

Tips for a Successful Superintendent Search

MSBA 2023 Leadership Conference

Friday, January 13 – Roundtable – 8:00 am

STEP ONE:

HAVE A HIRING PLAN

- Determine your approach
- Establish a timeline
- Discuss stakeholder involvement
- Create hiring criteria and Leadership Profile

STEP TWO:

FOLLOW YOUR PLAN

- Don't get sidelined
- Trust the process
- Remember: all meetings related to the superintendent search must adhere to Minnesota's Open Meeting Law
- Remember: applicant names are private data and must be treated in accordance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act

STEP THREE:

HAVE A POST-HIRING PLAN

- Develop Board/Superintendent first-year goals and expectations
- Ensure stakeholders are part of the onboarding process via introductions and engagement
- Monitor plan activities throughout the first year and adjust as needed through providing communication and support



Sample Superintendent Search Timeline

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SEARCH ACTIVITY</u>
	Adopt a search timeline, determine stakeholder opportunities, discuss hiring criteria, search procedures, and marketing plan
	Conduct stakeholder online survey
	Approve hiring criteria and vacancy brochure
	Advertise vacancy, collect applications, respond to inquiries
	Review summary of stakeholder engagement activities, develop interview questions, and discuss interview procedures
	Application deadline
	Determine finalists and develop interview questions and procedures
	Conduct first round of interviews
	Conduct reference checks and hold second round of interviews
	Select lone finalist, determine contract parameters, negotiate employment
	Approve employment contract
July 1, 2023	New superintendent reports to work



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the school board's role in finding a new superintendent?

One of the school board's most important jobs is to find the right person to lead the district, and the school board is legally responsible for hiring a superintendent.

Are school districts required to have a superintendent?

Yes. All school districts that maintain a classified secondary school must employ a superintendent.

How many applicants will apply for the school district's superintendent vacancy?

The number of applicants varies from district to district. However, a school district only needs one superintendent, so the best approach is to wait until the application deadline passes before developing any expectations.

How should we handle an internal applicant?

Internal applicants must follow the same hiring process as external applicants.

When do the names of applicants become public?

The names of applicants for employment are private, but the names of finalists are public. "Finalist" means an individual who is selected to be interviewed by the school board. For additional information, refer to the Minnesota Data Practices Act.

What applicant information is public?

Applicants are free to disclose personal information about themselves at their own discretion. The school board, however, may only release the following information on applicants for a position: name (finalists only), veteran status, relevant test scores, rank on eligible list, job history, education and training, and work availability. All other information on applicants is private.

Can we share how many school district employees applied?

No. Due to data privacy issues, the school district cannot disclose that information. Also, summary information which may lead to personally identifiable data cannot be released.



Can the public review an applicant's file?

No. Applicants' files contain private data, and in order to protect the applicants' privacy rights, only the school board may review this information.

Will reference checks be conducted?

Conducting reference checks is an important part of the selection process; therefore, the school board should check the references of the finalists.

Will background checks be conducted?

A school district must request a criminal history background check from the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension on all individuals who are offered employment.

Must the school board's discussions and decision about the hiring of the superintendent be made in public?

Yes. The process of hiring a superintendent must occur at public board meetings.

May the public watch the interviews?

Yes. The interviews are open to the public; however, participation in the interviews is limited to the finalists and school board members. Because hiring the superintendent is the school board's responsibility, only board members have the right to review an applicant's private data. However, the school board may choose to gather public input via stakeholder surveys, focus groups, and/or forums.

Are the terms of the new superintendent's employment contract public?

Yes. A superintendent's contract, including salary and benefits, is public information.

How many years may the superintendent's contract cover?

A superintendent's contract cannot exceed three years from the date of employment. The superintendent's contract may be for a one-, two-, or three-year term as agreed upon between the school board and the superintendent.



MSBA Workshop: Hiring the Right Superintendent

One of the most important decisions a school board will ever make is to choose a new superintendent. As part of MSBA's commitment to board leadership, we offer a **Hiring the Right Superintendent** workshop to help school boards learn about the process for conducting a successful superintendent search. Workshop topics include:

- Whether to use a consultant
- How to work with a consultant
- Setting a timeline
- Developing qualifications and selection criteria
- Involving stakeholders and the media
- Dealing with internal candidates
- Legal pitfalls
- Interviewing Do's and Don'ts
- Deliberating in public
- Q & A re: superintendent search options and best practices

Each board member receives a booklet with sample vacancy announcement, application form, interview questions, reference check form, and other material board members can adapt for their district's specific needs.

The foundational knowledge this workshop provides helps school boards feel confident in the board's decision-making process regarding the superintendent search, as well as fully prepared to take their next steps. Cost is \$1,395 in-district (\$1,095 virtual) and includes all time and materials. This workshop is available only to MSBA members.

For more information please contact Barb Dorn, Director of Leadership Development and Executive Search, at 507-508-5501 (cell), or bdorn@mnmsba.org.

