

SELECTING A SUPERINTENDENT

Board and Screening Committee Roles

KRS 160.352 requires that a screening committee be appointed within thirty days of determination that a vacancy has occurred, or will occur in the office of superintendent, except that when a board determines a vacancy will not occur before six months from the date of determination, the board shall establish a screening committee at least ninety days before the first date on which the position may be filled.

The screening committee shall be composed of: two teachers, elected by the teachers; one board member, appointed by the board chairman; one principal, elected by the principals; one parent, elected by the presidents of the parent-teacher organizations of the district; and one classified employee, elected by the classified employees. The screening committee may not deviate from the preceding composition (OAG 9-1-3), except that when the district has 8% or more minority enrollment and a minority is not represented among the six above, a minority parent shall be elected by the school district parents (KRS 160.352).

Prior to appointing a superintendent, the board must consider the recommendations of the screening committee, but it is not bound by them.

It should be clearly understood that the use of the mandated screening committee does not preclude the use of other committees or consultants that would be of benefit to the board (OAG 9-1-3).

The responsibility for hiring a superintendent rests with the board of education (KRS 160.290 and 160.350). The superintendent is answerable to the board of education and the board of education is answerable to the community for the quality of education in the district. If the search goes well and the district hires a good superintendent, the credit may be shared between the board and the screening committee. However, if the search goes poorly and a poor superintendent is hired, the blame is entirely the board's. The board is responsible for hiring the superintendent, and it is the board that the community should correctly hold accountable.

Board Responsibilities

The board is responsible for:

1. Establishing a screening committee by providing timely notice to teachers, principals, classified employees, and parent-teacher organizations regarding an impending vacancy in the office of superintendent, and stipulating their responsibilities in selecting screening committee members.
2. Deciding whether to use professional search consultants.
3. Establishing a timeline for all phases of the search process.
4. Developing criteria for the superintendent and instructing the screening committee regarding the same.
5. Advertising the position.
6. Establishing a procedure for receiving applications, corresponding with applicants and insuring the confidentiality of applications.
7. Providing the screening committee with originals, or a copy, of all applicant materials on, or around, the closing date for applications.

8. Charging the committee regarding reasonable confidentiality of applicant materials.

9. Establishing the date for the screening committee to report to the board.

The screening committee should not require more than a month nor less than ten days for screening. Give the screening committee as much time as possible without doing harm to the overall search. The amount of time allowed is contingent upon several factors, but chief among them is the time remaining until the new superintendent is to take office.

10. Receiving, and giving consideration to, the report of the screening committee.

The board is not required to hire from the recommendations of the screening committee, however, it is to be assumed that the screening committee was responsible and did its work well, therefore the committee's recommendations should receive serious consideration.

11. Interviewing such candidates as the board sees fit.

12. Hiring the superintendent and establishing the conditions of his/her contract.

The board should not be expected to pay stipends or grant release time, to screening committee members for service on the committee.

Screening Committee Responsibilities

The screening committee has the following responsibilities:

1. Screen all candidates according to criteria established by the board.

The committee may choose to establish its own criteria, but if it deviates too far from the board's criteria, it may mean less serious consideration of the committee's recommendations.

2. Employ any reasonable means it chooses to screen candidates.

The committee cannot financially obligate the board without prior approval.

3. Adhere to the board's directives regarding the security of applicant files and confidentiality of applicant information.

4. Report its recommendations to the board on the date, and in the manner, prescribed by the board.

The board may assign additional responsibilities to the screening committee if it chooses and the committee may accept those responsibilities if it chooses.

Service on the screening committee is strictly voluntary and the board should not be expected to pay stipends or grant release time to screening committee members for this service.