



**School Board Special Meeting**  
**Thursday, April 22, 2021; 5:00 PM**  
**Virtual**

**I. Determination of Quorum and Call to Order**

**II. Discussion**

- A. Superintendent Search: Board Training, Interview Information, and Potential Interview Questions for Candidates

**Description:** School Exec Connect representatives will provide information and training to the Board on items related to search protocols, questions and questioning techniques, interviewing of candidates, and other matters related to the superintendent search process. School Exec Connect representatives will also present potential interview questions to ask the candidates.

**Presenter(s):** School Exec Connect Representatives and Board Governance Committee

**III. Action**

- A. Superintendent Search: Interview Questions for Candidates

**Description:** Representatives from School Exec Connect will present potential interview questions for the candidates.

**Presenter(s):** School Exec Connect Representatives and Board Governance Committee

**Recommendation:** Approve the proposed interview questions, to be provided in advance to the superintendent candidates

**IV. Board Chair Updates**



**Board Meeting Date:** 4/22/2021 Special Meeting

**TITLE:** Superintendent Search – Board Training, Information, and Potential Interview Questions for Candidates

**TYPE:** Discussion

**PRESENTER(S):** School Exec Connect representatives; Governance Committee

**BACKGROUND:** School Exec Connect representatives will provide information and training to the Board on items related to search protocols, questions and questioning techniques, interviewing of candidates, and other matters related to the superintendent search process. School Exec Connect representatives will also present potential interview questions to ask the superintendent candidates.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Learn about interview protocols, process, and potential interview questions.

**PRIMARY ISSUE(S) TO CONSIDER:** Interview protocols, process, and potential interview questions to be used as part of the interviews.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. SEC Report

## **Edina Public Schools Superintendent Search Final Report**

Dear School Board Members:

On April 26, 2021, we will be presenting \_\_\_\_ outstanding candidates for you to consider in your search for the new superintendent of the Edina Public Schools.

These candidates, in our judgment, best meet the leadership attributes and criteria determined by the School Board. The candidates have tentatively been scheduled for interviews on Tuesday, April 27 and Wednesday, April 28. The following additional information will be presented to you on April 26th, after the Board has approved the field of candidates to be interviewed:

- Candidate Application Form
- Letter of Application
- By Reference Letters
- Resume
- Proof of Licensure
- Transcripts

At the end of the search process, we ask that you return all files with the exception of the file of the candidate you have chosen as your new superintendent.

Enclosed with this report are some suggested questions for you to consider. These are questions we have created as being related to the responsibilities of the Superintendent. Other questions were written because of individual interviews, focus group comments and input from the survey. We appreciate your support in this process.

We will spend time at the Board workshop reviewing the interview process for the next two weeks, and everyone's role and responsibilities. Information is included in this report for your review.

You are entering the phase of the search that requires the Board's due diligence. We appreciate the considerable effort that you will put forth in the coming weeks for the good of your community. We have enjoyed teaming with you in the search for your next leader of the Edina Public Schools.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Dragseth    David Clough    Patty Phillips    Lisa Anderson

CANDIDATE INFORMATION (To be presented on April 26)  
A review of the search process will also be presented.

## **THE FIRST INTERVIEW**

1. The next stage of the search process is conducting the first set of Board interviews of the candidates. The purpose of these interviews is to determine which candidates (ideally two or three candidates) will be selected to move forward in the process and to begin forming your first impression of candidates who are excellent for your district.

Dates, location, and any other arrangements for the interviews have been tentatively made and will be confirmed. The Board will need to determine whether this first interview will be virtual or in-person with appropriate distancing. One of us from the search team will greet each candidate and stay with them until their interview.

While interviewing candidates, keep in mind the desired characteristics, skills, and qualifications outlined in the New Superintendent Profile.

### **Profile of the Desired New Superintendent**

**The new superintendent should be a person who:**

- **Is an inspiring visionary who will confidently lead the implementation of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan and embrace Edina's tradition of academic excellence while boldly facilitating innovative initiatives that will propel a great school district to higher levels of achievement for all students.**
- **Is committed to excellence in academics, with an equitable lens, closing opportunity and achievement gaps and maximizing the potential of each student while simultaneously supporting the whole child's physical, social and emotional health from birth to graduation.**
- **Is a strong advocate for equity, demonstrates cultural competence and experience working with culturally and racially diverse populations, fosters a school culture that is motivating, inclusive, respectful and responsive while providing equitable opportunities for all and recruits, hires and retains quality staff who reflect the diversity of our students.**
- **Is an instructional leader, committed to continuous improvement who will facilitate development of strong curriculum and instructional programs, foster job embedded professional development that supports district wide implementation of strategic initiatives like the comprehensive PreK-12 Literacy Plan that meets 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning criteria and District equity work.**
- **Focuses on effective communication; listens actively, speaks and writes with a high degree of skill, employs a wide variety of media, understanding the need to reach wider audiences and provides strategic, accurate and timely information to the staff and community.**

- **Works well with the Board in a shared accountability and leadership role while continuing to share their vision for the direction of the District.**
- **Is a visible, trusted, transparent and approachable spokesperson and cheerleader for Edina Public Schools who effectively markets the District and reaches out to staff, students, parents and community to build mutually beneficial, trusting partnerships so that the District is the top educational choice for students and families.**
- **Displays fiscal savvy and discipline and understands legal matters affecting the District.**
- **Is a supportive team builder who recruits, hires and retains quality staff who reflect the diversity of our students, creates a trusting environment that brings out the best in others and interacts with all stakeholders in a manner that makes them feel valued, heard and respected.**
- **Is a decisive, yet collaborative consensus builder who listens with an open mind, uses data and input from those with multiple or diverse perspectives, and is able to synthesize, compromise and craft a shared vision finding common ground before taking action, focusing on what unites people rather than what divides them.**
- **Support the value of student engagement in strong athletic, activity and fine arts programs for the enjoyment they provide and their positive impact on student achievement, self-esteem, time management, teamwork, wellness and quality of life.**
- **Understands the profound impact of the pandemic on students, teachers, and the community and collaboratively works in times of uncertainty to address the unique, ongoing academic and social emotional needs that may arise.**

2. In order to prepare for the first interview, the following recommendations are offered:

- a. Please review the materials in each candidate's folder prior to the interview.
- b. Each interview should last approximately one hour.
- c. Each Board member should review the questions the Board has approved.
- d. In some cases, it will be appropriate to probe into detail with spontaneous questions that follow a planned question, but within the scope of the question.
- e. Board members should agree not to discuss the candidates with anyone and to remain open-minded until all interviews are completed. Refrain from the instinct to decide on the viability of the candidate within the first 5 minutes of the interview.
- f. No candidate should be talked about in the presence of another candidate.
- g. Remember that the candidate should do most of the talking.
- h. Keep all interview notes and candidate files where only Board members will see them.
- i. Finally, give positive feedback to all candidates so they feel good about the process. Remember, the candidate is interviewing us also.

- j. At the end of the first round of interviews the Board should identify two to three finalists. The consultants will lead the board subcommittee through a structured process to assist the determination of finalists.

## **THE SECOND INTERVIEW AND SELECTION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

1. Three or fewer candidates will be moved forward to the second interview.
2. Employees, student and community groups will have the opportunity to give input to the process. This input will be provided prior to the Board's interviews with each candidate.
3. A meeting onsite following covid protocols has been scheduled with each candidate and the Board for the final interviews.
4. After all interviews are completed, the Board should identify the finalist. The consultants will lead the Board through a structured process to assist with the determination of a finalist.
5. The selection of the superintendent should be one of true consensus.
6. Avoid starting the process with a Board member championing a favorite candidate. Begin the process by eliminating candidates who are not a fit for the District. The Board does not need to discuss each candidate in depth.
7. Try to keep Board differences on other issues from intruding in this decision.
8. Talk about the relative strengths and possible weaknesses of the remaining candidates and listen respectfully and openly to other Board member's perceptions of the candidates. Each Board member, with the best interest of the school district in mind, should address the issue of which candidate appears to be most acceptable to the entire Board and most capable of working with the Board as a whole. This process tends to be more productive than Board members campaigning for their favorite candidate.
9. Allow sufficient time for full discussion, but try not to let differences delay the final decision too long. The longer the decision is delayed, the greater the risk that a candidate may be lost.
10. The Board should pass a resolution that states that it will enter into negotiations with the candidate selected for the position of Superintendent of the Edina Public Schools. A final resolution to hire the candidate will occur when the contract negotiations are completed and the Superintendent contract is ready to be signed. This typically is at a regular or special Board meeting.

## **INVOLVING EMPLOYEES, STUDENTS, AND COMMUNITY IN THE FINAL INTERVIEWS OF THE NEXT SUPERINTENDENT**

Following are guidelines you may follow as you set up the interview groups for the superintendent search.

1. Two or three candidates will be interviewed on the two or three separate days that you have reserved for this purpose. Our process allows for a great number of people to be involved in this process, limits the time commitment that an employee, student or parent/community member must give to the task, and ensures that the Board is always firmly in control of the process.
2. Six different groups will interview the candidates, not including the Board. Each interview should last about 45 minutes. Each group will interview all candidates on separate days. Your prospective superintendent will want to meet with these groups. Additionally, you will find it helpful to receive feedback from these groups that have all seen the candidates.
3. The six interview groups will be the students, district administration, building administration, employee I, employee II and a group open to all community members. Based on the ability to follow proper covid protocols, the district administration and the governance committee will determine if these interview groups will be virtually or in person with social distance. School Board members should not attend or view the first five interviews but should plan to attend or view the community group interview.
4. When inviting community members to participate in the interviews be sure that sufficient publicity has been published so people know about the opportunity. In addition, you may want to personally invite people who have been active in the schools and community and who bring a constructive and healthy viewpoint to this task. Try to represent a wide variety of viewpoints.
5. When inviting employees to participate in the interviews, be sure that the leadership of the various groups is notified about the opportunity to meet the superintendent candidates. Also, notify all employees of the opportunity, if that is possible.
6. Provide notice of the time and place the interviews will take place to each group.
7. A district tour for the candidate will be included. (Details to be determined follow covid protocols).
8. At the end of each group interview, the participants will complete a feedback form either electronically or in writing on the form on the candidate. The forms will be copied or sent electronically and given to Board members prior to the Board interviews each evening.
9. The Board should use the input elicited from the employee, students and committee members as it conducts the finalist's second interviews.

Below is the tentative schedule that will be repeated each day for the two or three finalists.

**Finalists' Interview Schedule May 3, 4 and 5**

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Tour of the District
11:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	Students
12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch with District Administration
1:45 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	Building Administrators
3:00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Employee Option 1
4:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.	Employee Option 2
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Community at Large Meeting
6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.	Dinner with the Board
7:15 p.m.	Final Interview with Board of Education (open meeting-posted)

# COMMITTEE INSTRUCTIONS

## INTERVIEW DOS AND DON'TS

- Give lots of smiles and positive non-verbal cues to the candidates interviewing with you today. You want to present yourselves as warm, caring people. Even when candidates are not successful, they want to believe they were well received by the committee. Remember that the candidates are interviewing you as well as you are interviewing them. Be gracious, friendly, and professional at every point in your interactions.
- As you develop possible questions for the candidate: (a) Do not ask leading questions that have obvious answers; (b) Do not ask questions that are specific to Edina Public Schools that inhibits discerning the candidate's knowledge and skills; (c) Make sure your questions are easily understood by the candidate; and (d) Do not spend a disproportionate amount of time on one area. The superintendent's job is huge – try to elicit a good overview of the skills across the position rather than in one area.
- Each committee member will have the opportunity to fill out the feedback sheet on the candidates electronically or in writing. Please give your completed feedback sheet to the consultant or complete it electronically at the end of the session. Your feedback will be provided to the Board for its review prior to its final interview with the candidate.
- Remember the School Board makes the final decision. Your role is to give the Board accurate feedback regarding your impressions of the candidate. The Board will have follow-up interviews after having access to your feedback.
- You will not be able to ask illegal questions (e.g. those questions relating to age, religion, race, national origin, sexual orientation, gender issues, marital status, children, handicaps, criminal record, or financial affairs). If a candidate brings up a topic, such as the candidate's children, while it is legal, we do not recommend you ask follow up questions. You cannot ask candidates if they will live in Edina.

## **FINAL STEPS – SELECTING THE SUPERINTENDENT**

1. The Board should make the appointment of the new superintendent with a unanimous vote if possible.
2. Assuming that all has gone well during the process, a representative or representatives of the Board should meet to discuss general terms of salary and benefits with the final candidate. Typically, the Board should expect the superintendent's attorney to review the contract and should expect negotiations on contract points. The Board should vote on employing the finalist only after it is assured that the finalist is ready to sign the contract.
3. Publicity on the appointment should be released only after the prospective superintendent has agreed to the contract. The signed contract may be brought to the Board for action at the completion of negotiations between the candidate and the Board. A prepared media release should be given simultaneously to the media in your community and to the new superintendent's community.
4. Some districts require the candidate to have a complete physical examination with the cost being borne by the District.
5. After the superintendent is under contract, a letter signed by the Board President should be sent to all candidates who were interviewed by the Board thanking them for their interest in the position and informing them of the Board's selection. The consultants will send communications to all other candidates.

## **Superintendent Search Calendar Edina Public Schools**

February 16	Meet with Board to establish search process and timeline
February 22	Stakeholder letter/search calendar posted on website
Feb. 22 – Mar. 4	Link to Online Feedback Survey posted on website
Week of February 22	Board and individual interviews
March 1, 2, 3	Focus Groups with employees, students, parents and Community for input into the “New Superintendent Profile”
March 8	Develop New Superintendent Profile based on input from focus groups
	Survey results and individual interviews (7:30 p.m. meeting)
Feb 22 – April 20	Candidate recruitment and vetting of applicants
April 26	Slate of 5-7 highly qualified candidates presented to Board (5 p.m. meeting)
April 27, 28	First Board Interviews (5:00 p.m., 6:15 p.m., 7:30 p.m. each night)
April 28	Board narrows choice to two or three finalists
May 3, 4, 5	Finalist all day interview process. Employees, students, parents, community interviews during the day with Board interviews in the evening.
	Choice narrowed to one finalist on May 4 or 5 depending on 2 or 3 finalists
May (tbd)	Board negotiates contract
May (tbd)	Board action on Superintendent contract
July 1, 2021	Superintendent assumes duties



**Board Meeting Date:** 4/22/2021 Special Meeting

**TITLE:** Superintendent Search – Questions for Candidates

**TYPE:** Action

**PRESENTER(S):** School Exec Connect representatives; Board Governance Committee

**BACKGROUND:** Representatives from School Exec Connect will present potential interview questions to ask Superintendent candidates.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Representatives from School Exec Connect and the Board Governance Committee recommend approving the proposed questions, to be provided in advance to the Superintendent candidates.

**PRIMARY ISSUE(S) TO CONSIDER:** Questions to be used as part of the Superintendent candidate interviews.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. *Questions to be provided prior to the meeting.*

## Questions of Candidates for the Edina Superintendent of Schools

1. Please highlight work experiences that have led you to candidacy for this position.
2. How do you describe your leadership style? Tell us about a situation that exemplifies your leadership style. Give examples of how this style has served the individuals with whom you work.
3. I'm sure you've seen that we have a bold and comprehensive 2025 strategic plan. Given your experiences, what do you think are the biggest challenges or risks we are taking in our plan?
  - a. What experiences have you had with challenges in that area? Please provide details on how you addressed and solved these pieces?
  - b. What did you learn? What would you do differently? How does this apply to Edina's 2025 strategic plan work?
4. Tell us about a time when you had to build trust and lead change in an environment where there were both (1) important elements to maintain and (2) active and diverse stakeholders throughout the community.
  - a. What were the results? What is different within the district now due to your leadership and ability to implement?
  - b. Where were areas of friction/conflict as you led the change? How did you address these areas to build trust?
  - c. What did you learn about your leadership skills in that situation? What would you do differently?
5. What educational initiatives have you proposed and implemented in your current or previous work that have advanced academic excellence?
  - a. Describe for us the process or systems you used to identify the need for change. What data or inputs did you use?
  - b. How do you know the initiatives worked? What were your measurements of effectiveness? Why do those measurements make sense?
6. What experiences have you had in progressing equity in your current or prior roles? Why did you choose those focus areas? How was the work informed (and by whom)? Where did you look for innovative and new approaches for advancing equity?
7. How do you motivate and inspire? How do you mentor and work with your executive team in order to get the best results from this group?
  - a. How did you align needs/skills against the most important needs?

- b. How did you rally employees around a shared commitment to your vision?
- 8. How did you keep stakeholders involved (e.g. board, parents, administration, teachers' union)?
  - a. How did you build rapport/relationships with all stakeholders including those who had different or unpopular perspectives/viewpoints?
- 9. What communication strategies do you employ to connect with and listen to the community at large and respond thoughtfully?
- 10. Thinking back to the past year, how have you helped your district prioritize communication to the community?
- 11. How do you work alongside and educate the School Board in making important District decisions that keep the focus on what is best for students?
- 12. How do you balance the educational needs of all students while making sure that students who struggle and those who are most successful continue to grow academically?
- 13. What does success look like to you when it comes to students in the district? What is your plan for getting to know our students and employees in our schools?
- 14. We'd like to give you an opportunity to share anything more about your candidacy. What sets you apart from other candidates? What are strengths/superpowers you're especially proud of? What do you want us to take away from our conversation today?