
Announcement of Vacancy
Superintendent of Schools
Springfield SD 186



OUR MISSION

The District, in collaboration with families and community, shall develop in all students the knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes to empower them to be responsible life-long learners and citizens in an ever-changing world. This will be accomplished in a climate that promotes high expectations, strives to meet individual needs, and values diversity.

October 2025

ANNOUNCEMENT OF VACANCY

A PROJECTED TIMELINE

THE SCREENING TEAM

The Board of Education of Springfield SD 186, Springfield, 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 expects to offer a salary in the range of \$200,000 and \$250,000 and a competitive benefits package including health insurance, dental/vision insurance, life insurance, board paid TRS, board paid THIS, sick leave, vacation days, and professional dues. It is anticipated that the total compensation package will be 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.

Application Deadline:
December 5, 2025

Candidates Presented to Board:
Late November/Early December

Board Interviews Candidates:
Mid-December

New Superintendent Appointed:
January 2026

New Superintendent Begins:
July 1, 2026

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

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

Matt Brue, Consultant, Executive Searches, Illinois Association of School Boards, Springfield, Illinois.

This Professional Superintendent Search is being conducted by the
Illinois Association of School Boards, James (Jim) W. Helton
Associate Executive Director, Executive Searches, (217) 528-9688, ext. 1102.

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 Noon (CST) December 5, 2025 and upload the following 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 administrative 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 3 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).

*Information on certification and licensure can be obtained by contacting the Illinois State Board of Education, Division of Professional Preparation, 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

LOCATION — As the capital of Illinois, Springfield offers a unique blend of a dynamic professional environment with the warmth and accessibility of a mid-sized community of approximately 115,000 people. It is the sixth largest city in Illinois and home to the Illinois State Capitol. Springfield serves as the center of state government, making it a hub for leadership, policy, and civic engagement.

Springfield combines rich history with modern amenities. It is internationally recognized as the home of Abraham Lincoln, with world-class museums, historic landmarks, and cultural institutions that celebrate his legacy. Beyond its historic significance, Springfield offers excellent schools, diverse neighborhoods, a thriving healthcare sector, and convenient access to major metropolitan areas such as Chicago, St. Louis, and Indianapolis.

Springfield presents a unique “big small town” atmosphere that values connection, collaboration, and growth. With a cost of living well below national averages, a range of recreational opportunities, including beautiful parks, Lake Springfield, an active arts and dining scene, and diverse cultural experiences, Springfield provides an exceptional environment to live, work, lead, and thrive.

TYPE — PreK-12; 12,818 Students.

OFFICE — 3603 Fiat Avenue, Springfield, IL 62703.

STAFF — 32 Principals, 23 Assistant Principals, 1,126 Teachers, 910 Support Personnel.

CENTRAL OFFICE PERSONNEL — Superintendent

Cabinet Members: Assistant Superintendent of Teaching, Learning, and School Culture, Assistant Superintendent of Family, Community & School Leadership, Executive Director of Human Resources, Executive Director of Student Support Services, Executive Director of School Support, Director of College & Career Readiness, Director of Operations & Maintenance, Director of Business Services, Director of Communications, Public Relations, Media, and Marketing, Director of Project Management & Executive Operations, Chief of Federal Funds and Grant Writing, Assistant Director of Human Resources, Manager of Technology Services

The majority of Central Office staff were consolidated two years ago into the district’s new Administrative Center, 3063 Fiat Avenue. This location is home to the Superintendent’s Office, Office of the Board of Education, Business Services, Human Resources, Teaching and Learning Department, Technology Department, Student Support Services, and the Office of School Support. Four satellite offices are utilized for additional staff in Student Support Services, the Operations and Maintenance Department, Food Services, the Technology Department, the Instructional Resource Center, and the district’s school-based child care program, Project SCOPE.

CURRICULUM — Springfield Public School District 186 is committed to ensuring every student graduates ready for college, career, and life. At the center of this work is AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), a proven framework that emphasizes culture, leadership, instruction, systems, and equity. Guided by our Theory of Action, district leaders work together to support and build capacity among administrators and staff, maintain clear and high expectations, and align efforts in service of every student, family, and school community. This focus ensures all students have equitable access to rigorous learning opportunities and the tools they need to be empowered, successful, and future-ready.

Our Teaching and Learning Professional Learning Community (PLC) drives this mission forward with a vision of dramatic growth and achievement for every student in Springfield Public Schools. Through leadership, coaching, and supervision, the curriculum team works to strengthen principals and building leaders across the district. By setting ambitious goals, engaging in regular school visits, coaching, data inquiry cycles, and meaningful family engagement, the department fosters instructional excellence and professional growth. This collaborative and intentional approach ensures that high-quality teaching and learning are at the core of every classroom, supporting the district's mission to prepare students for a dynamic and changing world.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS —

Alternative Schools

- Douglas (middle and high school levels), <https://www.sps186.org/o/douglas-prep>
- Springfield Learning Academy (high school level), <https://www.sps186.org/o/sla>

Special Needs -

Lee School (special needs programming focusing on functional academics and life skills development) <https://www.sps186.org/o/lee>

Preschool - Early Learning Center, <https://www.sps186.org/o/elc>

Parents as Teachers - <https://www.sps186.org/page/parents-as-teachers>

Project SEARCH - <https://www.sps186.org/page/project-search>

Gifted Programs

- Iles School (elementary and middle school levels & International Baccalaureate World School), <https://www.sps186.org/o/elc>
- Franklin Middle School (school within a school), <https://www.sps186.org/o/franklin>

Technology Magnet - Lincoln Magnet School, <https://www.sps186.org/o/lincoln-magnet>

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) - <https://www.sps186.org/page/avid>

Career and Technical Education (CTE) - <https://www.sps186.org/page/career-and-technical-education>

Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Credit Courses - <https://www.sps186.org/page/secondary-schools-and-programs>

Braided Behavior Support Systems - <https://www.sps186.org/page/braided-behavior-support-systems>

School-Based Childcare - Project SCOPE, <https://www.sps186.org/page/scope>

English Language Learners - <https://www.sps186.org/page/english-language-learners>

Family and Community Engagement (F.A.C.E.) - <https://www.sps186.org/page/family-and-community-engagement>

SPECIAL SERVICES — District 186's Student Support Services Department's mission is to provide support for the success of every student in District 186 through a continuum of services for students with disabilities from preschool, age three, through high school graduation. Specialized services are also provided for limited English proficient students, students with health needs, and students with social emotional needs. The department cultivates a learning community that recognizes every student is a general education student first and foremost. Our inclusive practices instructional environment aspires to empower students with diverse learning needs to reach their full potential.

FACILITIES — In November 2018, Sangamon County residents passed the County School Facility Sales Tax, imposing a 1% sales tax on qualifying retail purchases throughout the county. The tax provides a sustainable funding source for school infrastructure projects. Springfield Public Schools receives approximately 48.5% of the revenue generated by this tax, which is being used to support the Our Schools Our Future Facilities Master Plan: <https://www.sps186.org/o/sps/page/our-schools-our-future>.

Buildings and Grades Housed in Each:

1 Pre-K

20 Elementary Schools, Grades K-5

1 Grades 1-8 Magnet School

5 Middle Schools, Grades 6-8

3 High Schools, Grades 9-12

1 Middle School Alternative Program, Grades 6-8

2 High School Alternative Programs, Grades 9-12

Additionally, one of our elementary buildings, Lee School <https://www.sps186.org/o/lee>, houses two different programs; a regular education program for students in grades K-5 and a special education program for students aged 5-22, which focuses on functional academics with an emphasis on life skill development.

TRANSPORTATION — District 186 provides comprehensive transportation services through a contract with First Student. To enhance communication and convenience for families, District 186 utilizes the FirstView app, which allows parents and guardians to track bus locations in real-time, receive notifications, and access route information. Additionally, we provide families with a dedicated transportation hotline for assistance and inquiries.

FOOD SERVICE — District 186 Food Services offers free breakfast and lunch district-wide through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), eliminating the need for individual free or reduced lunch applications. We also offer a summer meal program for children under the age of 18 throughout the community.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS — Springfield Public Schools is proud to collaborate with a wide range of community partners who share our commitment to student success and community growth. Through these partnerships, we are able to expand learning opportunities, support student well-being, and connect classrooms to real-world experiences. With the support of our community partners, a number of which are listed below, we create pathways that prepare students for college, careers, and active citizenship while strengthening the bonds between our schools and the greater Springfield community.

- The Boys and Girls Club
- City of Springfield
- Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln
- Compass for Kids
- Lincoln Land Community College
- Memorial Health
- NAACP
- Southern Illinois University School of Medicine
- Springfield Park District
- Springfield Public Schools Foundation
- Springfield Urban League
- The Outlet
- University of Illinois Springfield
- YMCA

THE COMMUNITY

DISTRICT WEBSITE — <https://www.ssps186.org>

MEMBER OF — District 186 is a member of numerous professional and community organizations, including: Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Business Officials, Illinois Association of School Administrators, Large Unit District Association, Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, and the Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance.

MEDICAL — Springfield's medical district is recognized globally for its advanced healthcare systems and comprehensive care. Anchored by two major hospitals, HSHS St. John's Hospital and Springfield Memorial Hospital, the city is also home to the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, Springfield Clinic (a leading multi-specialty practice), and the state-operated Andrew McFarland Mental Health Center.

This robust network of hospitals, clinics, wellness centers, and specialty providers ensures residents access to world-class care and attracts patients from across the nation and beyond. The majority of these facilities are located within the Mid-Illinois Medical District, a concentrated square-mile area just north of downtown that fosters collaboration, innovation, and growth in healthcare delivery.

Springfield's extensive healthcare community offers valuable partnerships that expand opportunities for District 186 students. In collaboration with Springfield Memorial Health, the district offers Project SEARCH, a unique transition-to-work program designed for young adults with intellectual, developmental, and other disabilities who need an intensive year of career development, internship experience, and support to reach their goals. In partnership with Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, District 186 also participates in the Physician Pipeline Preparatory Program (P4).

This four-year, after-school curriculum introduces students interested in medicine to medical school-style coursework, mentoring, and hands-on learning. Additionally, the Health and Science Academy at Southeast High School provides students interested in medicine, health, and science careers opportunities to explore and develop their skills.

RECREATION — Springfield offers an exceptional quality of life with a wide range of family-friendly attractions and year-round activities. From the Route 66 drive-in theater, Henson Robinson Zoo, and Knights Action Park to nationally significant Abraham Lincoln and Route 66 historic sites, the community blends recreation with cultural depth. Seasonal events, such as the Lincoln Half Marathon, the Illinois State Fair, and downtown concerts and festivals, add vibrancy and provide opportunities for connection across generations.

Outdoor recreation is at the heart of the Springfield lifestyle. Families enjoy boating on Lake Springfield, hiking at Lincoln Memorial Gardens, or camping at nearby state parks. The Springfield Muni outdoor amphitheater, farmers markets, art fairs, and music festivals create a lively cultural scene, while country clubs, local parks, and recreational leagues ensure abundant opportunities for sports, wellness, and community engagement.

The region's newest addition, a state-of-the-art sports park, further enhances these opportunities by providing premier fields, indoor and outdoor facilities for a variety of sports and other activities. Through a partnership with the Springfield Public Schools, the sports park also expands access for district athletes, strengthening both community connections and opportunities for youth development.

PLACES OF WORSHIP — Springfield offers a diverse and welcoming faith community, reflecting a broad range of traditions and cultures. The city is home to numerous places of worship, including long-established Christian congregations across denominations. Vibrant Catholic parishes, thriving Protestant churches, and historic African

American churches play a central role in our community. Springfield is also enriched by Jewish, Muslim, Greek Orthodox, Buddhist, Hindu, and other faith communities, which offer opportunities for spiritual connection, interfaith dialogue, and cultural engagement. This breadth of worship options reflects the city's inclusive character and provides residents abundant opportunities to practice their faith and build community.

Beyond spiritual life, Springfield's faith community actively partners with the Springfield Public Schools through initiatives such as those led by the Faith Coalition for the Common Good and Catholic Charities, among others.

CULTURAL — Springfield offers a cultural landscape that blends distinguished heritage with a dynamic arts community. As the hometown of Abraham Lincoln, the city features nationally recognized historic sites and museums, including the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, which draws visitors from around the world. The Illinois State Museum, Dana-Thomas House designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, and a wide range of local galleries and cultural institutions provide opportunities to experience world-class history, architecture, and art close to home.

Beyond its historic legacy, Springfield supports a thriving performing arts scene with the Hoogland Center for the Arts, UIS Performing Arts Center, Springfield Muni Opera, and the Illinois Symphony Orchestra. Seasonal festivals, live music venues, and local theaters add to the city's energy and sense of community. Together, these cultural experiences create a well-rounded and engaging environment for professionals and their families, offering both unique local character and access to nationally significant institutions.

RETAIL — Springfield offers a convenient retail and lifestyle environment. White Oaks Mall, located in one of Springfield's two major shopping corridors, is complemented by other major retailers in the area such as Scheels, Target, and Sam's Club for everyday essentials. Distinctive boutiques, antiques, and specialty shops in the historic downtown and neighborhoods add local charm and variety. These retail hubs are enhanced by a wide selection of dining options, ranging from nationally recognized restaurants to chef-driven local favorites, as well as a variety of entertainment venues that include movie theaters, live music spaces, and family attractions.

District 186 collaborates with the Simon Property Group, owners of White Oaks Mall, to provide space for the Springfield Learning Academy, an alternative high school designed to meet the needs of the non-traditional and truant students from the three Springfield public high schools.

FRATERNAL AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS — Springfield has a long tradition of civic engagement and professional networking, offering a range of organizations that foster leadership, service, and connection. The city is home to active chapters of Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, and other service clubs, as well as Masonic and fraternal lodges with deep community roots. A strong network of professional associations supports advancement across industries, including business, healthcare, education, law, and government. Groups including the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Springfield, the Springfield Sangamon Growth Alliance, American Association of University Women, and numerous industry-specific organizations provide opportunities to build relationships, engage in community leadership, and contribute to the region's continued growth.

The Springfield Public Schools Foundation partners with District 186 to strengthen the district, cultivate community support, and fund innovative programs that address the evolving needs of students and educators. Through a variety of grants to teachers and students, the Foundation helps create meaningful opportunities that enhance learning across District 186.

COLLEGES — Springfield is home to a strong network of higher education institutions that serve as anchors for talent, innovation, and community partnerships. The University of Illinois Springfield (UIS) offers more than 100 undergraduate and graduate programs, including AACSB-accredited business degrees, nationally recognized online programs, and a culture of civic leadership. UIS also partners with Springfield Public Schools on an innovative teacher pipeline program, preparing and placing new educators directly into local classrooms to strengthen the region's education workforce. Adjacent to UIS, Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) provides accessible and affordable education with transfer programs, workforce training, and specialized certificates that prepare students for in-demand careers. Springfield is also home to the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, a nationally recognized leader in medical education, research, and clinical care, which partners closely with Springfield's major healthcare systems. Together, these institutions create a robust talent pipeline and provide opportunities for collaboration across education, healthcare, and industry.

INDUSTRY — Springfield's economy is anchored by a strong public sector presence, with the State of Illinois serving as the city's largest employer with 17,800 staff. Healthcare is another cornerstone, with Memorial Health System, Hospital Sisters Health System, and Springfield Clinic together employing more than 12,000 professionals.

Springfield Public Schools District 186 ranks as the fifth-largest employer with more than 2,100 dedicated professionals. Higher education further strengthens the region, with UIS, LLCC, and SIU School of Medicine collectively employing nearly 3,800 faculty and staff. Financial services and a growing professional services sector contribute to the city's economic vitality. Springfield also benefits from advanced manufacturing, construction, agriculture, and logistics operations that connect the city to regional and national markets.

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:

- Ensures an INCLUSIVE, SAFE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT.
- Fosters a PROFESSIONAL CULTURE FOR EDUCATORS focused on engagement, accountability, and empowerment.
- Has excellent written and verbal COMMUNICATION SKILLS/is genuinely COLLABORATIVE.
- Has FINANCE/BUDGET expertise.
- Promotes EQUITY and advances CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS.
- Develops and works cooperatively/effectively with BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Springfield Public Schools is seeking a Superintendent who demonstrates **fiscal responsibility, integrity, and strong leadership**. The ideal candidate will be a **visible and supportive leader** who values and uplifts staff, prioritizes **student safety and discipline**, and drives **academic rigor, equity, and community engagement**.

*“We are looking for a visionary who can bring **fresh ideas and innovative practices** while building trust across all stakeholders.”*

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?

FINANCIAL DATA

EAV	\$ 2,486,406,724
Bonds Outstanding	\$ 84,680,000
Total Budget Revenue	\$ 338,038,411

TAX RATE —

Education	3.44490
Operations & Maintenance	0.64920
Transportation.....	0.26370
Working Cash.....	0.00000
I.M.R.F	0.13970
Tort Immunity.....	0.14690
Bond & Interest	0.38120
Social Security.....	0.14830
Special Education	0.14880
TOTAL	5.35820

**THE BOARD OF
EDUCATION**

The Springfield SD 186 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

Dr. Erica Austin, President.....	4
Buffy Lael-Wolf, Vice President	4
Kristin Barnett, Member.....	4 months
Sarah Blissett, Member	4
Ken Gilmore, Member	2
Debra Iams, Member	2
Micah Miller, Member	6

APPLICANTS ARE REQUESTED NOT TO CONTACT BOARD MEMBERS.

**Springfield SD 186 is an equal opportunity employer
and the Illinois Association of School Boards is an
equal opportunity employment search agency.**

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Superintendent Search
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