HORAN
communications

TO: Jeffrey J. Marsden, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Medfield Public Schools

FROM: Christopher M. Horan
Managing Partner, Horan Communications

DATE: December 29, 2023

Thank you for requesting this proposal to provide consulting services to strengthen communication in the Medfield Public Schools. I would welcome the opportunity to work with you and your team.

As you know from our previous work together, Horan Communications specializes in strategic communication for K-12 public school districts, in proactive marketing and communications as well as effective response to crisis situations. Over the past 14 years, I have worked closely with Superintendents and School Committees in dozens of school districts across Massachusetts and in other states around the country. Please see the attached summary of qualifications for additional details.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF WORK

The Medfield Public Schools' new five-year Strategic Plan establishes four key priorities, one of which is "Community Engagement and Communication." In order to advance the strategies outlined for this priority, the district is seeking external support and guidance in strategic communication.

On behalf of Horan Communications, I am prepared to conduct a consulting engagement in two phases to address two particular needs you have cited:

I. Communications Assessment

You have requested an external assessment of the school district's communications functions, messages, channels, and infrastructure, in order to gain a deeper understanding of strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improvement in both internal and external communication. To that end, the engagement will begin with a review of current practices and resources, including conversations with representative stakeholders.

The assessment process will include the following:

a. *Document Review:* I will review a variety of print and digital resources to gauge the district's current approach to communication. This will include a scan of your website, social media accounts, newsletters, letters to families and staff, news coverage, marketing/recruitment materials, videos, and any other files you would like to provide. The document review will provide a glimpse into the district's overall messaging, as well as the efficacy of various communications tools and resources. During this phase, I will also review summaries of the surveys and focus groups conducted during the Strategic Planning process.

b. *Site Visit:* I will conduct a half-day site visit to your central office to have a series of 4-5 conversations about communications with individuals or small groups (2-3 people), who may include School Committee members, district leaders, school leaders, parent representatives, and others who can share valuable perspectives on communications successes and opportunities. The conversations will focus on both *proactive* communication (how the district tells its story) and *reactive* communication (how the district responds to situations that arise, including crises). The conversations also will gather insights on the district's current practices in two-way communication – i.e., existing opportunities to hear feedback, ideas, questions, and concerns from stakeholders.

c. *Summary of Findings and Recommendations:* I will present to you a high-level summary of findings and recommendations, including short-term and longer-term action steps for enhanced communication.

II. Communications Plan

After delivery and discussion of the communications assessment, I will facilitate a process with you and selected members of your team to develop a communications plan (as prescribed in Strategy 2.1 of the Strategic Plan).

The process will begin with a professional development workshop about school district communications plans. Based on the learning, members of the team will work together to identify priorities, tactics, timeline, and roles and responsibilities for communications moving forward, culminating with the first draft of a communications plan. As part of the process, the team also will outline steps to publicize the Strategic Plan itself, including periodic updates to the community on implementation progress.

TIMELINE AND FEES

The consulting engagement will take place over four months, from January 16, 2024 through April 15, 2024, as follows:

Phase I – Communications Assessment

- Mid-January: Document and data review
- Late January: Site visit
- By February 29: Delivery of findings and recommendations

Phase II – Communications Plan

- Early March: Workshop (in-person) with the district team on communications plans
- March: Team collaboration to begin drafting sections of the report
- Early April: Team follow-up meeting (virtual) to finalize the plan
- By April 12 (Friday before April break): Delivery of communications plan

This proposed schedule is subject to change and dependent on scheduling of the site visit, team meetings, and other key project milestones.

The total consulting fee for the services outlined above is **$9,900**, inclusive of all administrative and travel expenses.

Horan Communications will invoice the district in three equal installments of $3,300 on the following dates: February 16, 2024; March 15, 2024; and April 16, 2024. Payment is due within 30 days of receipt of invoice.

APPROVAL

Both parties hereby agree to the terms outlined in this proposal:

Jeffrey J. Marsden, Ed.D.
Superintendent, Medfield Public Schools

Date

Christopher Horan
Managing Partner, Horan Communications LLC

1/5/24
Date