

10 Considerations of a Successful Superintendent Search

As a school board member, one of the most important and difficult jobs is the hiring of a new superintendent. With an average tenure of less than five years, the likelihood you will be involved in a search for your district's next top leader is relatively high. Please consider this ten-point checklist of important criteria for a successful school district superintendent search.

1. TIME AND PURPOSE

Timing is important when searching for quality candidates. The school superintendent search season runs generally from October through March, but more important than time of year is taking the time to navigate the important steps of a search. A board of education that conducts a search with an articulated purpose of finding the absolute best match for their district with an eye on the future will serve their stakeholders best.

2. STAKEHOLDER INPUT

One function of the board of education is to represent the community at large, including students, employees, and patrons. Obtaining input from district stakeholders serves a dual purpose. This input provides the board of education with the necessary information they need to find the right candidate while simultaneously giving community members ownership in the process.

3. BROAD REACH

Too often, a board of education will sell themselves short by only conducting a localized search. It is important to recognize that quality candidates are found internally, regionally, and even nationally. Finding the perfect fit for your district begins by having the best candidate pool from which to choose.

4. MISSION DRIVEN

Do not underestimate the importance of stating the obvious. Your district's next superintendent must possess a mission for helping children learn and succeed. A good search process will identify those candidates who will put this mission above all else.

5. THOROUGH VETTING

Suffice to say, background checks have changed significantly in the past several years. This high tech high social media world in which we live makes it more important than ever to do a thorough background check. Utilizing a multi-step process helps to ensure your district does not encounter costly and embarrassing surprises.

6. SELECT AND COMMUNICATE

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7. ON-BOARDING

Take a deep breath. Too often a school board secures their next district leader then steps back without much consideration for the on-boarding process. In many ways, developing and implementing a new superintendent transition and entry plan are the most critical steps in the process. A miscommunication here will leave the new superintendent and board of education wondering what went wrong.

8. CONTINUED COMMUNICATION

Throughout the first year of employment the board and superintendent will establish what each hope will be a long-lasting relationship. To do this, they must communicate regularly and honestly. A third-party facilitator works well by keeping the lines of communication open and establishing norms for the relationship.

9. EXECUTIVE COACHING

Just because your new superintendent holds the highest position in the district does not mean they could not benefit from a coach. The best leaders keep learning. Just like teacher professional development, superintendent professional development is a great investment that pays dividends for the district.

10. BOARD-SUPERINTENDENT STRATEGIC PLANNING

A school district's strategic plan is a roadmap for the future. By collaboratively developing and implementing a strategic plan, all parties agree upon district goals so the work of achieving those goals can begin in earnest. The strategic plan then becomes the tool that is utilized for the goals of the superintendent evaluation.

Taken together, these steps will ensure your school board will not only find a leader right for your district, but it will also help secure that person's success, the success of the district and therefore the success of your students.

At EGL, our Leadership Transition Services will help your district find the absolute best superintendent, and then will work to ensure the success of your new leader by building a strong school board-superintendent relationship.

Long time Kearney School District Board President, Mark Kelly said of the process, *"EGL's Leadership Transition Services helped find the right candidate for our district and continues to work with our board members and new leader during this critical transition period. Their comprehensive leadership transition process is ensuring the Kearney tradition of excellence for our students will continue long into the future."*

For more information about the EGL process, please visit our website at:
<https://www.edgovlead.com/>