

Superintendent Search Service

The selection of a new superintendent is probably the most important decision that ever confronts a board of education. That is why the Illinois Association of School Boards has developed a service to help its member boards prepare themselves for that decision.

The Association is well equipped to search out qualified candidates. The staff is familiar with the many ways of reaching potential candidates around the state and the nation. In addition, IASB staff has many years of experience at helping individual school boards define their needs and in screening candidates who can exactly fill those needs.

When assisting a board of education in the selection of a superintendent, IASB recommends the following steps:

Step 1: The board and IASB consultant drafts material for a brochure announcing the vacancy and describing the position to potential applicants and placement centers. The material for this brochure should include:

- A description of the community – its socio-economic, industrial and cultural nature;
- A description of the school district, including its geographic location, size and board of education membership;
- A description of curriculum presently in use; number of current staff; and financial structure of the district – budget totals, bonded indebtedness, assessed valuation and tax rates;
- A description of the type of person desired, outlining professional training, experience and personal qualities;
- Some reference to salary;
- A timeline for the completion of the search process.

Step 2: The consultant meets with and counsels the board in completing the material for the brochure. Special emphasis should be placed on the development of a description of the candidate and his/her qualifications. This will be used as

a “blueprint” or specific guide in screening applicants.

Step 3: Applicants will be solicited for the position in accordance with the time-lines established by the board.

Step 4: The board, in consultation with the IASB consultant, approves a screening committee generally consisting of three persons.

Step 5: The screening committee meets to review all applicant materials against the board’s specified qualifications and narrows the field to some number of nominees – generally five or six – as directed by the board.

Step 6: A final meeting is held with the board of education during which the consultant provides:

- A complete review, including background information and professional preparation, of each nominee.
- Assistance to the board of education in the interview and selection process.
- Information to the board on any concern it may have about completion of the process. Some areas generally discussed are interview schedule, contract content and fringe benefits.

Step 7: The board reviews the credentials of the nominees submitted by the committee, and invites them for personal interviews. This interview should be conducted by the full board. Those responding to the invitation for an interview should be reimbursed by the board for expenses incurred.

Step 8: The board selects from those interviewed two or three who are definitely interested in the position and in whom the board has definite interest.

These people are invited back for a second interview.

Step 9: After the second interview, a committee of the board visits the community where their highest rated candidate is working or has most recently worked as a further means of evaluating their application.

Step 10: Based on the visitation, the board decides whether to offer a contract to this candidate.

AN ESTIMATE OF THE TIME INVOLVED – This procedure should not be hurried. Three or four months is a standard amount of time to conduct a thorough search.

IASB strives to conduct the search and selection process as efficiently and professionally as possible. Association involvement includes coordinating the entire process, collecting information on candidates and record keeping. This service is constantly monitored, evaluated and revised by IASB to strengthen its effectiveness.

Any district seeking a new superintendent owes it to its community to investigate this comprehensive service. There is never a charge for a board of education/IASB meeting to discuss the service in detail. Costs are incurred only if a contract is signed and are always kept to a minimum.

*The mission of the Illinois
Association of School Boards is
excellence in local school
governance and support
of public education*