for the community and Evergreen Elementary School, which was evident when he elected to return as principal fall 2016, despite the school's grade of an F. Under his leadership, the school increased nearly two letter grades, missing a C by only two percentage points in spring 2017. The Florida State Assessment and FCAT results spring 2018 also indicate continued improvements as a majority of the grade levels increased, by double-digits, the percentage of students proficient in both English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. The administrative team also includes two assistant principals, two deans, and three content area specialists to support English Language Arts/Reading, Math, and Science. One of the assistant principals has a doctorate with experience working at Evergreen Elementary School and the second assistant principal brings district-level curriculum and data analysis expertise.

**4. If the district had a partnership with the outside entity/external operator, explain the difference in the proposed services changing from a partnership to operator.**

There was no existing partnership between the School Board of Marion County, Florida, Marion County Public Schools, and Educational Directions, LLC before initiating the search for an external operator. As such, this request is not applicable.

**5. Provide a detailed budget for the contracted amount with the outside entity/external operator.**

The School Board is paying Educational Directions a straight fee for the personnel and services they are rendering this year. Educational Directions has, through the executed contract, insourced fiscal agency back to the School District, and has chosen to utilize most of the curricula and programs the school has purchased. Operations, staff, faculty, and school leadership will remain employees of the District. Educational Directions will have control of discretionary spending or ad hoc monies or expenses that arise. Educational Directions will also have access to additional money the School District has set aside as an incentive to attract and retain teachers for the positions at all District turnaround schools, but the budget should be similar to budgets in the past. This was not a default position. This decision was made after over two months of site analysis by Educational Directions. Educational Directions and the School District are comfortable with the current plan for Evergreen Elementary.

Response to Chancellor Lyons

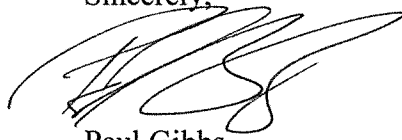
July 2, 2018

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Please see Exhibit B of the Executed Contract for Services previously provided between the School Board of Marion County, Florida, and Educational Directions for a breakdown of the flat rate that the School Board of Marion County, Florida, is paying Educational Directions for the services being rendered. The total cost to the School Board for 2018-2019 is not to exceed \$401,600.00.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you should need any further assistance or clarification as to the turning over of Evergreen Elementary School's operations to Educational Directions, LLC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Gibbs", written in a cursive style.

Paul Gibbs