

**PROPOSAL RESPONSE FOR:**

**Strategic Planning Partnership  
Services – Final Revision**

**PRESENTED TO:**

**GURNEE SCHOOL DISTRICT 56, IL**

**Date: June 5, 2026**

# COVER LETTER

Battelle for Kids (BFK) and AASA, The School Superintendents Association, joined forces beginning July 1, 2025. BFK's experience and expertise, combined with AASA's influence and reach, create synergies to accelerate and scale our future-ready learning models to impact public education in a positive, transformative way.

It is with pleasure that we offer to support Gurnee School District 56 (D56) with your efforts to integrate your Portrait of a Graduate competencies into the district's Strategic Planning Process and ultimately your learning design. The purposeful integration of your Portrait of a Graduate competencies into the learning design activates conceptual transfer and deep understandings resulting in strong academic growth and achievement. Planning and execution will require shifts in educator practice, leadership support, and organizational coherence throughout the engagement, building capacity at all levels.

We appreciate the opportunity to be considered as we share a strategic framework anchored in the Public Education Promise (PEP). We believe the PEP framework can be viewed as a district's commitments with a focus on prioritizing long-term goals and being more agile in response to rapid changes. The framework provides guiding principles like student-centered learning and future-ready approaches which districts can adapt and weigh these principles differently based on their specific needs.

We are excited to have further conversations around a true partnership approach with AASA.

All the best,

Jeff

Jeff Korchinski, District Partnerships

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Every school system is unique, but they are connected by a shared aspiration: that all students have an educational experience preparing them to be effective lifelong learners and contributors.**

D56 has been focusing on further evolution into a future-ready district. A Portrait of a Graduate has been developed. An encouraging and proactive Superintendent who is a strong advocate and has prioritized two years of sustained work on learning frameworks and integrating the Portrait work into the SIP process have all attributed to increased exposure and valuable learning experiences across the district.

The district now has the opportunity to continue to build upon this effort with the development of your Strategic Plan. As you move from alignment to transformation, we believe what is missing is a single, enduring architecture that holds the Portrait, the instructional shifts, and the operational work of the district under one coherent strategy.

AASA proposes a strategic planning partnership that builds that architecture using the Public Education Promise as its foundation. The Public Education Promise is not a template to adopt. It is a research-grounded set of five interlocking principles that provide a reliable lens for a district to articulate its own long-term commitments and the shorter-cycle priorities that will realize them.

We see the culmination of this work with a ten-year District Framework: a framework of enduring commitments, three-year priority cycles which bring continuity and the ability to pivot and adjust without complete reconstruction every time. We see aligned action plans, and a monitoring and accountability structure designed to keep the plan active rather than archived.

We see this engagement as a true partnership. D56 is well positioned to serve as a national proof-of-concept for how a small district can apply the Public Education Promise with fidelity and produce durable results. In exchange for documented case-study rights, reference-client status, and opportunities for D56 leadership to share the district's experience at AASA's EPIC event and the National Conference on Education, AASA is offering this engagement at a pilot partnership price of \$30,000.

We are excited to be considered a partner in supporting this important work.

## Why the Public Education Promise is the Right Foundation

Most district strategic plans are organized around whatever the consultant brings to the table: a proprietary methodology, a generic SWOT-based template, or the structure of the district's last plan. The result is a plan that works for the moment it was written and begins decaying the day after it is adopted.

The Public Education Promise offers something structurally different. The Public Education Promise is AASA's commitment to providing every child in every community with a highly effective education that prepares them for college, career, and real life. Developed by the Public Education Promise Advisory Committee, (coalition of superintendents, educators, and cross-sector leaders convened by AASA), the Future-Ready Framework represents a fundamental redesign of the current education system, rooted in principles flexible enough to honor local context and sturdy enough to prepare all students to thrive in futures they cannot yet imagine. The framework articulates five principles that collectively define what public schools must do to graduate future-ready students:

- Prioritize Student-Centered Learning
- The New Basics: Real Skills for Real Life
- Attract, Hire, Retain, and Reward the Best People
- Build Highly Engaged Family, Community, and Business Partnerships
- Measure What Matters

These five principles are not goals a district adopts. They are a lens the district uses to determine what commitments it will make, what priorities it will pursue, and what it will measure. The principles are flexible enough to honor local context and sturdy enough to remain relevant as circumstances shift.

That durability is exactly what D56 has asked for: not a five-year plan with a 2032 expiration date, but a framework that can potentially anchor a decade of work and adapt through shorter priority cycles along the way.

### **What This Means in Practice**

The Public Education Promise does not prescribe D56's commitments. The community, staff, and leadership of D56 determine those commitments themselves, using the five principles as a structured frame for the conversation.

The district's Portrait of a Graduate and any existing learning framework or progressions are not set aside. They are examined through the Public Education Promise lens and integrated into the commitments that emerge.

The framework is built to live. The Public Education Promise's emphasis on measuring what matters shapes how progress is tracked, reported, and adjusted over the life of the plan.

## Philosophical Underpinnings

Five commitments guide how AASA approaches this engagement. These commitments shape the design of every session, every input instrument, and every deliverable in the scope that follows.

- **Long-term stability, short-term agility.** The ability to develop a ten-year framework of district commitments, supported by three-year priority cycles. This provides enduring direction while preserving the district’s ability to respond to a changing landscape.
- **Coherence as a catalyst.** The engagement produces a single architecture that connects the Portrait of a Graduate, the district’s learning frameworks, its operating priorities, and its monitoring structure. Alignment is the multiplier.
- **Evidence over assumption.** Wide stakeholder input, a Public Education Promise systems self-assessment, and structured current-state analysis replace gut-feel conclusions with a defensible evidence base for every commitment and priority.
- **Equal voice, not loudest voice.** Engagement methods are designed so that every stakeholder’s input carries equal weight, surfacing the full diversity of thought in the community rather than the views of the most practiced speakers.
- **From consumers to co-creators.** Students, staff, families, and community members are engaged as co-authors of the district’s future rather than as audiences for a finished plan.

# PROPOSED METHODOLOGY & TIMELINE

The engagement is organized across four phases over approximately six months, preceded by a dedicated Leadership and Community Immersion approximately one month before the formal work begins. Note, this timeframe can be adjusted based on the availability of district staff. Each phase is designed to produce a specific deliverable and to build district capacity to sustain the work beyond AASA’s involvement.

## Timeline at a Glance

Timeframe	Phase	Key Activities & Milestones
7/2	Virtual Planning	Project kickoff; confirm key dates and team contacts; Communications Toolkit delivered
9/15	Leadership Immersion	One-day on-site Public Education Promise working session; SP orientation
9/16	Design Team Meeting 1	SP Orientation; Data review and Priority Area input
Sept-Oct	Discovery (Phase 4)	Stakeholder survey; systems self-assessment; board conversations
11/4	Design Team Meeting 2	Updates, Priority area and Goal feedback
11/5	Leadership Team Meeting	Review Design Team feedback, refine Priority Areas and Goals, Begin to craft Benchmarks
Nov – Jan	Refinement	Writing Team convenes; Commitments and Priorities drafted; staff focus groups
2/3	Design Team Meeting 3	Final review and feedback loop; future Design Team commitment and engagement brainstorming
2/4	Leadership Team Meeting	Review Design Team feedback, refine Benchmarks, articulate KPIs
Feb -April	Finalization	Writing Team completes plan
April 2027	Final Refinement	Draft complete; Board review
May 2027	Launch	Final District Framework delivered; board approval
Through-out	Coaching and Capacity Building	Begins after Leadership Immersion; 10-20 for SP

*Note: All timelines can shift based on actual start date and ground-level realities. Paired community and leadership sessions are anchor points; surrounding activities adjust accordingly.*

## COST OF SERVICES

The following are cost estimates for the services and solutions to support this engagement. Estimates are subject to change should the scope be modified. All pricing includes Travel and related expenses.

<b>Total:</b>	<b>AASA Member Price</b>	<b>AASA &amp; EdLeader Member Price</b>
Strategic Planning (The price covers all facilitation, design, technical assistance, coaching and capacity-building calls, two on-site paired community and leadership sessions, one on-site pre-engagement Leadership Immersion & Community Forum, the Writing Team support structure, virtual staff focus groups, the Current State Analysis, & the Action Planning Template & meeting.)*	\$33,995	\$30,000

\*Includes all Prep and travel related expenses

## APPENDIX - COMPANY PROFILE



AASA, The School Superintendents Association, is the premier association for school system leaders and serves as the national voice for public education and district leadership on Capitol Hill.

A professional community of more than 10,000 educational leaders, AASA and its members are committed to providing high-quality public education to all students.

AASA develops and supports school system leaders through the national exchange of ideas; access to professional learning, publications, and resources; and opportunities to champion initiatives to help transform the future of public education.

### AASA's acquisition of Battelle For Kids

Battelle For Kids joined AASA, effective July 1, 2025. While this closes the chapter on the storied 24-year-old organization that has been BFK, the important work continues at AASA. The Portrait of a Graduate framework, which Battelle For Kids has proudly led for more than a decade, is central to the work of preparing future-ready students.

This integration positions AASA for long-term stability and growth, enabling it to expand its reach and deepen its impact. With increased scalability and broader implementation of Portrait of a Graduate and Portrait to Practice® it strengthens AASA's ability to support educational leaders, enrich professional development opportunities, and foster strategic partnerships. It will also assist in providing high-quality public-school education supports to leaders and learners with student-centered, best-in-class education systems.

There is a strong contingent of BFK staff members who transitioned to AASA, allowing for continuity in how we support district clients.

“Battelle for Kids and AASA share a common mission and serve a similar audience, both organizations are dedicated to transforming school systems for educators and students nationwide. That’s why I’m thrilled to expand and scale the impactful work Battelle for Kids has championed,” said Dr. David R. Schuler, Executive Director of AASA. “As a lifelong educator and former superintendent, I look forward to advancing this work even further—creating greater opportunities and pathways for every student, in every community.”