

THERE ARE SEVERAL STEPS A SCHOOL DISTRICT CAN TAKE TO MAKE SURE IT IS COMPARING APPLES TO APPLES WHEN IT SELECTS AN ARCHITECTURE FIRM FOR A PROJECT:



1. Define project specifications in as much detail as possible, communicate those details to the professionals and then insist that they address those details in their proposals. For example, the RFP should identify how many times the school district expects to meet with the architects through out the project, including during construction, how many options the architects will present and how many times construction documents will be reviewed.

2. Hold a pre-proposal meeting with professionals to make sure they understand the scope of work and to answer questions. This will help eliminate misinterpretations of the RFP.

3. Understand that architectural firms have different definitions for "standard service." Architecture firms that have done dozens of K-12 projects may rely on stock designs that they modify to fit project requirements. This strategy may result in lower fees than their competitors, but they may not be putting in the initial effort to understand the school district's specific needs.. Other firms include in their standard services extensive pre-design meetings with all user groups—teachers, administration, and the public--to ensure that the design addresses all their needs. These meetings can often save time and money later in the project and result in

a building that achieves the community's educational goals.

4. Visit the architecture firms' offices. You can learn a lot about a firm and its professionalism by looking at the quality of its own facilities, the number and type of people there and their enthusiasm and the personality of the organization.

For additional information regarding "apples to apples" comparisons please contact John E. Kosar at 724.285.4761 or Michael Carter at 216.454.2152.

