



Proposal For Consideration

Prepared For

**Joint Study Committee
Co-Located School Campus**

School Districts

Eveleth-Gilbert, Mountain Iron-Buhl, Virginia

April 1, 2014



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INTRODUCTION

In December 2013, independent school districts in Mountain Iron-Buhl and Virginia each approved resolutions agreeing to explore a new unprecedented possibility: a cooperative school that would offer more educational and growth options for their collective students in Grades 7 – 12, without consolidating the school districts. In January 2014, the members of the Eveleth-Gilbert School Board voted to join the collaborative process.

If constructed, the new school campus would be built adjacent to the Merritt Elementary School in Mountain Iron and would provide a dynamic learning environment for nearly 1,400 students. Early cost projections indicate the new campus could cost approximately \$110 million. Funding would come from taconite tax revenues distributed through the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board. The three boards of education established a goal of not seeking any increase in local property taxes for area homeowners or businesses.

At the first joint meeting of board representatives, members agreed that transparency in communications and actions were of the utmost importance, and that public forums and public polling would be conducted to better determine the levels of support or opposition to the challenging endeavor. The joint board requested representatives of Zenith Research Group attend a January 13, 2014 meeting to be briefed about the project. At that forum, the committee requested Zenith Research proceed with the development of a website and Facebook page to begin the process of disseminating news and information about the collaborative process, and assist with the development of a Q & A document addressing what are likely to be frequently asked questions by residents of the three school districts.

Following collaborative efforts, Zenith Research Group registered the internet domain www.bettertogether.info and a website is operational. In addition, Zenith Research Group created BetterTogetherMN as the official Facebook page of the joint committee efforts. Company representatives continue to update each of the sites with new information on a daily basis, or as events warrant.

Zenith Research Group coordinated the preparation, printing, and release of a Frequently Asked Questions document detailing responses to many of the anticipated questions the residents of the three school districts are likely to have as the process continues.

Zenith Research Group has also engaged in the development of media alerts as needed, and has scheduled interviews for school district representatives with local media sources to more fully explain the deliberations and actions being undertaken by the three school districts. In addition, the company assisted the planning and implementation in January of two community forums in Virginia and Mountain Iron. The coordinated release of relevant materials was designed to establish a baseline of public knowledge and information sufficient to generate positive public opinion, leading to majority support among the residents of the three independent school districts for the design and construction of a new co-located campus.

During the initial January meeting, it was determined that research should also be a component of the collaborative study process. This document is in response to a committee request for a proposal and outline of both quantitative and qualitative studies.

RESEARCH DESCRIPTIVES

	Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research
Objective / Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “ To gain an understanding of underlying reasons and motivations “ To provide insights into the setting of a problem, generating ideas and/or hypotheses for later quantitative research “ To uncover prevalent trends in thought and opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “ To quantify data and generalize results from a sample to the population of interest “ To measure the incidence of various views and opinions in a chosen sample “ Sometimes followed by qualitative research which is used to explore some findings further
Sample	Usually a small number of non-representative cases. Respondents selected to fulfil a given quota.	Usually a large number of cases representing the population of interest. Randomly selected respondents.
Data Collection	Unstructured or semi-structured techniques e.g. individual depth interviews or group discussions.	Structured techniques such as online questionnaires, on-street or telephone interviews.
Data Analysis	Non-statistical.	Statistical data is usually in the form of tabulations (tabs). Findings are conclusive and usually descriptive in nature.
Outcome	Exploratory and/or investigative. Findings are not conclusive and cannot be used to make generalizations about the population of interest. Develop an initial understanding and sound base for further decision making.	Used to recommend a final course of action.
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “ Answers exploratory “why” questions “ Enables flexible discourse “ Provides face-to-face, non-verbal indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “ Answers questions such as “how much?” or “how many?” “ Provides more decision-making substance/confirmation “ Statistically robust
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “ Relatively small numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “ Generally more expensive and time consuming “ Fixed questionnaire structure

RESEARCH SPECIFICS
SCOPE OF WORK
QUANTITATIVE STUDY

List Size/Source

Any list source for dissemination of news materials and research will be internal Zenith Research data. Zenith Research Group will segment contact data files to determine and confirm identity and best option contact information (landline vs wireless numbers). Based on anticipated survey substance and length, substantial resistance is not anticipated. If resistance is noted, a determination upon how to proceed will be mutually agreed upon between Zenith Research and the contracting party.

Training

Call center agents will be trained specifically for this research. Training will include, but is not limited to the following:

- " Initial training and re-training, if required, of agents.
- " Training of supervisory staff.
- " Organization overview: services, goals, mission.

Quantitative Stage Benefits

- " Data can be collected and analyzed fairly quickly.
- " Relying on a statistically valid random sample, results can be generalized to the entire population
- " Analysis provides repeatable direction for planning programs, themes and message delivery

Project Sequence

1. Development of call center script
2. Call center associate training
3. Pre-test
4. Project launch
5. Data analysis
6. Preparation of summary findings

Methodology

Research findings must be reliable and accurate to be utilized effectively for public policy influence campaigns by engaged organizations and decision-making by governing entities. To this end, Zenith Research Group will specifically design methodology for consideration based on an agreed service fee. In lieu of a signed agreement, Zenith Research Group presents the following options for consideration. (See top of page 5)

SCHOOL DISTRICT	COMPLETED INTERVIEWS Option 1 Margin of Error +/-5%	COMPLETED INTERVIEWS Option 2 Margin of Error +/-4%	COMPLETED INTERVIEWS Option 3 Margin of Error +/-3%
Eveleth-Gilbert	353	528	859
Mountain Iron – Buhl	342	503	794
Virginia	367	558	942
TOTAL INTERVIEWS	1,062	1,589	2,595
PROJECT FEE	\$17,695.00	\$25,680.00	\$41,160.00
Project Assumptions: ~ Includes all items listed in Project Sequence ~ Estimated survey instrument length - 7 minutes			

RESEARCH SPECIFICS
SCOPE OF WORK
QUALITATIVE STUDY

Discussion Guide Development

Preparation of the script to be used by the focus group facilitator based on current issues, decisions or topics under consideration by the contracting agency. Questions will be developed to accommodate a 90-minute forum.

Location Selection

A location offering a setting large enough to accommodate - at a minimum – 12 to 15 participants, facilitator, video recording equipment and food station for participant meals (if offered).

Participant Screening/Selection

Selection of panel members, often requiring application of quota standards to ensure a representative sampling of the community or customer base.

Options

Pre-determination of participant fee and participation meals.

Deliverables

Summary of key findings.

Fees

A fee schedule based on multiple scenarios is available at the top of page 6.

FOCUS GROUP SCENARIOS		
OPTION	DESCRIPTIVE	FEE
Option One	~ A single focus group within each of the three school districts comprised of parents with children in one of the district's schools	\$10,200 (With \$35 participant fee and participant meal) \$8,625 (Without \$35 participant fee) \$9525 (Without participant meal)
Option Two	~ A focus group within each school district comprised of parents with children in one of the district's schools ~ A focus group within each district comprised of residents without a child or children in one of the district's schools	\$20,400.00 (With participant fee/meal) \$17,250.00 (Without participant fee) \$19,050.00 (Without participant meal)
Option Three	~ A focus group within each school district comprised of a mix of school parents and residents without children in one of the district's schools	See Option One
Option Four	~ A single focus group comprised of parents with a child or children in one of the three district's schools – panel members would be selected from each of the three districts	\$4,000.00 (With participant fee/meal) \$3,475.00 (Without participant fee) \$3,775.00 (Without participant meal)
Option Five	~ A single focus group comprised of parents with a child or children in one of the three district's schools – panel members would be selected from each of the three districts ~ A single focus group comprised of residents without a child or children in one of the district's schools – panel members would be selected from each of the three districts	\$7,750.00 (With participant fee/meal) \$6,500.00 (Without participant fee) \$7,100.00 (Without participant meal)
Option Six	~ A single focus group comprised of parents with children in one of the district's schools, and with residents without a child or children in one of the district's schools – panel members would be selected from each of the three districts	See Option Three

Fees and Pricing Philosophy

Zenith Research presents this pricing as a good-faith effort subject to alteration based on methodology, actual experience and upon mutual agreement between the contracting parties.

Invoicing

Zenith Research Group will immediately invoice for 30 percent of the selected project fee(s) to launch the selected project(s). However, Zenith Research agrees to review funding options as presented by Joint Study Committee.

Agreed:



Dushan Skorich, President
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