

## Request for Proposals From Superintendent Search Firms

### **Section I: Purpose**

The Evanston/Skokie School District 65 Board of Education seeks proposals from experienced executive search firms or individuals to provide consulting services for a national search for a superintendent.

### **Section II: Introduction**

The School District is beginning its search for a qualified candidate for superintendent of schools to start work during the Winter of 2023. To help in the search for the most qualified candidate the School District is seeking to retain the services of an executive search firm or individual with experience in the recruitment of superintendents for mid-sized school districts.

### **Description of the Evanston/Skokie School District 65**

Situated on the shores of Lake Michigan and just north of Chicago, Evanston/Skokie School District 65 is a pre-K through 8th grade public school district serving approximately 6,500 students from the City of Evanston and a small neighboring section of the Village of Skokie. The district represents a wide range of ethnic, economic, racial, and cultural backgrounds. District 65 is fortunate to serve a community that not only supports but truly embraces public education. Throughout the course of the school year and during the summer months, the district partners with dozens of organizations throughout the community to enhance both the educational experience and the lives of students and their families.

Over 1,400 outstanding educators, administrators, and support staff members have made their professional home in District 65 and are dedicated to helping every child to reach their full potential each and every day. Evanston/Skokie School District 65 consists of 10 attendance-area elementary schools (grades K-5); three attendance-area middle schools (grades 6-8); two magnet schools (grades K-8); an early childhood center; a school for students with significant special needs; and a therapeutic day school.

All students are taught by highly qualified, caring educators who share in the belief that all students can learn and work tirelessly to prepare them for success in high school and beyond. The staff in District 65 recognize that excellence requires a commitment to equity and are deeply engaged in work to promote equitable outcomes for all students. District 65 embraces the use of technology and innovative educational practices to enhance student learning. While high quality teaching and learning is of the utmost importance, our schools recognize the need to focus on the "whole child" and are deeply committed to social and emotional learning and fostering a safe and supportive school climate. In addition, many of the programs and services integrated into the curriculum provide rich arts, drama, and musical components. District 65 also offers a wide array of intervention and support services such as the Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports program (PBIS) and Response to Intervention (RtI).

### **Our Commitment to Equity**

We are committed to creating schools that work for all students. Children learn and grow in different ways and we know that some need more care and resources. We believe that by creating supportive environments where all students feel a sense of belonging and safety, they can be their authentic selves and excel in their learning.

We further know that our students do not fail, our systems fail our students. Our team remains committed to racial and educational equity and creating more just schools. We will continue to break down barriers and change our practices, policies, and procedures that have historically marginalized students. Together, as a community, we can make the change necessary to achieve our goals. With these commitments and continued action, we know that ALL students can and will achieve their full potential in District 65.

The Board of Education uses policy governance as its method of running the district. The superintendent is the board's primary employee, and it is the superintendent's role to evaluate and monitor the rest of the district's staff. The Board uses a detailed monitoring system to measure district and superintendent performance. Information about student performance, district goals, financial data, annual reports, etc., may be found on the district's web site at [www.district65.net](http://www.district65.net).

### **Section III: Scope of Work**

The Board of Education will work with the selected firm or individual to develop a superintendent search process and a timeline for the search activities. At a minimum, the activities will include the generation of a position description and qualifications, advisory services to the Board, identification and assessment of candidates, assisting with logistics of finalist interviews, and ensuring a satisfactory conclusion to the search. Understanding that discretion is of utmost importance to our district, as well as to many candidates, the search firm must maintain the confidentiality of all information collected as appropriate.

#### **Generation of position description and qualifications**

Conducting interviews with and soliciting input from school board members, school district staff, community leaders and the general public to develop the qualifications and criteria that will be used to judge superintendent candidates.

#### **Advisory Services to the Board of Education**

- Developing a search plan and timeline in consultation with the Board.
- Assisting with the evaluation and interviewing of potential candidates.
- Ensuring that there is compliance with applicable legal requirements.
- Collect and disaggregate community feedback in an agreed manner.

#### **Identification and Assessment of Candidates**

- Developing and distributing recruitment materials that will encourage qualified candidates to apply.
- Conducting a national search that will include advertising the position broadly in print media as well as through an effective web-based strategy.
- Conducting personal outreach recruiting to ensure that the applicant pool includes highly qualified candidates with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

- Collecting all relevant background information on potential candidates so that the strengths and weaknesses of each applicant can be assessed.
- Assisting the Board with prescreening candidates based on clearly delineated criteria.
- Assisting the Board (or possible advisory committee on the board's behalf) in evaluating the applicants against the qualifications and criteria developed to create a group of candidates for interviews.

#### **Assisting with Logistics of Finalist Interviews**

- Facilitating visits by the Board to the communities of the finalists.
- Facilitating community forums and interviews with the finalists.

#### **Ensuring a Satisfactory Conclusion to the Search**

Assisting the Board in contract negotiations with the selected candidate.

### **Section IV: Proposal Requirements**

To allow the Board of Education to fairly judge the merits of each proposal, responses to this RFP shall include a response to each of the items listed below. The Board reserves the right to reject proposals that do not follow this format.

**Cover Sheet** – Include the completed cover sheet that is part of this RFP signed by a person authorized to act on behalf of the company submitting the proposal.

**Executive Summary** – Provide a short summary that demonstrates your understanding of the scope of services required by the School District and why your firm is best able to provide that scope of service.

**Experience and Qualifications** – Provide details on the following:

Overview of Company – address, telephone, fax, e-mail; whether company is local, regional, or national; if a multi-office firm, which office will provide the services; areas of expertise and types of searches performed by the company.

Project Team – Provide names, titles, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mails of the person(s) who will be authorized to represent the company. Specify the names, titles, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mails of the person(s) who will be directly working on our superintendent search. Discuss the availability of each team member and the potential for conflicts that might interfere with the project's timeline.

Experience – For each member of the project team, please provide a description of their experience and education, time with the company, and how their experience suits their role on the team. Specify the number of superintendent searches in which each member has participated and in what capacity. Note the longevity of superintendents hired by members of this team or firm over the past six years. Describe any particularly noteworthy accomplishments of the superintendents placed.

**Work Plan** – Provide details on the following:

The approach to be used to address each search activity listed in Section III: Scope of Work.

Methods you will use to communicate and work with a seven member elected Board of Education.

Methods you will use to identify prospective candidates and promote their interest to apply.

Your experience in effective community engagement both in terms of collecting information from the public to develop the initial position qualifications and evaluation criteria and in providing a meaningful way to generate and receive public input in the evaluation of final candidates.

Describe what the major challenges to a successful superintendent search are and how the project team will address them.

Estimate a reasonable timeline that the project team will use to guide the search process.

Information, services and assistance you will require from the School Board and district staff to enable you to conduct the search.

**Cost** – A budget should be provided that will cover all of the work described in Section III: Scope of Work and the Work Plan above. The budget should provide a breakdown of costs in the following areas:

- Estimated cost by each scope of work section
- Estimated hours spent by each member of the project team and their fees
- Estimated travel expenses
- Estimated publishing and advertising expenses
- Estimated postage and other costs to distribute information regarding the vacancy Any other expenses

Proposal must also include a maximum price that will not be exceeded to complete the described work. Payment terms should be specified.

**References** – Provide a minimum of three school districts (of similar size and academic quality to the School District, if possible) that have used your services for a superintendent search within the past six years. For each reference supply the school district name, contact person, their title, telephone number and address. Describe the contract (scope, length, and dollar value) for each reference.

**Contract Form** – If you intend to propose a form of professional services contract between you or your company and the school district, please provide a sample copy of such contract form. If you prefer that the school district generate such contract, please so indicate.

**Litigation Record** – Have you been involved in litigation with any of your clients within the last five (5) years? If so, please give the name, date, and jurisdiction of each such matter, and a brief description of the nature of the dispute and the outcome.

**Ensuring Client Satisfaction** – Provide information regarding your philosophy and policies regarding client satisfaction in the event of an unsuccessful search.

**Additional Information** – Should you feel that additional information would help us more properly evaluate your proposal or if you have recommended modifications in the procedures specified herein, please feel free to address such matters under this heading.

**Section V: Timeline for this RFP**

The following schedule will be used for the implementation of this RFP

Date	RFP Activity
June 26, 2023	RFP e-mailed to prospective search firms known to the district. RFP posted on the district's web site.
August 4, 2023	Responses to RFP due at 3:00 p.m. local time.
August 28, 2023	Presentation at Board Meeting from finalists that were notified.
Sept. 18, 2023	Selection of finalist

**Section VI: Submission Details**

All proposals must be received at the District's administrative offices prior to 3:00 p.m. on Friday August 4, 2023. Proposals should be sent to: Adeela Qureshi, Board Secretary - Evanston/Skokie School District 65, 1500 McDaniel Ave., Evanston, IL 60201  
E-mail: [qureshia@district65.net](mailto:qureshia@district65.net). Late proposals will not be accepted.

**Section VII: General Conditions**

The School District reserves the right to waive, modify, or otherwise vary the conditions or requirements herein and may accept or reject any and all proposals as the Board of Education, in its sole discretion, deems to be in the best interest of the School District. The School District may, notwithstanding the terms herein, negotiate the terms of any response to this RFP. The School District shall not be bound to accept the lowest priced proposal, but may accept such proposal, if any, as the Board of Education determines to be in the best interests of the School District.