B.3.2 Contracted Services

A. Outside Expertise

Highland Prep (HP) will establish a quality network of Contracted Service Providers to support the school's learning community in the areas of

- Payroll: assistance with running the payroll for each pay period, including mandatory withholdings.
- Accounting: assistance with bank reconciliations, general ledger review, monthly financial statements, cash flow review and projections, budget preparation, audit preparation, and internal controls.
- Special Education Services: Hearing, Vision, Speech and psychological evaluation services.
- Legal Services: assistance with 501(c) (3) application and maintenance, required filings, and compliance with relevant local, state, and federal regulations.
- 401(k) Plan Administration

All contracted personnel will comply with Fingerprint Clearance Card requirements and possess the specified qualifications necessary to service HP. All contracted personnel will have experience with charter schools, understand the mission of HP, provide cost effective solutions, and have certifications where necessary.

B. & C. Professional Qualifications of Contracted Service Providers Are Viable and Cost Effective

Payroll & Accounting

Highland Prep will contract with Aspire Business Consultants based on their excellent reputation for providing quality service and training that will eventually lead to the school executing payroll and accounting services in house. HP will also contract with Aspire Business Consultants based on their quality financial management expertise, and particularly their expertise with 501 (c) (3) corporations.

The overall monthly fee for these services totals $275 per month and will begin in the first year of operation. The yearly costs are as follows:

Year 1 - $3,300
Year 2 - $5,000
Year 3 - $6,500

Professional Qualifications Expected:

1. Strong charter school finance experience
2. Capacity to provide personalized service
3. Cost effective
4. Three positive referrals

Financial services are based upon work performed, not per student, and having previous experience with this contractor, HP is confident the estimations are adequate to satisfy the need.

Special Education Services

Highland Prep will employ a state certified Special Education Coordinator beginning in year 1, to provide a high quality of services to our students with disabilities. Commensurate with enrollment, the school will add a Special Education Para Professional in year 2, to ensure that accommodations and modifications are carried out in the spirit of HP's belief that all students must reach the same place, irrespective of the condition upon which they arrived. In support of this conviction, HP will also require assistance from outside contracted special education service providers, including; hearing, vision, speech, and psychological evaluation services.

STEPS - Serving The Exceptional Populations, is a well-established, Special Education service provider with a history of personalized service, and positive referrals from several schools and special education coordinators, and administrators. STEPS, has also built a solid background of working successfully with Charter Schools and several references have indicated quality service.

Based on these qualifications, HP intends to contract with STEPS, who will provide contracted special education services for HP. Hearing and vision screening will be $80 per child, speech services at $75.00/hour, and a psycho educational evaluations will be $450.00.

Yearly costs are projected as follows:

Year 1 - $4,700
Year 2 - $6,500
Year 3 - $9.000

Professional Qualifications Expected:

- State certified with a minimum three years working with special needs children
- Experienced writing MET reports and IEP's
- History of maintaining detailed records
- Cost effective
- Three positive referrals
- Flexible and available for meetings

Based upon experience operating another charter school with a similar student population, the above costs are adequate.

Legal Services

Highland Prep anticipates that it will contract legal services from the Carter Law Group, P.C. to provide legal expertise due to their specialization with non-profit corporations. HP selected Carter Law Group P.C., based on the following criteria:

- Recommendation from the Arizona Charter Schools Association
- Over 16 years experience in non-profit law
- National recognition and awards
- Listed in *Best Lawyers World Premier Guide*

Based on these qualifications, HP has budgeted for future legal services at $2,000 starting in year 1. The yearly costs are as follows:

Year 1 - $2,000
Year 2 - $1,000
Year 3 - $500

Professional Qualifications Expected:

- Good standing with the Arizona State Bar
- A minimum of five years experience with school and non-profit law
- Three positive referrals
- Cost effective

401(k) Plan Administration

Highland Prep believes that to recruit and retain quality staff, a comprehensive benefits package must be provided. One of the essential features of a quality benefits package is a 401 (K) Plan that is viable and adequate for staff to plan for a promising future. As a result, HP will offer a generous 401(k) plan, with an employer match up to 2% with 100% vested in year 3. HP's 401(k) plan administrator will ensure the effective administration of HP's 401(k) program. HP's 401(k) program is an important part of the compensation structure of the school.

HP is still considering a number of 401 (K) providers. The primary determinants for a good match will be:

- Mission, vision, and values alignment with HP.
- Personalized service.
- Costs, Service and Savings
- Experience and track record of success in serving smaller organizations, like charter schools
- Local reputation

Contracted 401(k) plan administration services were budgeted for $1,000 for year 1, $1,500 in year 2, and $2,000 in year 3. These figures are based on an average of quotes provided by three different 401 (K) providers.