

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 709

Duluth Public Schools
709 Portia Johnson Drive
Duluth, Minnesota 55811
218-336-8700



MEMORANDUM

To: Simone Zunich, Executive Director of Business Services
From: Cathy Holman, Purchasing Coordinator
Subject: QUOTE #4414 REFERENDUM STRATEGY
Date: July 22, 2026

The quote is to provided consulting services for referendum communication for the Duluth Public Schools.

Two (2) vendors responded with the following results:

VENDOR	TOTAL
Jeff Dehler Public Relations LLC	\$ 42,150.00
CESO	\$ 23,200.00

John Magas and Simone Zunich reviewed the quotes.

Simone Zunich, Executive Director of Finance & Business Services, recommends accepting and awarding the quote meeting specifications as submitted by Jeff Dehler Public Relations, LLC for the amount of **\$42,150.00**.

Program: Finance & Business Services

Fund Custodian: Simone Zunich, Executive Director of Finance & Business Services

**CONTRACT BETWEEN
DULUTH PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT AND
JEFF DEHLER PUBLIC RELATIONS, LLC**

THIS CONTRACT is entered into between **DULUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 709**, 709 Portia Johnson Drive, Duluth, MN 55811 ("CLIENT") and **JEFF DEHLER PUBLIC RELATIONS, LLC** 3427 Utah Ave N, Crystal, MN 55427 ("Consultant").

CLIENT wishes to purchase services from a consultant knowledgeable about referendum marketing. CONSULTANT represents that they are in the business of providing branding, marketing, communications, and public relations consulting services and are qualified and willing to furnish these services.

TERM

This Contract begins July 15, 2026 and ends November 30, 2026.

SERVICES

CLIENT agrees to purchase, and CONSULTANT agrees to furnish consulting services for referendum communications for Duluth Public Schools. The Scope of Services generally include the following:

The Consultant will draft and implement a strategic communications plan that meets the district's referendum information campaign goals, to include planning and production of communications materials related to the referendum and strategic counsel on strategies that district administration will use to engage with stakeholder groups.

A detailed Scope of Services is attached.

COST

CLIENT will pay CONSULTANT for pre-referendum community engagement and strategic communications services on behalf of CLIENT as outlined in the attached SCOPE OF SERVICES not to exceed **\$42,150.00**. Consultant and CLIENT may negotiate an extension of this contract or add additional services not reflected in the SCOPE OF SERVICES if deemed necessary and such agreement shall be reduced to writing and signed by both parties.

BILLING AND PAYMENT

Consultant requires half of the contract amount to be paid at the beginning of the contract term and the second half at the end of the contract term for referendum communications services. We will provide invoices for your records. **Send payment to Jeff Dehler Public Relations, LLC, PO Box 783, Pewee Valley, KY 40056-9197.** CLIENT agrees to pay such amounts due within thirty (30) days of such stated dates. Failure to pay within 30 days may incur a 5% penalty of the amount due.

Expenses incurred in connection with services under this contract, including but not limited to travel, newspaper subscriptions, printing, postage, and other out-of-pocket costs, will be billed separately and are not included in the contract amount above.

WORK OUTSIDE OF THE CONTRACT SCOPE / RATES

Any work requested by the CLIENT that is outside of the contract scope of service will be approved in writing by both parties. Costs outside of the scope of service will be billed at the following standard rates.

Principal and Senior Counselor - \$150/hour

Account Manager - \$120/hour

Technical Specialist - \$100/hour

Clerical - \$75/hour

Intern - \$50/hour

PROCESSING FEE

A 15% processing fee will be added to all subcontracted labor or vendor expenses paid by DehlerPR on behalf of the CLIENT. This fee helps us cover accounting services and other overhead related to processing bills and invoices.

Thank you for understanding that these rates and fees will allow us to continue bringing best-in-class service, competitive value, and high-quality strategic counsel and public relations expertise.

TERMINATION

Either party may terminate this Agreement with thirty (30) days written notice. CLIENT remains liable for all fees for work done through date of termination. CONSULTANT is liable for work through the date of termination.

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR

At all times and for all purposes under this Contract, Consultant's relationship to CLIENT is as an independent contractor and not an employee or agent of CLIENT.

The Parties agree that Consultant may utilize other vendors, subcontractors or other independent contractors to complete the agreed upon services. Consultant is responsible to pay all applicable state and federal social security, unemployment, and income taxes for any employees that they supply. Any vendor, subcontractor or other independent contractor of CONSULTANT shall be responsible to pay all applicable state and federal social security, unemployment and income taxes for their own personnel.

Except for intentional, willful or wanton conduct of CLIENT or CLIENT's personnel, Consultant agrees that under no circumstances will CLIENT be responsible for workers' compensation for injuries suffered by CONSULTANT or any of CONSULTANT's employees in connection with this Agreement.

COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS

In providing services, Consultant will abide by all statutes, ordinances, rules, and regulations pertaining to or regulating the provision of the services.

SUBCONTRACTING AND ASSIGNMENTS

Consultant is responsible for the performance of all vendors, subcontractors and independent contractors hired by the consultant under this Agreement.

MODIFICATIONS

Any material alterations, modifications, or variations of the terms of this Contract will be valid and enforceable only when reduced to writing as an amendment and signed by both parties.

DATA PRACTICES

In collecting, maintaining, storing, using, and disseminating data on individuals while providing services, Consultant agrees to abide by all pertinent state and federal statutes, rules and regulations covering data privacy.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

CONSULTANT represents that all final work generated under this Agreement shall be the property of CLIENT. CONSULTANT agrees to work with CLIENT to complete any requested documentation, including an assignment of creative work, to ensure title to final work resides with CLIENT. Further, CONSULTANT represents that all final work completed under this Agreement shall not infringe on the intellectual property rights of any third party. Further, the Parties agree that CONSULTANT may use any created work under this Agreement with other prospective clients and for marketing purposes without additional notice, permission or approval from CLIENT.

CLIENT represents and warrants that any and all intellectual property it supplies to CONSULTANT for inclusion in any work of CLIENT does not infringe on the intellectual property rights of any third party and that it has secured all necessary licensing, approvals or waivers for such use. CLIENT is responsible for obtaining any and all releases and waivers from any individual who is under their control and who may appear in any finished work. For any individual who is under the age of 18, such release and waiver must be signed by an adult or legal guardian of such minor. Any legal liability for failing to obtain appropriate releases or securing the rights of any third party for such use of intellectual property in this subsection shall be the responsibility of CLIENT and not that of the CONSULTANT.

CONFIDENTIALITY

CONSULTANT will not, as a current representative of CLIENT or at any time thereafter, disclose in whole or in part, any of CLIENT's Confidential Information that CONSULTANT may learn or acquire during this contract term with CLIENT, to any other person, firm, corporation or entity. CONSULTANT further agrees that CONSULTANT will not use CLIENT's Confidential Information for CONSULTANT's benefit or for the benefit of any other person, firm, corporation or entity unless CLIENT expressly directs CONSULTANT to do so. During the term of CONSULTANT's contract with CLIENT, CONSULTANT will use the Confidential Information only in furtherance of CLIENT's interests.

DISPUTES/CHOICE OF LAW

The Parties agree that, should there be a dispute or disagreement as to the terms of this Agreement they shall work collaboratively together to come to a mutually acceptable solution. Should such efforts fail, the Parties agree that this Agreement is governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Minnesota which will control any dispute.

ASSIGNMENT

Neither party may assign this Agreement.

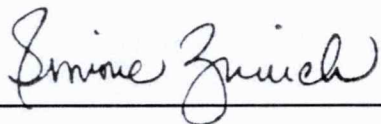
LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

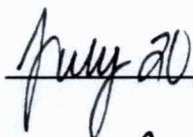
The extent of liability of CONSULTANT shall be the total amount of fees paid under this Agreement.

ENTIRE CONTRACT

The entire agreement of the parties is contained in this document, the Scope of Services and the Proposal.

APPROVALS

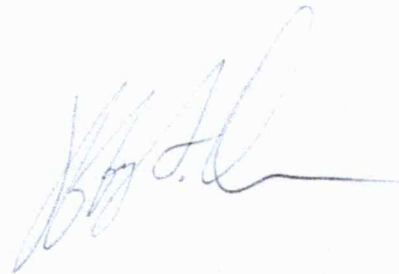


 2026

NAME: Simone Zurich

POSITION: Exec. Dir. Finance, Business Services

Duluth Public Schools
Independent School District 706
709 Portia Johnson Drive
Duluth, MN 55811



July 15, 2026
Jeffrey A. Dehler,
President
Jeff Dehler Public Relations, LLC
Independent Contractor

SCOPE OF SERVICES		
Referendum Communication	COST	RANGE
Project Management	\$ 6,000	
Preparation, planning, coordination		
Strategic Counsel	\$ 3,000	
In-person meeting		\$ 1,500
Campaign management – bi-weekly phone calls as needed (Consultant is responsible for agendas, notes, leads meetings)		
Strategic Referendum Communications plan		
Research (Prep and analysis)	\$ 3,000	
Backgrounding		
Mini-communications audit		
Interviews and/or focus group		
Voter file analysis		
Website and newsletter analytics reports		
Strategic Message Development	\$ 3,000	
Speaking points (establishes messaging) and tagline		
Campaign branding - theme graphic		
Materials Development	\$ 14,000	
Referendum website content 10 pages		
Employee Do's and Don'ts		
Video strategy and script oversight		
Staff and parent email content (5 emails)		
Fast Facts postcard - Draft, art direction, printing coordination		
Brochure - 16-pages - Draft, art direction, printing coordination		
Back pack flyers (3)		
Facebook editorial calendar and content (30-90 days)		
Get out the vote messaging and strategies		
Post-referendum messaging and strategies		
PowerPoint presentation		
Assistance with Notice of Special Election		\$ 1,000
Coordinate translations		\$ 3,000
Photography		\$ 1,500
Video editing of in-house video shoots		\$ 1,000
Building team coordination and materials		\$ 2,000
Media Relations	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Monitor media for referendum related news		
News releases (2-6) Op-ed (2-6) review and edit		

Media relations (calls to editors, reporters, producers)		
TOTAL	\$ 30,000	\$ 11,000
Expenses:		
Website hosting and domain name		\$ 300
Constant Contact subscription		\$ 350
Mileage, lodging, meals (per in-person meeting)		\$ 300
Lodging (if necessary)		\$ 200
TOTAL	\$ 30,000	\$ 12,150



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Referendum Communications Support

Duluth Public Schools
(Reference #Q-1414)

6.29.2026



01 | The CESO Communications Story •

CESO Communications is committed to “rethinking possible” in all we do. Our team includes school communication professionals from across the country who have a combined experience of more than 300 years, and all of our senior strategists have earned the Accredited in Public Relations (APR) designation. We understand the issues faced by schools and districts, and we have the experience to solve any issue. We combine our school expertise with a creative team of talented designers, marketers and strategists to create and deliver powerful solutions that solve problems and lead to impactful results.

We are colleagues with our clients, showing up for them with our sleeves rolled up, ready to think, work and act in their best interest. We tap our team’s creativity, expertise and experience as we partner with our clients, knowing that expertly implemented action founded in strategy can have a transformational impact.

02 | Scope of Work & Cost •

CESO Communications is proposing to partner with Duluth Public Schools to provide communications assistance and support for the district’s planned November 2026 operating levy referendum election. While our team will accept additional assignments, the typical referendum scope of work includes the following:

- Create a communications plan to outline a tactical approach to the campaign
- Create overall key messages to be included in communications throughout the campaign
- Create a web page or standalone microsite for the campaign
- Create levy-related content for a variety of communication channels to include:
 - Content for the district website
 - Stories to be submitted to the local newspaper
 - Content to be shared in school and district newsletters
 - Materials for community presentations
 - Content to be shared through social media
 - Provide graphic design election-related materials
- Provide graphic design for election-related materials
- Assist the Duluth team in discussing and planning an overall campaign strategy
- Provide advice and counsel to the district team throughout the campaign.

We have organized the proposal to include two parts:

- Our team will provide 35 hours per month for two months - July-August 2026 - to create the overall campaign communications plan, key messaging, and begin



implementation of the first several weeks activities included in the communications plan. **COST - \$11,200 or \$5,600 monthly**

- Our team will provide 25 hours per month for three months - September-November 2026 - to continue implementation of the campaign plan and assist the district as needed. **COST - \$12,000 or \$4,000 monthly**

We will ask the district to assign a district administrator to be our primary contact and will meet regularly to assess progress.

TOTAL - \$23,200

03 | Summary •

The CESO Communications team is excited at the possibility of partnering with Duluth Public Schools to assist with referendum communications. A clear and focused communications plan that is expertly implemented will go a long way toward helping district residents understand the operating levy proposal.

We are happy to discuss the details of the proposal and make any necessary adjustments. Let me know if you have any questions or need additional information. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Bob Noyed, APR

Vice President, CESO Communications

bob.noyed@theceso.com, 612-325-2127