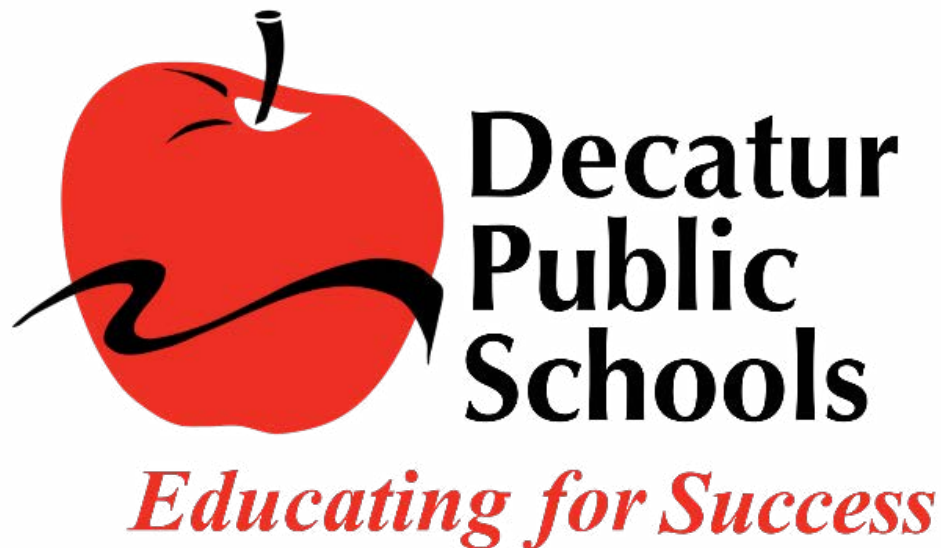

ANNOUNCEMENT OF VACANCY
Superintendent of Schools
Decatur Public School District 61



MISSION STATEMENT

Strategic Plan Mission:

The mission of Decatur Public Schools, the destination district of our community, is to unlock students' unique and limitless potential to achieve their personal aspirations as fully prepared, contributing citizens in a global society through learning experiences distinguished by:

- commitment to the whole person resulting in student growth and confidence
- relevant, innovative, personalized academic pathways that promote passion and pride
- a learning environment that fosters curiosity and the thirst for achievement and discovery
- a culture of diversity, adaptability, and resilience
- meaningful and lasting relationships
- extraordinary school and community connections

Decatur, Illinois
October 2025

ANNOUNCEMENT OF VACANCY

The Board of Education of Decatur Public School District 61, Decatur, Illinois, is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Superintendent of Schools. The Board wishes to select a superintendent who will begin work on July 1, 2026.

The Board of Education expects to offer a salary in the range of \$215,000 to \$270,000 and a competitive benefits package including sick leave, vacation days, personal days, health insurance, dental/vision insurance, life insurance, TRS/THIS contributions, professional membership dues, and travel expense reimbursements. It is anticipated that the total compensation package will be regionally competitive and based on successful experience and education. It is expected that the initial contract will be for a multi-year period, as authorized by Illinois statutes.

Central Office/Superintendent experience is preferred.

Residency in the district boundary is required.

APPLICANTS ARE REQUESTED NOT TO CONTACT BOARD MEMBERS.

A PROJECTED TIMELINE

Application Deadline:

January 2, 2026

Candidates Presented to Board:

January 2026

Board Interviews Candidates:

January/February 2026

New Superintendent Appointed:

January/February 2026

New Superintendent Begins:

July 1, 2026

THE SCREENING TEAM

A Screening Team from the Illinois Association of School Boards has been selected to assist the Board of Education in securing and screening applicants. The team will include:

James (Jim) W. Helton, Associate Executive Director, Executive Searches, Illinois Association of School Boards, Springfield, Illinois.

Carmen I. Ayala, Ph.D., Consultant, Executive Searches, Illinois Association of School Boards, Lombard, Illinois.

Timothy Buss, Consultant, Executive Searches, Illinois Association of School Boards, Springfield, Illinois.

Vic Zimmerman, Ed.D., Consultant, Executive Searches, Illinois Association of School Boards, Springfield, Illinois

This Professional Superintendent Search is being conducted by the
Illinois Association of School Boards, Carmen I Ayala, Ph.D.
Consultant, Executive Searches 630-629-3776, ext. 1243.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

IASB has an online application process and does not accept mailed, emailed, hand-delivered or faxed application packets. Please begin your application process at: <https://iasb.myrevelus.com>.

Applicants will need to establish a username and password. Applicants will be asked to give consent to a limited background inquiry. Completed responses to statements identified in this announcement will be required.

All applicants must apply online by 12:00 p.m. (CST) January 2, 2026, and upload the following **PDF documents** to receive consideration:

1. A **formal letter of application** indicating your desire to be a candidate for this position.
2. A **formal resume** that includes a summary of achievements in all education positions, educational vision, and goals, personal leadership philosophy and reasons for your interest in this position.
3. At least **three recent letters of reference dated within the last three years**.
4. **Copies of transcripts** from each college/university attended. **(Please redact/remove your social security number and birthdate before uploading any of these items).**
5. **Proof of qualification and licensure to be a superintendent in the state of Illinois** (copy of the administrative licensure with all related endorsements*) or other evidence showing qualification to be a superintendent in another state. **(Please redact/remove your birthdate before you upload this document).**

ALL UPLOADS MUST BE IN PDF FORMAT.

*Information on certification and licensure can be obtained by contacting the Illinois State Board of Education, Department of Educator Effectiveness, 100 North First Street, Springfield, Illinois 62777 or by visiting the ISBE website at www.isbe.net.



A service of the Illinois Association of School Boards

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE DISTRICT

Decatur Public Schools is located in Decatur, which is centrally located in the state of Illinois. District 61 provides a range of educational options, including magnet and Montessori programs with innovative schools and outstanding technology integration.

The dedicated staff and enriching after-school programs help support students and families in a diverse middle-class community.

Decatur is an extremely affordable place to live. The cost of living is about 19% below the national average. The median home value hovers around \$85,500–\$92,400, and rent averages around \$770–\$790, making homeownership and comfortable living within reach for many.

Decatur's population is notably diverse and approaching approximately 70,000. Many families, young professionals, and retirees call it home, and it scores particularly high for its inclusive racial and cultural mix.

The average commute is just 22 minutes, well below the U.S. average. While most residents drive, there is also a functional public transit system, including a downtown trolley and bus network.

Downtown Decatur features historic architecture like the Transfer House and a charming Merchant Street. At the same time, job opportunities thrive in sectors like agriculture, biomanufacturing, healthcare, and regional industry. The city is strong in production, manufacturing, healthcare, education, and public services along with good wages in roles like law enforcement and production supervision. With law enforcement, Decatur is fortunate to have the Macon-County Law Enforcement Training Center built through the Howard G. Buffett Foundation. This state-of-the-art facility is a state-certified Basic Law Enforcement and Basic Corrections training academy.

Decatur shines for those seeking an affordable, welcoming Midwestern community enriched with parks, arts, and a slower pace of life. Families, retirees, and newcomers often appreciate its friendly neighborhoods and civic spirit.

TYPE: PreK-12; 7,540 Students

CENTRAL OFFICE: 101 W. Cerro Gordo Street, Decatur, IL 62523

CENTRAL OFFICE PERSONNEL

- Superintendent
- Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning
- Director of Teaching & Learning – Elementary
- Director of Teaching & Learning - Secondary
- Assistant Superintendent of Support Services
- Director of Student Services
- Chief Operational Officer
- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Information Technology
- Director of Communications and Public Relations
- Director of Buildings & Grounds
- Executive Director of Innovative Programs & Strategic Planning
- Safety & Security Administrator
- School Health Services Administrator
- Director of Macon-Piatt Special Education - Part of a Cooperative (Co-op)
- Assistant Director of Macon-Piatt Special Education (2)

DISTRICT STAFF: 14 Principals and 1 Alternative Education Principal, 1 Macon-Piatt Special Alternative Education Principal, 23 Assistant Principals, 552 Teachers, 302 Teaching Assistants, 87 Support Personnel.

THE DISTRICT

CURRICULUM: Decatur Public School District 61 delivers a rigorous, aligned curriculum designed to prepare every student for success. Literacy achievement is a top priority, driven by the districtwide implementation of structured literacy and supported by Instructional Teaching Assistants in all K–3 classrooms to provide targeted, individualized learning. In mathematics, a cohesive K–12 curriculum ensures consistent skill development and smooth transitions from grade-to-grade. At the high school level, a strong emphasis on career exploration and college and career readiness connects students with real-world experiences and pathways that align with their interests, equipping them for college, careers, and lifelong success.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS:

DPS Extended Day program is a before and after school program offered at 11 sites across District 61. Families sign up for Extended Day have the flexibility to get students to school as early as 6:00 a.m. and pick up students as late as 5:30 p.m. This is a FREE program for our families that serve around 500 students.

- Provides students with nutrition, academic support, enrichment activities, and other supports proven to boost attendance, and discipline.

Prep Academy is a partnership between District 61 and Richland Community College (RCC), offering selected DPS students the opportunity to earn their high school diploma AND an associate's degree from RCC upon completion of the four-year program during high school. The Prep Academy is tuition free for all students.

InspirED Futures Senior Internship Program (50+ local business partners): This is the 11th year for the InspirEd Futures Internship. Students have a unique opportunity to transition from a classroom to a professional environment by participating in this 12-week program. The goal of the InspirEd Futures program is to provide internship opportunities to student interns with real-life applications and hands-on learning.

Career Signing Day (6th year): Highlights students in our paid career pathway programs with local businesses (DMH, St. Mary's, ADM Trucking, ADM Electrical, Caterpillar Inc., Land of Lincoln Credit Union, Align Production Systems, Building Construction Trades) annually in May.

Career & College Pathway Endorsements with State of Illinois: 4 CTE endorsements for students (CNA, Digital Business, Welding, and Agriculture).

Teacher Prep Program at EHS and MHS is an Education Pathway for DPS high schools' students interested in education. The course provides classroom coursework from EdRising, plus education field exploration.

Financial Literacy: Partnerships with local financial institutions to prepare students for money management post high school.

Career exposure provides opportunities in various industries such as Manufacturing, Banking, and Healthcare.

Paid Co-Op Opportunities: Workforce opportunities for students to build skills in preparation for long-term careers. DPS currently offers paid co-ops through ADM Trucking, Caterpillar, Land of Lincoln Credit Union, Memorial Hospital, St. Mary's Hospital, Align Systems, and DPS IT and Maintenance departments.

Skilled Trades: Pre-apprenticeship program that successfully prepares students to transition to labor registered apprenticeships in the trades post-graduation.

Dual Enrollment: Partnership with Richland Community College that allows DPS to offer dual credit classes at the high schools, giving students access to college credit.

Building Construction Trades Course: This is a partnership with the North America's Building Trade's Union. DPS junior and senior students experience a comprehensive pre-apprenticeship readiness program with a goal of allowing students to gain access to Building Trades' registered programs.

Workforce Prep Course: Partnership with EnRICH at Richland Community College that prepares students to go straight to the workforce by learning essential skills.

Milligan Academy is a ROE Alternative Education program that services DPS and County students from grades 6th through 12th grades.

Option 3 is a ROE program designed to provide students in grades 6th – 12th an unique opportunity to focus on credit recovery and pave their way toward graduation.

Futures Program is a ROE program that serves “at risk” high school students (9-12) by providing an opportunity for education and guidance through various school-based and community-based programs. Our students have the opportunity to earn their diplomas in an accelerated manner.

Heartland Technical Academy is a program geared towards CTE (Career & Technical Education) 9th – 12th grades (AM & PM Sessions).

Boys & Girls Club of IL is an afterschool program that serves students from the Decatur and Macon County communities.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Macon-Piatt Special Education – Part of a Cooperative (Co-op)
620 E. Garfield Avenue
Decatur, IL 62526

Pershing Early Learning Center (Pre-K)

Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 11:40 a.m. and 12:50 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Early Childhood Special Education (significant developmental delays)

Baum Elementary School (K-6)

Hours: 7:40 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Life Skills (moderately disabled; requiring alternative curriculum; DLM eligible)

Montessori Academy for Peace (PreK-8)

Hours: 9:15 a.m. – 3:35 p.m.
AM PreK 9:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. and PM PreK 1:05 p.m. – 3:35 p.m.
Hearing Impaired (requiring more than 20% hearing impaired itinerant services)
Life Skills (moderately disabled; requiring alternative curriculum; DLM eligible – only K-6)

Hope Academy (K-6)

Hours: 8:25 a.m. – 2:45 p.m. (Half day for Essential Skills)
Essential Skills (severe/multiple impairments)
Life Skills (moderately disabled; requiring alternative curriculum; DLM eligible)

Stephen Decatur Middle School (7-8)

Hours: 9:15 a.m. – 3:35 p.m.
Life Skills (moderately disabled; requiring alternative curriculum; DLM eligible)
Essential Skills (severe/multiple impairments)
Social Emotional Development (social/emotional deficits primary focus)

Eisenhower High School (9-12)

Hours: 8:10 a.m. – 2:55 p.m.
Life Skills (moderately disabled; requiring alternative curriculum; DLM eligible)
Social Emotional Development (social/emotional deficits primary focus)

MacArthur High School (9-12)

Hours: 8:10 a.m. – 2:55 p.m.

Life Skills (moderately disabled; requiring alternative curriculum; DLM eligible)

Essential Skills (severe/multiple impairments)

Social Emotional Development (social/emotional deficits primary focus)

Social Emotional Learning Academy (SELA, K-12)

Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 1:25 p.m.

SELA Program (alternative education for students with IEPs only that are at risk for expulsion or behavioral issues that significantly impact the safety of themselves or others)

FACILITIES

- Pershing Early Learning Center: PreK AM & PM Sessions & Full Day Sessions
- Baum Elementary School: K – 6th grades
- Franklin Grove Elementary School: K – 6th grades
- Muffley Elementary School: K – 6th grades
- Parsons Elementary School: K – 6th grades
- South Shores Elementary School: K – 6th grades
- Dennis Lab School: K – 8th grades
- Ellsworth Dansby Jr. Magnet School: K – 8th grades
- Hope Academy: K – 8th grades
- Johns Hill Magnet School: K – 8th grades
- Montessori Academy for Peace: PreK (AM & PM Sessions) – 8th grades
- Stephen Decatur Middle School: 7 – 8th grades
- Eisenhower High School: 9 – 12th grades
- MacArthur High School: 9 – 12th grades
- Decatur Public Schools Alternative Education Program: K – 12th grades

FACILITY – MACON-PIATT SPECIAL EDUCATION DISTRICT

- Social Emotional Learning Academy (SELA – Alternative Education Program): K-12

TRANSPORTATION

- Alltown Bus Company
- City of Decatur Public Transit
- High School Activity Buses

FOOD SERVICE

- Aramark Food Service

MEMBER OF: Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) and Large Unit District Association (LUDA).

DISTRICT WEB SITE: www.dps61.org

MEDICAL

- Memorial Hospital – former name Decatur Memorial Hospital (DMH)
- St. Mary's Hospital – HSHS
- Numerous same-day care medical facilities
- Crossings Healthcare
- Heritage Behavioral Center

CULTURAL

The District's demographics are as follows:

- 49.7% Black
- 26.6 % White
- 16% 2 Races
- 2.2% Unknown
- 4.4% Hispanic
- 0.8% Asian
- 0.3% American-Indian

Decatur's population is notably diverse with a population approaching approximately 70,000. Many families, young professionals, and retirees call it home, and it scores particularly high for its inclusive racial and cultural mix.

RECREATION

Lake Decatur offers 22 miles of shoreline for boating, fishing, and outdoor fun. The city's parks, including Overlook Adventure Park, Rock Springs, and the Scovill Zoo, offer activities year-round. Cultural life flourishes at venues like the Devon Lakeshore Amphitheater, the Decatur Municipal Band, and the Madden Arts Center.

Below is a list of a few recreational family venues in the City of Decatur:

- The Devon Lakeshore Amphitheater
- Splash Cove Water Park
- Scovill Zoo
- The Decatur Park District
- AMC Classic Theater
- The Decatur Boat Club
- Lake Decatur
- Rock Springs
- Decatur Walking and Bike Trails
- YMCA
- The Decatur Arts Council
- Planet Fitness
- The Boys & Girls Club of Decatur

PLACES OF WORSHIP

There are a variety of places to worship throughout the Decatur community with a variety of diverse religions.

RETAIL

- Downtown Decatur
- Walmart
- Target
- Small Businesses throughout the City
- Farm & Fleet

FRATERNAL AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- United Way
- NAACP
- Greater Decatur Chamber of Commerce
- Economic Development
- Several Kiwanis Clubs
- Rotary Club 180
- Various fraternities and sororities
- Various social and membership clubs

COLLEGES

- Millikin University
- Richland Community College

INDUSTRY

- ADM – Archer Daniels Midland
- Caterpillar Inc.
- Mueller Company
- The Kelly Group (construction & metal fabrication)
- Primient formerly known as A.E. Staley Manufacturing
- Ameren IL
- Norfolk Southern
- Bodine Electric
- A-Lert Construction Service
- McLeod Express (trucking)
- Fuyao Glass America
- TCR Systems (agriculture & sheet metal industries)
- T/CCI Manufacturing (compressor technology)
- Parke Warehouses
- Tillamook (dairy products)

IDEAL CANDIDATE

Candidates will be evaluated on their professional merits and successful experience that demonstrates a good match for the district, with emphasis on the following, specified by the Board of Education. The Superintendent of our district should be an educational leader who:

- Develops and works cooperatively/effectively with BOARD OF EDUCATION.
- Fosters a PROFESSIONAL CULTURE FOR EDUCATORS focused on engagement, accountability, and empowerment.
- Has excellent written and verbal COMMUNICATION SKILLS/is genuinely COLLABORATIVE.
- Facilitates CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT through data/program analysis and innovation.
- Develops and supports rigorous, clear systems for CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, and ASSESSMENT.
- Ensures an INCLUSIVE, SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT.

The Decatur community is seeking a transformational superintendent — a leader who is visible, communicative, relational, and deeply committed to staying long-term. This leader must have teaching and administrative/superintendent experience, success in diverse/urban contexts, and the ability to manage complex challenges such as declining enrollment, staffing shortages, academic improvement, facilities, and governance.

At the same time, the superintendent must champion DPS's strengths — its innovative programs, dedicated staff, cultural diversity, and supportive community — to reshape the district's narrative, build pride, and inspire hope. The right superintendent will not only lead but also become the face of a new chapter for Decatur Public Schools.

Applicants will be required to provide responses to the following online application statements:

1. Describe your experience in curriculum development and instructional implementation.
2. Describe your experience in school finance and budgeting.
3. Describe your experience in developing and monitoring goals for school improvement.
4. Describe your experience in building and sustaining productive relationships with stakeholders (board, staff, students, parents and community members).
5. Describe your experiences in working with a diverse population (socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, etc.).
6. Having read the ideal candidate section of the announcement of vacancy, why do you feel you are a match for this district?

Resident of Decatur Public Schools is required.

Teaching/administrative/superintendent experience preferred.

APPLICANTS ARE REQUESTED NOT TO CONTACT BOARD MEMBERS.

FINANCIAL DATA

EAV \$ 895,857,453
Bonds Outstanding \$ 115,180,000
Total Budget Revenue..... \$ 114,094,863

TAX RATE

Education 2.5700
Operations & Maintenance 0.5000
Transportation 0.2000
Working Cash..... 0.0500
I.M.R.F..... 0.2280
Tort Immunity..... 0.3600
Bond & Interest 0.5000
Fire Prevention 0.0500
Social Security 0.5000
Special Education 0.0400
Life Safety 0.0500
TOTAL 4.7890

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Decatur Public School District 61 Board of Education is comprised of citizens dedicated to providing the best education possible for every student it serves. Board members establish sound written policies and expect the superintendent to function as the chief executive officer in implementing those policies.

Name..... Years

Mr. Bill Clevenger, President 3

Mr. Will Wetzel, Vice President 2

Mr. Mark Reynolds, Board Member..... 2

Mr. Kevin Hale, Board Member Elected 4/1/25, Sworn in 5/7/25

Mr. Devon Joyner, Board Member Elected 4/1/25, Sworn in 5/7/25

Dr. Karen Lauritzen, Board Member Elected 4/1/25, Sworn in 5/7/25

Mrs. Christina Tyus, Board Member Elected 4/1/25, Sworn in 5/7/25

APPLICANTS ARE REQUESTED NOT TO CONTACT BOARD MEMBERS.

**Decatur Public School District 61 is an equal opportunity
employer and the Illinois Association of School Boards is
an equal opportunity employment search agency.**

**This Professional
Superintendent Search
is conducted by the**

