

St. Louis Park Public Schools School Board Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, February 7, 2024 at 7:00 PM
Special School Board Mtg. - Superintendent Search: Planning Meeting
with Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA)
Central Community Center, Room 21
6300 Walker Street
St. Louis Park, Minnesota 55416

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
3. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**
 - A. Superintendent Search: Discussion of interview training, stakeholder report and interview questions and procedures. 2
4. **ADJOURNMENT**

St. Louis Park Public Schools Superintendent Search

Stakeholder Engagement Superintendent Search Survey

Overview: On December 21, 2023, the “St. Louis Park Public Schools Superintendent Search Survey” was made available to stakeholders both online and in hard copy across the district. The survey remained open for respondents until January 18, 2024, and a total of 1,572 people completed the survey (1,549 English, 13 Spanish, 10 Somali).

In addition, multi-language survey groups and focus groups were held with:

- 30 students on January 17, 2024
- 15 Somali family members on January 18, 2024
- 18 Latino family members on January 24, 2024

These groups bring the total of touchpoints regarding the superintendent search for St. Louis Park Public Schools to **1,635 stakeholders**, nearly 3x the number typically expected for a district the size of SLP (estimations early in the search process were that we would receive approximately 580 total stakeholder survey responses). This is a tremendous response and indicates high interest in the St. Louis Park Public Schools superintendent search process.

SURVEY RESULTS: Survey takers were asked to identify the role that best reflected the basis for their responses. The categories selected by the survey takers are provided below.

- 45.10% of respondents selected “Student”
- 35.30% of respondents selected “Parent/Guardian/Caregiver”
- 11.85% of respondents selected “Staff Member”
- 4.61% of respondents selected “Community Member”
- 1.60% of respondents selected “Business Owner/District Partner”
- 1.54% of respondents selected “Other”

Race: Those who responded to the survey were also asked how they would identify their race. The results are shown below.

- 70.23% of respondents selected “White”
- 12.60% of respondents selected “I prefer not to disclose”
- 12.21% of respondents selected “Black or African American”
- 7.70% of respondents selected “Hispanic/Latino”
- 6.17% of respondents selected “Asian”
- 1.84% of respondents selected “American Indian or Indigenous”
- 0.89% of respondents selected “Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander”



Ethnicity: Those who responded to the survey were also asked how they would identify their ethnicity. The results are shown below.

- 41.09% of respondents selected "European"
- 24.75% of respondents selected "Other"
- 17.11% of respondents selected "I prefer not to disclose"
- 6.55% of respondents selected "Jewish"
- 5.03% of respondents selected "African"
- 4.77% of respondents selected "Mexican"
- 4.01% of respondents selected "Somali"
- 1.91% of respondents selected "Middle Eastern"
- 1.59% of respondents selected "Native"
- 1.34% of respondents selected "Arab"
- 1.21% of respondents selected "Caribbean"
- 1.21% of respondents selected "Indian"
- 0.76% of respondents selected "Ethiopian"
- 0.76% of respondents selected "Vietnamese"
- 0.70% of respondents selected "Nigerian"
- 0.64% of respondents selected "Colombian"
- 0.51% of respondents selected "Guatemalan"
- 0.51% of respondents selected "Hmong"
- 0.32% of respondents selected "Cambodian"
- 0.25% of respondents selected "Afghan"

NOTE: in terms of race and ethnicity, please note none of the quantitative nor qualitative data was separated out by these categories. This data was gathered for the sole purpose of helping the school board better understand which constituencies responded to the superintendent search survey, and how many representative groups across the district were reached in the effort to gather stakeholder data for the purposes of this survey.

Although no opt-in survey instrument is perfect, these results do indicate that a cross-section of St. Louis Park district roles, races, and ethnicities were reached through the superintendent search survey process.

The following pages illustrate overall responses to the quantitative questions asked in the stakeholder survey, as well as a breakout of stakeholder groups by response category.



Areas of Expertise: All of those who responded to the survey were asked to identify the top six desirable areas of expertise they believe the new superintendent must possess. The most frequently noted areas of expertise are listed below in order of preference.

- Budget and Finance
- Collaborative Leadership
- Curriculum Development/Evaluation
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- School Reform (i.e. Strategic Planning, etc.)
- Cultural Competence

Specialized Skills: The top six specialized skills the new superintendent must possess were identified in the survey results as shown below.

- Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner in dealings with the Board, staff, and community
- Develops and directs an effective leadership team
- Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders
- Is a “people person” with proven abilities in human relations and communications
- Is a visionary, creative thinker
- Effectively mediates and accommodates different perspectives; values teamwork

Previous Experience: Respondents were asked if previous superintendent experience is important. Based on the results, 47.49% of the respondents selected “Yes,” while 52.51% of the respondents selected “No.”

Personal Characteristics: Survey takers were also asked to identify the top six personal characteristics they believe the new superintendent must possess. The most frequently noted personal characteristics are listed below in order of preference.

- Honest and ethical
- Effective communicator
- Problem solver
- Confident
- Transparent
- Consistent



The following tables summarize the stakeholder survey’s quantitative data by respondent category (i.e. Parent/Guardian/Caregiver, Staff Member, Community Member, Business Owner/District Partner, Student, Other):

TOP SIX AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Parent/ Guardian/ Caregiver (551)	Staff Member (185)	Community Member (72)	Business Owner /District Partner (25)	Other (24)	Student (704)
Curriculum Development/ Evaluation	Collaborative Leadership	Collaborative Leadership	Budget & Finance	Collaborative Leadership	Budget & Finance
Budget & Finance	Budget & Finance	Curriculum Development/ Evaluation	Collaborative Leadership	Budget & Finance	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Collaborative Leadership	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Budget & Finance	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Collaborative Leadership
School Reform (i.e., strategic planning, etc.)	Curriculum Development/ Evaluation	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Cultural Competence	Curriculum Development/ Evaluation	Curriculum Development/ Evaluation
Student Testing Results and Achievement	School Reform (i.e., strategic planning, etc.)	Student Testing Results and Achievement	Fundraising/Grant Writing	Public Relations	Technology
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Cultural Competence	Cultural Competence	Public Relations	Cultural Competence	Support Services



TOP SIX PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Parent/ Guardian/ Caregiver (551)	Staff Member (185)	Community Member (72)	Business Owner /District Partner (25)	Other (24)	Student (704)
Honest and Ethical	Effective Communicator	Honest and Ethical	Creative	Effective Communicator	Confident
Effective Communicator	Honest and Ethical	Effective Communicator	Effective Communicator	Honest and Ethical	Honest and Ethical
Problem Solver	Problem Solver	Problem Solver	Confident	Transparent	Problem Solver
Transparent	Transparent	Empathetic	Consistent	Problem Solver	Effective Communicator
Resourceful	Consistent	Consistent	Problem Solver	Sense of Humor	Creative
Consistent	Personable	Confident	Flexible	Empathetic	Sense of Humor

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Parent/ Guardian/ Caregiver (551)	Staff Member (185)	Community Member (72)	Business Owner /District Partner (25)	Other (24)	Student (704)
Yes: 43.89%	Yes: 56.32%	Yes: 36.51%	Yes: 68.75%	Yes: 55.56%	Yes: 48.65%
No: 56.11%	No: 43.68%	No: 63.49%	No: 31.25%	No: 44.44%	No: 51.35%

The following page breaks out data which can be analyzed directly against the School Board's responses to the same questionnaire (in other words, an "apples to apples" comparison). Results indicate significant alignment between the board and stakeholders, as School Board members prioritized these same categories as follows:

- Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders
- Has knowledge of and experience with equity leadership challenges and opportunities
- Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner with the School Board, staff, and community
- Develops and directs an effective leadership team
- Effectively mediates and accommodates different perspectives; values teamwork
- Is visible and accessible to the School Board, staff, students, parents, and community



TOP SIX SPECIALIZED SKILLS

Parent/ Guardian/ Caregiver (551)	Staff Member (185)	Community Member (72)	Business Owner /District Partner (25)	Other (24)	Student (704)
Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner with the School Board, staff, and community	Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner with the School Board, staff, and community	Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner with the School Board, staff, and community	A visionary, creative thinker	Develops and directs an effective leadership team	Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner with the School Board, staff, and community
Develops and directs an effective leadership team	Develops and directs an effective leadership team	A "people person" with proven abilities in human relations and communications	A "people person" with proven abilities in human relations and communications	Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner with the School Board, staff, and community	A "people person" with proven abilities in human relations and communications
Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders	Develops and directs an effective leadership team	Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner with the School Board, staff, and community	A "people person" with proven abilities in human relations and communications	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders
Experience in implementing educational priorities	A "people person" with proven abilities in human relations and communications	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders	Develops and directs an effective leadership team	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders	A visionary, creative thinker
Possesses a strong academic background with experience in curriculum	Effectively mediates and accommodates different perspectives; values teamwork	A visionary, creative thinker	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders	Visible and accessible to the School Board, staff, students, parents, and community	Develops and directs an effective leadership team
Effectively mediates and accommodates different perspectives; values teamwork	Delegates authority while maintaining accountability	Delegates authority while maintaining accountability	Delegates authority while maintaining accountability	A visionary, creative thinker	Delegates authority while maintaining accountability



Additional comments: Finally, respondents were given the opportunity (but not required) to answer open-ended questions in the survey, and on average, 1,170 of the 1,572 respondents provided additional commentary. These results were then reviewed by MSBA representatives, with reappearing ideas identified and grouped into themes. These themes are highlighted below for each of the questions.

The stakeholder survey asked the following four questions:

1. What are some of the good things taking place in St. Louis Park Public Schools today?
2. What challenges do you see for our district over the next five years?
3. What does the new superintendent need to know about the history of the district and community to be successful?
4. Additional comments.

1. What are some of the good things taking place in St. Louis Park Public Schools today?

Summary

St. Louis Park Public Schools stand out as an inclusive and progressive educational environment. The district is characterized by its deep commitment to fostering an enriching and welcoming environment for learning, and teachers in these schools are exceptionally dedicated, contributing to a robust and positive learning experience for their students. Diversity, equity, and belonging are central themes, providing students with a sense of representation and value. The importance of a well-rounded education is clear, with a strong focus on comprehensive extracurricular activities and equitable learning opportunities. Specialized programs and curricula, which emphasize student engagement and inclusivity, are a testament to the district's dedication to preparing students for a diverse and evolving world. In summary, St. Louis Park Public Schools are celebrated for their focus on quality education and the holistic development of students, making them a model for an inclusive and integrated educational experience.

Key themes

<p>St. Louis Park Public Schools have a caring staff that are deeply committed to providing their students an excellent education and a positive learning environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Great teachers who care about students.</i> • <i>The teachers are amazing, and care deeply about all students. They work so hard to make sure each student feels seen, heard, and valued.</i> 	<p>285 related responses</p>
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- *Teachers who care deeply for their students and welcome parents as partners in the educational process.*
- *The educators in SLP are incredible, having a solid leader that can bring people together, see things from multiple perspectives and can continue to celebrate diversity/be inclusive is paramount.*
- *High quality teachers and support staff.*
- *There are a lot of good teachers.*
- *We have some great teachers who care about all students.*
- *Amazing teachers and educators - staff who truly care at all levels.*
- *We have a good education system and good teachers.*
- *Staff want to teach and truly care for kids.*
- *The teachers are really understanding of student's needs.*
- *Teachers are nice and are good at teaching.*
- *Our teachers are inclusive and kind to all.*
- *Personable and passionate teachers.*
- *Teachers who care about their students.*
- *The teachers help the students to practice and keep going.*
- *Great teachers, wonderful principal, great communications with school and district.*
- *The teachers are the core of the school district. They are engaged with students and parents.*
- *Dedicated staff members who value the students and continuously work to provide support and learning to the students.*
- *Collaboration between staff and teams, best-practices being implemented by teaching staff.*
- *Effort teachers and staff put into students. Whether that be academically or building social and emotional healthy children together with our families.*
- *Teachers are incredibly creative with limited resources to craft the best education they can for students.*
- *Some really good teachers are working hard to help students learn.*
- *The staff works tirelessly to raise up all students. We see our diversity as a strength.*
- *Wonderful teachers and staff in all the schools.*
- *We have passionate and hard-working teachers and staff.*
- *Many dedicated staff are working hard in spite of all of the challenges.*
- *Excellent staff that care deeply about students.*
- *We have great teachers and staff.*
- *The teachers genuinely care about the students and try their best to help them with all aspects of schooling.*
- *There are some talented and dedicated teachers.*
- *Current teachers are devoted educators and flexible thinkers.*
- *Amazing and supportive teachers and staff in the schools who truly care about their students.*
- *Dedicated and passionate staff despite the tremendous challenges post covid.*
- *High quality staff and teachers who care about our students and are invested in supporting individual growth/strengths.*
- *We have staff who are committed to our strategic priorities and who are also very knowledgeable about best practices in education today.*
- *Teachers that care about their students and want the best for them.*



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We have incredible teachers and staff who work really hard for students and families.</i> • <i>Our teachers are highly competent and committed.</i> • <i>The staff cares so much about the students as a whole person. The teachers' voices need to continue to be heard because they are incredible and be the change to continue to elevate SLP schools.</i> • <i>Teachers that love their job and their students.</i> • <i>The staff at the schools are amazing.</i> • <i>There are a number of SLP teachers, I've found, who truly value that home-to-school relationship, and who I have complete trust in as partners in my children's education.</i> • <i>The teachers at the high school are good.</i> • <i>I am really pleased with the teaching and the attentiveness of teachers to our students' needs.</i> • <i>There are a lot of good teachers who approach classrooms very well, as well as the focus on IB curriculum, and potential for academic achievement.</i> • <i>The teachers are nice and they want the best for every kid not just a certain group.</i> • <i>Teachers genuinely care about students and make an effort to connect with them on a personal level.</i> • <i>Some of the best, most dedicated staff members around.</i> • <i>The staff that I've interacted with, while from varied backgrounds, are welcoming and supportive of all students.</i> 	
<p>The district is committed to fostering an environment where every student's uniqueness is celebrated, and where equitable opportunities for growth and learning are provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My student feels like he belongs to a community at his school.</i> • <i>Schools are very inclusive.</i> • <i>Our racial equity work.</i> • <i>A diverse student population, restorative practices, emphasis on racial equity in teaching practices.</i> • <i>Diversity and inclusion initiatives (including how students can use their learning to change the world), including special needs students in all things, and talent development for all.</i> • <i>Diverse and inclusive classrooms. Thoughtful strengths-based student engagement.</i> • <i>Diversity is celebrated.</i> • <i>The history of good academics combined with focus on racial equity is a positive thing.</i> • <i>Building an inclusive community.</i> • <i>Slp schools are very inclusive.</i> • <i>Equity and inclusion policies are being supported and followed.</i> • <i>Brilliant and diverse student population and an emphasis on equity in our curriculum and teaching practices.</i> • <i>Talent development and a focus on equity.</i> • <i>I am appreciative of SLP's strong focus on equity.</i> 	<p>216 related responses</p>



- *Racial consciousness development in teachers, conversations about equity*
- *The SLP schools have adopted an equity and inclusion policy.*
- *The mission statement - seeing students' brilliance fostering identity, racial equity transformation.*
- *The vision that the district has for racial justice, equity and community and centering student voices.*
- *The work around equity and creating an environment that is safe and welcoming to everyone.*
- *Inclusive, respectful, approachable leadership, commitment to improvement.*
- *The district has a great understanding of equity and inclusion.*
- *Diversity. Ability to change and adapt to new populations because of the size of the district. The staff at the schools are amazing.*
- *Great leaders in all forms of diversity. The district protects ALL persons of all facets of life. This protection is public, protects human integrity, and realizes that EACH and EVERY person contributes positively to their long-term vision and mission.*
- *Known for standing up for our diverse community.*
- *The inclusive curriculum. I choose St Louis Park because of how they embraced diversity while also promoting achievement and high standards for all students.*
- *Some of the good things that are taking place is that people are working hard towards inclusiveness.*
- *I feel like we are a very inclusive school and I like that there are many different people from different backgrounds and communities in our school.*
- *Increased Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs. Heightened level of racial consciousness.*
- *There's a lot more diversity and I feel like there's a bigger sense of community within the schools.*
- *SLP has the potential to be a national leader, modeling how true DEIA work, educational excellence, and educational systemic change can occur.*
- *There are many ways this school is trying to be more inclusive and there are many ways students can express their love for a subject.*
- *They use a culturally responsive pedagogy and inclusive education policies.*
- *There is a focus on diversity and improving educational outcomes for all.*
- *The district is trying to do good things related to equity/DEI.*
- *The racial equity and diversity and inclusion core values are something we really value and we look forward to seeing ways for these to continually be implemented.*
- *Safe environment for the children. Very inclusive and caring staff. My kids love the school and it's community.*
- *Progress is being made towards our equity goals.*
- *The dedicated emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion, especially compared to the unfortunate things you see in other school districts across the state and country.*
- *Commitment to racial equity and justice.*
- *Racial equity focus. The mission and strategic plan is why I'm here.*
- *The work around equity and creating an environment that is safe and welcoming to everyone.*
- *The focus on cultural competency and equity. The work can be difficult and 'messy' however I believe that we are 'in the arena' and making a difference.*



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Equity is a paramount focus within the school district.</i> • <i>Racial Equity Transformation - making a clear stance on what's best for ALL students and staying consistent.</i> • <i>Inclusivity of LGBTQ+ students and teachers, discussion of current world and community issues and promoting critical thinking.</i> • <i>We have strategic priorities which center children and families, especially those who have been historically under-served in our school system.</i> • <i>The race-equity work we have been engaged in for over a decade is our greatest strength and draws both families and staff to our district. It is ongoing work that is transformative and on-going.</i> • <i>Commitment to racial equity and to gender-inclusive policies.</i> • <i>Focus on diversity and inclusion to ensure every student finds success.</i> • <i>Focus on equity, providing a world-centered inclusive education (not solely based on test scores) building community and empathy.</i> • <i>I think SLP has the potential to be a national leader, modeling how true DEIA work, educational excellence, and educational systemic change can occur.</i> 	
<p>The St. Louis Park community, families, and district collaborate to create a strong support network that enhances the educational experience and well-being of their students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Welcome parents as partners in the educational process.</i> • <i>Engaged parents.</i> • <i>Strong community.</i> • <i>We have a community like a small town but resources like a large city.</i> • <i>Schools are safe, diverse, welcoming and provide a sense of community.</i> • <i>The district has a good sense of community. Families of various backgrounds are invested in their child's/children's education.</i> • <i>I think the intercommunication in the community is a priority and is very helpful.</i> • <i>Good community support that believes in education.</i> • <i>Community, parents and school admin working together to navigate tough situations.</i> • <i>It is wonderful how many people care for the education and community at St. Louis Park and how many people are involved.</i> • <i>Being a great community.</i> • <i>We are a good community.</i> • <i>We have a great group of supportive parents and the broader SLP community.</i> • <i>Wonderful schools that foster a sense of community. Great families with strong family values live in SLP. Let's keep it that way!</i> • <i>Wonderful community, feel like a small town sometimes.</i> • <i>The community supports the schools.</i> • <i>A community that truly cares.</i> • <i>Parents are getting more involved.</i> • <i>Community continues to vote for investing in schools.</i> • <i>Participation of students and families. Park schools offer activities for a wide array of interests and remove barriers, as much as possible, for participation.</i> • <i>Strong community commitment to arts and creative endeavors.</i> • <i>A parent community that values inclusion and diversity.</i> 	<p>195 related responses</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of support for the schools. • There is a great community with families who care deeply about teaching kids how to be good, responsible and contributing members of society. • Good focus on relationships with parents. • Parent involvement is high. Parents are willing to support initiatives when they are communicated or when opinions are sought. • Great community support. • The schools are a welcoming and kind place. And the community of SLP is very giving and kind. • Great support of sports teams. • Opportunities for community involvement. • Clubs and classes that actively support and open the community to others. • Involvement with the community and outreach programs and resources to help underprivileged students. • There's a lot more diversity and I feel like there's a bigger sense of community within the schools. • St Louis Park community always supports the schools with referendum funding. • Families seem committed and proud of the community. • Diverse student body and supportive community. • Supportive community who cares about the district regardless of whether they have kids here. • We have strategic priorities which center children and families, especially those who have been historically under-served in our school system. • The race-equity work we have been engaged in for over a decade is our greatest strength and draws both families and staff to our district. • There is a strong community, families are very involved and eager to help. • School engagement with the community. • An engaged and committed community. We have consistently approved referendums to support our schools. • Great sense of community and looking out for one another. 	
<p>St. Louis Park Public Schools offer innovative curricular programs which contribute to a dynamic and well-rounded educational experience for students, and provide an enriching range of extracurricular activities that nurture students' diverse talents, interests, and needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers at the elementary level are learning about the science of reading and implementing new literacy curriculum. • Strong academic principles. • Excellent opportunities for children to grow as whole-person learners—intellectually, culturally, emotionally. • We find the new literacy curriculum outstanding. • STEM programs, MN outdoors, Language arts. • Educational reform through the design team/curricular and program review process. • Our professional development and curriculum is amazing. 	<p>168 related responses</p>



- *The history of good academics combined with focus on racial equity is a positive thing.*
- *New curriculums in phonemic awareness and phonics instruction in elementary schools is being used.*
- *We have systematic curriculum in core subjects. We've adopted a new literacy curriculum that is comprehensive.*
- *Early childhood programming is excellent. New emphasis on teaching reading fundamentals.*
- *Teachers are being incredibly creative with limited resources to craft the best education they can for students.*
- *There is an effort to recognize differences among learners.*
- *The high school is offering some variety in courses.*
- *Still have high standards for our schools and students are, by and large, still getting a good education in SLP.*
- *I choose St Louis Park because of how they embraced diversity while also promoting achievement and high standards for all students.*
- *The High School is going in a good direction by doing renovating and adding programs.*
- *There are a lot of good teachers who approach classrooms very well, as well as the focus on IB curriculum, and potential for academic achievement.*
- *A lot of inclusive programs.*
- *We appreciate the emphasis on learning about other cultures in the elementary school. We also appreciate the focus on arts education (music, theater, visual arts). We also appreciate the changes to the reading instruction.*
- *Innovative curriculum, International Baccalaureate program, focus on DEI.*
- *Middle school - Sound programming with the basics covered.*
- *Good academics and achievement within high diversity.*
- *Spanish immersion is an amazing opportunity for students!*
- *Curriculum that covers a broad array of topics including arts/creative learning. Smaller class sizes.*
- *Creating relatable curriculum for students.*
- *The early childhood and early childhood special education programs are thriving.*
- *The high school programming that provide real life skills to train our young people to get jobs is a great asset (the nursing program).*
- *The IB program and global perspective it brings to students.*
- *Broad set of offerings for students to be involved in (sports, clubs, activities).*
- *Sports and after-school activities.*
- *Student leadership programs.*
- *Early childhood programming is excellent. New emphasis on teaching reading fundamentals.*
- *Best practices being implemented by teaching staff.*
- *Opportunities for participation are greater and don't always need to compete to be part of a team. I like that Kids Place has been accessible and not a struggle to have a stop.*
- *Wide variety of co-curriculars offered at MS & HS.*
- *The steam programming (talent & development), access to regular gym and the outdoors.*
- *The early childhood programs are wonderful.*



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Park schools offer activities for a wide array of interests and remove barriers, as much as possible, for participation.</i> • <i>The middle school has a great music program that we really enjoy. The high school's choir and theater departments are great.</i> • <i>The extracurricular programs.</i> • <i>Support of sports teams.</i> • <i>Participating in the AP African American studies pilot program.</i> • <i>Several sports and activities options for students.</i> • <i>SOAR and their important conversations, other clubs, athletics.</i> • <i>Different things and programs we do in classes.</i> • <i>Programming and opportunities that allow students to explore their interests and strengthen their skills, such as arts, music, and theater classes, Talent Development classes, STEM classes, etc.</i> 	
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2. What challenges do you see for our district over the next five years?

Summary

In looking ahead, St. Louis Park Public Schools may face numerous challenges. These could include an increasing need for innovative educational approaches, declining test scores, and balancing equity and diversity efforts with academic rigor. In addition, families may opt for other schooling options due to academic and safety concerns, leading to decreasing enrollment which will impact funding and the district's competitive standing. Budget constraints would be exacerbated by this trend, with continued community concerns focused on the allocation of funds towards direct educational needs. Additionally, the district may struggle with recruiting and retaining high-quality staff, addressing staff burnout, and providing adequate support and resources to employees across the district. Other challenges could include addressing staff and student mental health issues, managing student behavior, and enhancing student safety to ensure a secure and supportive educational environment.

Key themes

<p>Survey respondents believe St. Louis Park Public Schools are likely to face significant challenges related to enrollment, impacting both funding and the district's long-standing reputation. This trend is influenced by factors such as families opting for neighboring or private schools due to perceived higher academic standards and perceived fewer safety issues elsewhere.</p>	<p>213 related responses</p>
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- *Competing with neighboring and private schools for enrollment.*
- *Declining enrollment resulting in lack of funding if students/families decide to leave the district.*
- *Enrollment sounds like it's been an issue since the pandemic.*
- *Lower enrollment because other schools have bigger budgets & better academics based on the data.*
- *The challenge is that enrollment is declining.*
- *Low enrollment/families choosing other options.*
- *How to deal with a changing population (and enrollment).*
- *A year over year decline in enrollment for SLP residents.*
- *A continued decline in enrollment. Parents will continue to leave the middle school if students have no opportunity for honors classes or if ap classes are scaled back in high school.*
- *Declining enrollment and budget shortfalls leading to cutbacks and starting a self-perpetuating downward spiral.*
- *Concerned about losing enrollment because of lack of differentiation as well as lowered academic standards.*
- *Adapting to continued funding cuts based on enrollment.*
- *Our enrollment has dropped because families left because of housing or that their schools are not meeting their academic needs.*
- *Stagnant and/or declining enrollment impacting funding.*
- *Declining enrollment due to lack of focus on fundamental academic rigor.*
- *Funding/enrollment – I debate if my kids should transfer to Edina or a private school.*
- *Enrollment fluctuation and budget.*
- *We know several families that have left the district after elementary school due to concerns about lack of academic rigor and safety.*
- *The district needs to retain more SLP kids and limit our open enrollment.*
- *Declining enrollment is affecting finances/budget (need to capture larger share of students within district boundaries).*
- *Declining enrollment, declining capture rate of SLP students, declining reputation of the district resulting in families leaving or never starting in SLP.*
- *Declining enrollment and the district's inability or lack of desire to adapt. Macro factors such as declining birth rates are one factor, but the competition from private, charter and other public schools has made student acquisition/retention a challenge for a district who cannot marry academic rigor and racial equity.*
- *Enrollment - with a consumer-driven school, SLP has to compete with bigger districts and private schools.*
- *Diminishing student enrollment must be addressed.*
- *We continue to see enrollment decline.*
- *Exodus of St. louis park families to suburban schools with better academic performance through open enrollment.*
- *Enrollment from within St. louis park is dropping; reasons include the lack of art and science classes in elementary schools, discipline issues and the removal of advanced classes at the middle school and dropping standardized test scores across the district.*
- *Keeping enrollment up.*



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment and test scores which are connected. marketing is needed to show community and state of Minnesota why people choose St. Louis Park Public Schools. • Loss of parental and community confidence, declining enrollment • Academically talented students (and their dedicated parents) leaving the district, no longer feels like a small-town neighborhood school, catering to open enrollment students. • Declining enrollment. People are leaving the district due to lack of reading and math intervention programs at the elementary schools that other nearby districts provide. • Our students need to feel safe going to school and right now they do not. if this is not handled i see declining enrollment happening. • Financial impact of enrollment. • Maintaining a sustainable enrollment. • Declining enrollment as kids reach high school. • It seems every year more and more families remove their kids to go to another school. • I worry about losing more families to outside districts and private schools. • Declining enrollment of SLP district students due to lack of discipline. 	
<p>Like many districts, St. Louis Park Public Schools may face increasing budget constraints and funding challenges, which could be affected by any decline in student enrollment. The community has a growing concern over how funds are allocated, emphasizing a desire to direct more funds to directly addressing students’ educational needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing expectations for public schools paired with fewer resources. • Making the best use of a small but large district with a small but large staff. • We all want more funding & budgets to support a better education, but it continues to be an issue & our district suffers from this. • There are continual funding issues. • Fundraising, grants, getting money into the district. • Declining funding. • The budget needs to be managed better so that the district can stop asking for special taxpayer levies, etc. • Funding - there are always more desires than available funding. • As we experience more park residents open enrolling in neighboring communities or seeking private school options, i anticipate that more financial challenges can be on the horizon. • Budget constraints and shortages of staff. • Managing district finances so less gets spent outside classrooms and more students from within SLP are enrolled. • Put the money at the classroom level. • Ensuring funding for diverse programs and opportunities. • Budget shortfalls leading to cutbacks. • Getting budget needed to effective learning. 	190



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adapting to continued funding cuts based on enrollment.</i> • <i>Making sure we manage our budget well, since i know there were a lot of renovations.</i> • <i>Budget cuts take great teachers, funding for extracurricular activities (which seems to hit the arts more than athletics), assistance with monitoring for violence and vaping, and effective discipline needed.</i> • <i>It's possible that there will be budget issues with remodeling the school.</i> • <i>The way they spend money. We did not need a new cafeteria. It was fine and we could have spent the money on field trips and other things to make our education more fun.</i> • <i>Financial management, specifically within the school system, the distribution of wealth throughout the schools needs work.</i> • <i>Construction delays meaning we must put more money in the money hole, the deficit that led to mass firings recently continuing and subsequent bankruptcy.</i> • <i>Financial stability, there seems to be spending even though they talk about budget problems.</i> • <i>The need to spend money on retaining teachers and staff and less on building upgrades.</i> • <i>Cuts in funding leading to more responsibility placed on the classroom teachers with limited time and resources.</i> • <i>Funding - no more referendums to make up for shortfalls or to pay for technology that will be obsolete within a year.</i> • <i>The school district's budget and spending needs to be scrutinized and changes need to be made to get the budget under control.</i> • <i>Finances - with the cost of living on the rise, schools are struggling to meet their finance needs.</i> • <i>The budget cuts and declining enrollment need to be addressed; the district's financial future is murky.</i> • <i>An increasing amount of focus & money is spent on remedial efforts.</i> • <i>Raising cost of transportation, finishing building projects while staying within budget.</i> 	
<p>Also like many districts, SLP Schools are encountering difficulties in retaining and recruiting high-quality staff, managing staff burnout, and providing staff with adequate support and resources. At the same time workload expectations may continue to increase, leading to additional stress for district staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Supports need to be put back in place in order to support scholars and teachers.</i> • <i>Shifting resources and attention to address the overwhelming social/emotional needs of both staff and students.</i> • <i>Supporting staff and keeping enough staff.</i> • <i>We need to provide support and training to new teachers.</i> • <i>Teacher burnout, evolving with the times & finding more innovative ways to teach.</i> • <i>High number of special education needs with little para support, difficult to keep paras staffed.</i> 	<p>147 related responses</p>



- *I believe we are going to see a massive burnout of staff.*
- *A continued need for increased special education support.*
- *Teacher burnout because of not being allowed to work part time or job share at elementary schools.*
- *We need to do whatever we can to support teachers and support staff to make education great.*
- *There simply isn't enough resources/attention to handle students.*
- *Getting back to supporting teachers with specialists.*
- *Teacher burnout - more and more teachers leaving for lack of compensation for an over-stacked workload. Other reasons for teachers leaving include lack of support or sense of solidarity with admin. High school continuously asks more and more of teachers when it comes to classroom and hallway management.*
- *Budget cuts that impact teachers and support staff will continue to have a negative impact on all students.*
- *Enough staffing with the right experience and education to support mission and environment.*
- *Lack of engagement due to burnout.*
- *Public education keeps getting harder with fewer resources and needier students.*
- *We need to support teachers and staff with the resources they need— retain good teachers at all cost!*
- *Because teachers aren't receiving the same support from admin, teachers are quitting, and soon we won't have enough teachers with a passion for teaching.*
- *Veteran teachers leaving and younger teachers leaving (due to lack of mentoring for younger teachers) and the immense challenges for all teachers with so many new curricula, student behaviors increasingly challenging with a lack of mental health resources, less and less time for proper lesson preparation and higher-class sizes.*
- *Staff are exhausted and need support and leadership to effectively guide and encourage all children.*
- *Cuts in funding lead to more responsibility placed on the classroom teachers with limited time and resources. Teacher burnout.*
- *Maintaining staff burnout as educational roles become more tiresome.*
- *Support staff to ensure they want to remain in the field.*
- *Staff retention for education in general; Teacher burnout.*
- *Educating and supporting District leaders, and growing future leaders.*
- *District doesn't pay enough to retain special needs staff or teachers; definitely doesn't pay a competitive wage for substitute teachers; sped retention; not enough teachers for growing grade sizes.*
- *Teacher burnout, more students needing support and limited resources.*
- *Good teachers quitting the profession, lack of resources, too much on teachers plates and not enough support.*
- *Teachers want to feel supported by their leadership in this stance, mission, and vision.*
- *Teachers often express frustration at the lack of support from the school district, which hampers efforts to help students are struggling with their schoolwork or who are ready for more challenging work.*



St. Louis Park Public Schools will continue to face challenges in addressing mental health for both educators and students, as well as managing student behavior and enhancing overall student safety to maintain a supportive and inclusive educational environment.

142 related responses

- *Safety in schools - how to keep a safe learning environment?*
- *Welcoming inclusive values and viewpoints while also keeping developmentally appropriate practice in view for all learners.*
- *Students not being held accountable for behavior. This has gotten way out of hand. There are no significant consequences and teachers get in trouble.*
- *Increase in discipline/disruptive behaviors.*
- *Our students need to feel safe going to school and right now they do not.*
- *Addressing student needs in mental health.*
- *Effectively implementing restorative practices, so that behavior concerns are adequately addressed and schools can have a peaceful and effective learning environment.*
- *Changing student behavior.*
- *Discipline is a big concern for me as a parent. It seems that kids can get away with anything. This is and worsening test scores are only going to increase the amount of families leaving the district.*
- *Unruly, undisciplined students.*
- *Making the school more inclusive.*
- *Not having bullying.*
- *Making sure to be supportive and inclusive of lgbtq+ people in the community.*
- *Kids mental health.*
- *We have noticed a lack of support when it comes to mental health.*
- *Hold students accountable for behavior.*
- *Behaviors in school have shifted dramatically over the years and we seem to be lacking appropriate resources to be proactive and shift our standard thinking into new thinking on how to best meet the needs of the students educational, emotionally, and behaviorally. it would be important to have more relevant training to managing behaviors and academics that may reshape how we address current needs.*
- *Maintaining a safe learning environment. I am still highly concerned about the changes with the school resource officers.*
- *Increasing number of students to teachers, no control of misbehaved students, increased bullying and social media trends.*
- *Disruptive students are continuing to distract, the environment is loud because of kids who don't listen, are growing up and are not learning respect, they feel like they can get away with anything.*
- *Lack of appropriate disciplinary action which makes it hard for other students to learn, very serious student safety concerns,*
- *Lots of behavior problems and disrespect in ms and hs, and because of inclusivity there is not always lot of correction of these behaviors.*
- *Regular kids are being short changed due to disruptive classmates.*



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A complete lack of discipline options available to teachers and ability to remove distractions from the classrooms makes it nearly impossible to teach the students who are willing to learn.</i> • <i>Lack of accountability for high school students who wander the halls, don't attend class, don't do homework, etc. the expectations have been lowered so much that it is doing at risk students a disservice to have no consequences for their actions.</i> • <i>School safety for all students and staff at all slp schools.</i> • <i>Becoming a district struggling with discipline - getting consistent hallway roamers and class disrupters into a space that fits their needs vs just letting these students continue to disrupt.</i> • <i>I have observed teachers deal with all kinds of behavioral issues in the classroom-taking away from the learning of those students as well as the rest of the students.</i> • <i>Focusing on mental health support is also incredibly important for the well-being of students and would improve school safety (gun violence, drug use, other harmful acts) possibly through stress management practices such as guilt and stigma-free counseling and teaching mindfulness through meditation.</i> • <i>More fights happening, cyberbullying.</i> • <i>Being inclusive.</i> • <i>Managing students behavior, dealing with social changes, behavioral plans not working.</i> • <i>Peer pressure and bullying in schools, especially in elementary schools.</i> • <i>Inclusion of new students, fighting and social media, bullying and no teachers stepping up.</i> • <i>Safety and increasing and keeping our schools safe.</i> • <i>My impression is that behaviors are a bit out of control, very little accountability for those that disrupt learning, ruining the experience for all.</i> • <i>We need to invest in school mental health personnel to reduce our embarrassingly high student-to-staff ratios. We need to invest in behavioral intervention/supports rather than fly by the seat of our pants.</i> • <i>Developing and implementing effective and culturally responsive student supports is a significant need! we are so very behind. we must invest in student support systems that promote not just academic but social and emotional needs as well.</i> 	
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3. What does the new superintendent need to know about the history of the school district and community to be successful?

Summary

To succeed, the new superintendent of St. Louis Park Public Schools must grasp the district's legacy of prioritizing high-quality academics as well as diversity and inclusivity. They should be aware of the concerns regarding declining academic standards and the need for a



balanced approach between equity initiatives and academic rigor. Recognizing the district's history as a progressive, tight-knit community, the superintendent should be adept at integrating various cultures and addressing changing demographics. Success will hinge on the superintendent's ability to listen, lead with empathy, maintain transparency, and engage in effective communication. They must be proficient in balancing diverse viewpoints, prioritizing both equity and academic excellence, and steadfastly uphold the district's core values and vision while ensuring the voices of students, staff, parents, and the broader community are heard and respected in decision-making processes.

Key themes

<p>The next superintendent needs to understand the district's historical commitment to academics, diversity, and inclusivity, while recognizing a perceived relaxation of academic standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>This community has had one of the top high school and middle schools in the nation in the past. They achieved this by focusing on academic rigor and excellence while respecting student and their family's diverse religious and cultural backgrounds.</i> <i>Increase academic standards in elementary and middle school. Bring back small group learning.</i> <i>SLP Schools used to be a draw to our city, lately it's moving people to open enroll elsewhere. We need to bring back rigor in our curriculum and not cater to "fairness" above everything else. Those that want to excel should have the opportunity, those that need more support should be given the support, it's not one-size fits all.</i> <i>There is a history of high student achievement in SLP, which we are very proud of. Recent declines in reading and math test scores (especially at the secondary level) are concerning, along with the district's decision in recent years to remove reading/math interventions from elementary schools and eliminate certain honors options in middle/high school.</i> <i>We have a long history of putting equity, most specifically racial equity, at the fore front. This is important, but it has been at the fore front for at least 20+ years and unfortunately it has not allowed for time and opportunity to really work deeply on academics and also other kinds of equity work.</i> <i>We need to catch up to some of the surrounding districts and make SLP a place people seek out vs families always questioning whether or not they want to stay in the district for Middle and High School.</i> <i>The school district has been getting worse, as good teachers leave, the curriculum is dumbed down.</i> <i>We need to support the families that actually live in St. Louis Park first and foremost, equity has always been strongly valued. However, achieving equity only on a surface level with lip service does not actually serve the students and community. Education and supporting academic achievement for all socioeconomic classes need to be prioritized more.</i> 	<p>118 related responses</p>
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- *This is an inclusive school & there's a lot of pride for that fact. We care about a great education and arming our teens with knowledge and experiences to set them up for success for their next chapter.*
- *The focus historically on high-quality academics. I think parents will continue to leave if this focus is not there, especially as families left for private schools during the pandemic and see that standards are high at private schools.*
- *St Louis Park has a history of being progressive on topics of inclusion and belonging and we should not go backwards.*
- *I believe in equity and inclusion but not at the cost of our kids excelling to their full potential. Let's set the bar high and push our kids.*
- *We have a history of high student achievement, along with a diverse student population. These are things our community is proud of and want to see continue in the future.*
- *SLP used to be a district with a strong brand. One that people trusted and were excited and proud to send their kids to every day. Now their brand is slipping to one where people are scared of the low academic outcomes and thus looking for options out of district. We can definitely get back to the previous brand but it will take making hard choices around what is best for kids and their academic outcomes. If it isn't serving immediate learning goals around reading and number sense it shouldn't be prioritized until we get those two building blocks set again.*
- *Historically, the SLP district was known for academic excellence. In the past 5 years or so, the academics have dramatically declined.*
- *Our students learning is suffering because of cuts to essential programs and increases in class sizes when academic and social/emotional needs are at an all time high.*
- *I believe we are doing a disservice to our young people in not providing them with as much academic rigor as they can handle, and thus preparing to compete on a global stage.*
- *It is important to note the history of intervention programming and note how this has impacted schools, families and students in positive and negative ways.*
- *SLP has always prided itself on being inclusive and diverse.*
- *We want test scores back up and kids held accountable for their actions.*
- *SLP is a great district and I believe we can continue to be great. I strongly believe in the mission of equity and diversity throughout the district. That being said, the district took that too far and forgot the kids that are quietly doing their work and wanting to strive for more.*
- *Getting rid of accelerated math programs, gifted and talented programs, and also more support for reading intervention at the elementary school level has caused many people to pull their students out of SLP.*
- *AP classes at HS is something that is important and allows students to be challenged and get college credit. Many students now are leaving for other districts or PSEO to pursuit college credit.*
- *Our equity work and the importance of it and that it continues.*
- *We need to provide a challenging academic experience for ALL students.*
- *Our district has too many initiatives in place and because of that we do a lot of things, but very few of them are done well. I would like to see an increased focus on making sure kids are reading well by 3rd grade with the inclusion of extra support for kids who need it.*



- *We need to increase our focus and dedicate resources towards social-emotional learning opportunities with implementation of a curriculum for students.*
- *Equality of ALL students, keeping high academic standards.*
- *St Louis Park schools used to have a fantastic reputation. Parents chose to live in SLP because they valued the diversity of our community as well as the academic opportunities available to all students. We cannot accept the recent declines in academic performance as the new normal.*
- *Strong community pride in our schools.*
- *The reasons for including more diversity/inclusion goals in the curriculum.*
- *People have pride living in SLP and want their schools to reflect the high quality of life here.*
- *I want the new superintendent to be passionate about racial equity. I don't want our students and community members to believe this has somehow lost its importance.*
- *There seems to be some tension between focusing on important equity and inclusion initiatives and focusing on core academic skills to ensure our young people are adequately prepared for post-high school work and education.*
- *Our district has allowed lower standards by teachers and thus students, in regard to both behavior and academics. At the middle school teachers are teaching to the lowest learners, and students who want to learn are not being challenged.*
- *It's vast diverse direction and implementation of diversity in education, cultural competency, culturally relevant curriculum and ensuring that future staff is upheld to high cultural and diverse expectations that are meeting SLP Schools.*
- *Continue to invest in the schools and attract people into SLP by having the best test scores in the west metro.*
- *I would like to see the racial equity focus continue.*
- *The SLP community strongly values education. The community also values equity, and wants all students to maximally benefit from school resources.*
- *We will not accept anything but the most inclusive environment for our students.*
- *That SLP was and should continue to be a beacon - a leader in education - and that it has a strong history of educating well.*
- *To be successful, we need to return to having high expectations for our students both behaviorally and academically. Our scores have decreased and we no longer seem to be the Park that had parents fighting to get their child enrolled because of academic staffs and rigorous education.*
- *Figure out how to be inclusive and also how to provide a top education for every single kid.*
- *SLP Schools used to be the school so many wanted their kids to attend. For the academics, elective options, school sizes (big enough, but not overwhelming), diversity, inclusion, extracurricular opportunities, teacher to student ratio, etc.*
- *I think a lot of people here value an inclusive environment. It's important to maintain that.*
- *That this is a school that is a inclusive community and you need to be able to be flexible.*
- *Our history of racial equity & diversity.*
- *SLP has a WONDERFUL history of inclusion and academic success. Unfortunately, the more recent laser-focus on JUST racial equity has been expensive and ineffective and weakened the academic success and staff morality in the district.*



<p><i>While racial equity is extremely important, it CANNOT be the single focus of finances and professional development.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• The school is very diverse so they need to be accepting and inclusive.</i> <i>• Our district's gifted & talented program has been gutted, test scores are unimpressive at best, and families are leaving for private schools in droves.</i> <i>• Racial equity is at it full front and it is an important work at SLP.</i> <i>• Inclusive and high achievement at all levels.</i> 	
<p>To be successful, the next superintendent must prioritize transparency, effective communication, and active listening to the needs and feedback of students, staff, parents, and the community. Multiple voices should be included as decisions are being made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• We need to have transparency on these issues & listen to what kids & parents are saying.</i> <i>• Staff across all programs do not feel heard and appreciated- this needs to be rectified.</i> <i>• Either the use of funding has not been spent appropriately or communication about where money is going is not accurate- either way this needs to be addressed and communicated to staff.</i> <i>• That we are passionate about our students receiving a strong education, that we want to build a compassionate and connected community, communication and honesty are vital.</i> <i>• We're supportive of our public schools, but need more transparency.</i> <i>• That cooperation between the members of this community, in my opinion, thrives on open discussion and asking questions when needed.</i> <i>• She/He must respect differences and be open to the voices of others.</i> <i>• We should ask all stakeholders; especially the teachers, for input before decisions are made.</i> <i>• We like to have community involvement in our schools.</i> <i>• Please be transparent with where all the money goes that the school district acquired, from public voters and our taxes. Please keep families informed of all the changes happening in the district.</i> <i>• Listen to all voices. Ask families who have left the district why they chose to leave.</i> <i>• Involvement of the community members and maintaining positive communication and relationships will help with adding new families to our district.</i> <i>• This community values transparency and honesty, diversity, equity and inclusion, and academic excellence.</i> <i>• SLP district parents vigorously value transparency. The new superintendent should view their role as a collaborative leader who listens to feedback and clearly communicates reasons for curricular, facility, and resource decision.</i> <i>• Community support has always been strong but relies on openness and transparency. Being available to parents and approachable is very important.</i> <i>• As the district moves forward, it is important that its superintendent listens to the community as well as the staff. All need to feel their voices are being heard.</i> 	<p>64 related responses</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They should actually listen to student voices. • I believe being a leader also means to listen to the people you are being a leader for. • They have to be able to listen to students. • They need to listen to the community as a whole citizens are vested and they need to be listened to and really heard. Not just head nodding. • Take student feedback seriously. • Strong support for education in community, but need transparency and solid ethics. • Figure out how to streamline communication/involvement so that it's meaningful, straight-forward. • There should be clear communication from admin to staff. • Hopeful that big changes can be better thought out and communicated regarding the rationale to the stakeholders. 	
<p>The next superintendent must understand St. Louis Park is a small, tight-knit community with a history of progressive values and diversity, but it is also facing challenges in integrating new cultures and adapting to the community’s changing demographics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are plenty of moderates and conservatives in SLP. • We are a small school district surrounded by larger districts, so we have a strong sense of community. • St Louis Park has a history of being progressive on topics of inclusion and belonging. • St. Louis Park has had a long history of a large Jewish population. For the last several years the population has decreased significantly. This has been in large part due to the atmosphere in the schools. • The history and pride this school and many suburban communities once had prior to the influx of so many different cultures without the proper understanding or knowledge as to how to accomplish the integration successfully. • This is an inner-ring suburban school district with a small-town feel. • SLP has always prided itself on being inclusive and diverse. Starting with its history of a large Jewish community. • History of progressive thinking. • The history and evolution of the city’s demographics and diverse cultures that reside and contribute to it. • Needs to know about community demographics and history. • We have one of, if not the most, active and largest population of Jewish students compared to the other public schools in the state. That's because SLP has been made to be a place where we feel safe and welcome, that feeling has diminished over the past year, but it's something we definitely wish to return. • They need to know the history of this land and why it's important to us that we acknowledge it. • SLP has a WONDERFUL history of inclusion and academic success. 	<p>59 related responses</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I think a knowledge of the diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds that have historically and currently make up the school district and community is important.</i> • <i>What makes this district amazing is the well rounded community with people from all walks of life and backgrounds.</i> • <i>St. Louis Park is a racially and socioeconomically diverse city that is a gem within the Twin Cities metro area. It is generally quiet and safe, yet accessible to everywhere. The community has many progressive residents who value diversity & inclusion, and generally support education initiatives through voting.</i> • <i>They need to know that our community is highly engaged, diverse, and eager to commit to making this district exceptional.</i> • <i>SLP is a small tight community and leaders are successful here that engage with the community.</i> • <i>Long history of community passing all tax levies although it has an aging population.</i> • <i>This is a big city with a small town feel and we love that.</i> 	
<p>To be successful, the new superintendent should possess not only hard skills but also soft skills such as empathy, transparency, and collaboration, as well as hold strengths in trust and relationship-building. They should also possess emotional intelligence and strong, synergistic leadership skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I hope the new superintendent would not feel pressure to pull back in our values of tolerance and acceptance, and instead will stand grounded in our core values while also encouraging families to join us in our work.</i> • <i>The Superintendent needs to align with the goals and vision that the district is already pursuing.</i> • <i>We need someone to have a backbone. The superintendent needs to also balance a multi-cultural district that has many different views and be inclusive of ALL - not just one - perspective.</i> • <i>The new superintendent needs to make it a good learning environment again.</i> • <i>They have to be skilled in helping the entire SLP community understand the "why" behind the commitment to racial equity.</i> • <i>I am looking for a superintendent who will stand STRONG in making brave and just choices that align with our mission and vision.</i> • <i>There seems to be some tension between focusing on important equity and inclusion initiatives and focusing on core academic skills to ensure our young people are adequately prepared for post-high school work and education. This is a both/and, and the next superintendent will need to navigate these sometimes polarizing perspectives.</i> • <i>We need a strong leader who is either going to manage decline or grow enrollment.</i> • <i>The future superintendent MUST be a leader in this category to protect the vision and mission.</i> 	<p>50 related responses</p>



- *The new superintendent should view their role as a collaborative leader who listens to feedback and clearly communicates reasons for curricular, facility, and resource decision.*
- *Strong, trustworthy leadership is needed. The community values equity and top curriculum. Diverse needs and limited resources will require clear vision and communication.*
- *Be a good communicator and leader.*
- *Empathy is really important to have in order to be successful because there are many different people with different lifestyles.*
- *Identify needs and policies, develop regulations, provide leadership, and manage the day-to-day operation of the district.*
- *Our students are blessed to meet so many people from different parts of the world and different economic circumstances. Our superintendent needs to understand and embrace that- which includes prioritizing both the most disadvantaged students AND the most academically talented students.*
- *Hopeful that big changes can be better thought out and communicated regarding the rationale to the stakeholders.*
- *You don't have to be super-human but respect yourself and the community enough to maintain a level of honorable leadership worth the title.*
- *We need a Superintendent to be excited about working with the schools/staff/students and will hold people accountable. We need someone that can delegate well, expects the best from themselves and others and communicates clear strategy and expectations. We need someone that can consistently hold themselves and staff/teachers/students accountable. Honesty and consistent engagement and evaluations of leaders in the district is important as well.*
- *SLP needs strong, transparent, effective leadership. Our children deserve the best.*
- *A clear understanding of our trajectory with racial equity transformation, and a clear vision for how to move forward to strengthen and deepen our work. This is CRITICAL to finding a superintendent who will come work with us to move forward - and not create a new trajectory.*
- *St. Louis Park Public Schools has always valued the involvement of ALL stakeholders in decision making even when cumbersome - from senior citizens to community members to business leaders and all staff members at all levels within the district.*
- *I seek a superintendent who brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the position and can leverage those learnings to improve the academic programs for our children.*
- *We have had our ups and downs in many ways, but our district is resilient and can bounce back with the proper leadership.*
- *I believe they need to recognize the work that has been done to bring this system to where it is, and they need to have evidence of minimally a commitment or disposition to be vulnerable as a leader as it relates to issues of racial equity as it relates to developing people and systems to deliver results.*
- *A strong vision will be more important than trying to incorporate the community's whims. Presenting a getting buy-in to a solid plan will work better than blindly implementing the latest, popular policy idea.*



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We NEED someone who understands elementary students and their needs. It's hugely important for the foundation to be strong for the future to also be strong. Elementary students aren't just small high schoolers.</i> • <i>It is important that the superintendent be completely transparent with everything happening within the district.</i> • <i>We work with each other; we show leadership and empathy. The next superintendent needs to care about everyone who enters school.</i> 	
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4. Additional Comments:

<p>The next superintendent should be a transparent, effective communicator and leader, committed to high academic standards, ethical decision-making, inclusivity, and active engagement with stakeholders to foster a trusting, diverse, and equitable educational environment for all students across the district.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I hope our next superintendent is truly serious about academic rigor, growth and progress.</i> • <i>I would want to make sure the next superintendent is an effective leader.</i> • <i>I like teachers and people in charge that are happy and are willing to cooperate and know that they're working with a team and are not just making decisions on their own. Also the superintendent should be a nice person.</i> • <i>It's vital that the new Superintendent show complete transparency with the community about what is happening with the district.</i> • <i>My hope for the new superintendent is to look at what is being done and who is doing what.</i> • <i>The new superintendent needs to have a strong academic and curriculum savvy background, a strong moral & ethical compass, exceptional leadership qualities and good communication skills.</i> • <i>I want our new superintendent to value the human experience and work to ensure that all community members feel like they are worthy of dignity, safety and a sense of belonging.</i> • <i>New superintendent should be able to benchmark against other thriving school districts and implement changes that have made them successful.</i> • <i>We need a superintendent who thoughtfully involves stakeholders and communicates effectively. We need one who can guide the administration effectively, someone who is fair yet holds high standards.</i> • <i>The superintendent should be able to define the word equity and how it differs from the word equality.</i> • <i>SLP needs leaders who appreciate and consider the input of employees in the trenches, have meaningful dialogue with staff, and work with staff to make significant continuous improvement in the district that results in better student outcomes.</i> 	<p>65 related responses</p>
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- *I just hope they will be able to make decisions based on the needs of the students and the school. Not for money or simplicity.*
- *I want to see a superintendent that prizes diversity, but not at the expense of offering advanced classes, and offering space for gifted students.*
- *We need a superintendent with an open mind that is wanting and willing to see all points of view.*
- *I think that the Superintendent role in a school district should be one that is grounded in desire to do the best for the children and learners in the community that he/she is working in. Leading by example with compassion, integrity, transparency and accountability.*
- *The new superintendent must create a plan to retain and attract families. The more students we lose, the more difficult our situation will be.*
- *We need an experienced, hardworking superintendent with endless energy who is passionate about lifting ALL students.*
- *I hope that our new superintendent can come in with a fresh set of eyes and build a high level of trust with the community. I believe that transparency about the current state of our district will be critical to building trust in our community.*
- *It would be great if the new superintendent made an effort to know who staff is and what their contributions to the district have been.*
- *I hope our new superintendent is willing to speak to all stakeholders to figure out what is working and not working at every level.*
- *Communication is the key. Hoping we can find a new superintendent who understands the importance of building relationships with staff, parents and the community through meaningful conversation that makes everyone feel heard and valued.*



Community Input Sessions

SOMALI PARENT GROUP

On January 18, 2024, MSBA and St. Louis Park Public Schools staff met with 15 Somali parents/guardians and asked them four open-ended questions. The results of the listening sessions were reviewed by MSBA representatives. Below is a summary of the discussion for each question.

1. What are some good things about your student’s school or education?

St. Louis Park Public Schools is well-regarded for its quality of education and has a positive reputation. This perception is shared by both longstanding residents and those who have recently moved to the district. Parents appreciate the school's proactive approach in communication, notably through emails and phone calls whenever a student falls behind or faces issues. Additionally, there is an efficient system in place that allows parents to stay informed about their children's homework and missing assignments.

The approach to homework is also notable, with some parents highlighting that students often complete their work at school, reducing the burden on families, particularly those who may face language barriers. Safety at the school is considered good, and there's prompt communication from teachers regarding various aspects of the students' educational experience. Overall, the school district is seen as providing a supportive and effective educational environment.



2. What are some challenges about your student’s school or education?

The primary challenges attendees identified for St. Louis Park Public Schools center around transportation and communication issues. Parents face difficulties due to the lack of nearby bus stops, forcing students to walk considerable distances to catch their transport. Additionally, the school's communication system poses challenges, particularly for non-English speaking families.

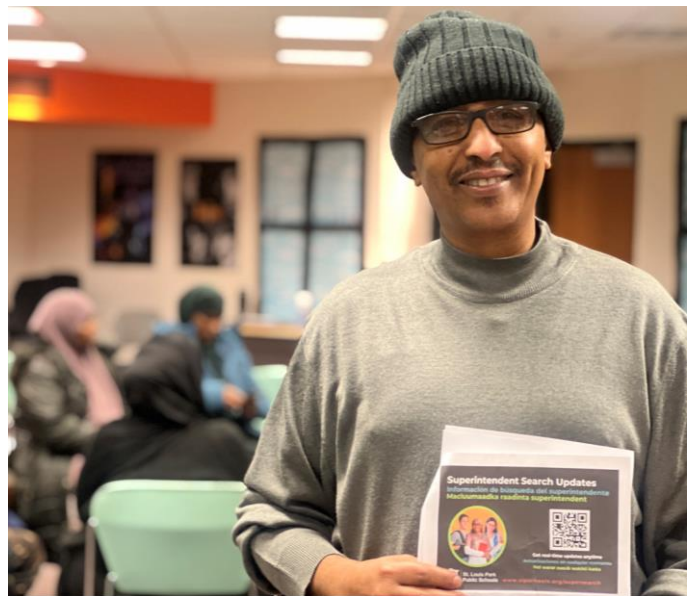
There's a notable need for more language support, like Somali-speaking liaisons, to bridge the communication gap. Parents also struggle with understanding the process for scheduling meetings with teachers and obtaining clear information about their children's academic performance.

Disciplinary measures and conflict resolution within the school are other areas of concern. There are instances of student fights, with some parents expressing frustration over the handling of these incidents. They report a lack of thorough investigation, leading to unfair blame on students, including those facing language barriers. This situation is compounded by a perceived inadequacy in addressing concerns raised by students and parents, which sometimes escalates to physical confrontations. Moreover, issues with the attendance reporting system, where students are marked absent despite being in school, further highlight the need for improved administrative processes and transparency in the school's operations.

3. What personal characteristics, skills, or areas of expertise are important for the new superintendent to have?

The ideal superintendent for the district should be highly accessible, demonstrating a strong commitment to engaging with parents and attentively listening to their concerns. Key personal traits for this role include patience, a genuine passion for education, and being approachable. This accessibility is crucial in fostering a trusting and open relationship between the school administration and the community. The ability to effectively communicate is paramount, not only in addressing current issues but also in regularly updating parents and the community about ongoing developments within the school.

In addition to interpersonal skills, the superintendent should embody fairness and accountability. This includes holding principals accountable for their actions and ensuring progress in educational outcomes without granting special privileges to any group. A keen sensitivity to cultural diversity is essential, with the superintendent needing to be comfortable and fair in interactions with people from various cultural and religious backgrounds. Building and maintaining relationships with students and parents is also vital, alongside a preference for peaceful resolution of issues. Overall, the community seeks a superintendent who can navigate the diverse needs of the school while fostering an inclusive and progressive environment.



4. What does the new superintendent need to understand about your family or community to be successful?

The new superintendent needs to have a deep understanding of the specific educational and cultural needs of the diverse community they will serve. One major aspect is the unique challenge with ESL (English as a Second Language) education. Many children in the community, especially those arriving from overseas, require substantial ESL support. These students are often placed in classes based on their age rather than their academic proficiency, leading to a need for more resources and tailored support to bring their English skills up to standard. Additionally, there is a desire for greater cultural sensitivity in the school environment, including accommodating practices for religious observance, such as providing prayer spaces and breaks.

Furthermore, the superintendent should be aware of and sensitive to the community's concerns regarding certain aspects of the curriculum, particularly those that may conflict with Islamic faith and values. The community expects to be informed about and involved in discussions related to curriculum content that may go against their beliefs. On a broader note, the superintendent should possess a rich background in dealing with diverse communities, bringing experience and maturity to the role. They should be someone who can exhibit patience and understanding, effectively engaging with families. This includes playing a supportive role akin to a parental figure when necessary, helping children, especially those new to the country, to come out of their shells and feel comfortable in the school environment.



LATINO PARENT GROUP

On January 24, 2024, MSBA and St. Louis Park Public Schools staff met with 18 Latino parents/guardians and asked them four open-ended questions. The results of the listening sessions were reviewed by MSBA representatives. Below is a summary of the discussion for each question.

1. What are some good things about your student's school or education?

The school district is positively regarded for its proactive engagement with families, particularly through initiatives like the "Bring it Home" program. This program is especially beneficial for Latino families, providing essential information, fostering a platform for parental feedback, and focusing on cultural and familial aspects important to the community. These meetings are a vital resource for parents to understand and contribute to their children's education, highlighting the district's commitment to inclusivity and responsiveness to diverse needs.

The leadership within the schools is highly appreciated for their active involvement and accessibility. They are recognized for their hands-on approach, constantly interacting with students and parents, which contributes significantly to the positive school environment. However, engaging a wider range of families in these programs remains a challenge, often due to work commitments and other constraints faced by parents. Despite these challenges, there is a strong sense of community among participating families, underscoring the importance of such involvement for their children's and the community's future. Overall, the district is commended for its effective communication, safety measures, extracurricular activities, and the supportive role of cultural liaisons, which collectively enhance the educational experience.



2. What are some challenges about your student's school or education?

The challenges faced by students and their families in this school district are multifaceted, encompassing aspects of safety, communication, and logistical issues. Safety concerns are a significant issue, with incidents at the high school causing fear among students and parents. The presence of police in schools has been reassuring for some, emphasizing a need for continued attention to safety, especially as students transition to middle school. Parents recognize that no school can guarantee complete safety due to the diverse personalities and behaviors of students. They emphasize the importance of parental responsibility in educating children, acknowledging the influences of peers and media on young minds. Other concerns include bullying, inappropriate language, and a perceived disconnect between teachers and student experiences. Additionally,

practical issues like heavy backpacks, unsatisfactory food service options, and the impact of transportation cuts on families' ability to get their children to school, particularly in bad weather, were highlighted. Despite these challenges, the high school is still regarded as a great school, with the belief that incidents like fights can serve as wake-up calls, reinforcing the need for vigilance and community involvement in school safety.

Logistic and communication barriers also present challenges. The reliance on email for communication can be ineffective, especially for parents facing language barriers or those without regular access to email. School closures due to incidents disrupt the routines of working parents. Language barriers also hinder participation in school meetings, with uncertainty about the availability of interpreters. These challenges underscore the need for the school district to consider its practices related to parent/guardian communication.

3. What personal characteristics, skills, or areas of expertise are important for the new superintendent to have?

The new superintendent must possess a blend of strong communication skills and a deep understanding of diverse community needs. Direct and clear communication with families is crucial, with an emphasis on effectively conveying plans and actions. The ability to actively seek and incorporate feedback from various community groups, such as Latino families, is essential. The superintendent should be approachable and personable, creating an environment where families feel seen and valued. This openness should extend to asking for and receiving help from the community, fostering a collaborative relationship. The new superintendent should appreciate and value diversity, ensuring all community members feel acknowledged and respected. Their presence and involvement in school activities are important for creating a sense of community and providing parents with peace of mind about their children's education and well-being.

Additionally, the superintendent should recognize and address the varying needs and opportunities of different students. They should support and reinforce values like kindness, manners, and respect, which are taught at home, ensuring that the school and home environments are aligned. The importance of consequences and accountability in student behavior, such as policies on phone usage, is a concern that needs addressing.



4. What does the new superintendent need to understand about your family or community to be successful?

For the new superintendent to be successful, it is crucial to understand and actively support the growing Latino community within the school district. This community seeks not only recognition but also meaningful inclusion in the decision-making process. They express a desire to be more involved in various aspects of the school system, including understanding how to become a school board member, volunteer opportunities, and ways to assist schools. However, there's a lack of clear communication about these opportunities, indicating a need for more outreach and information dissemination.

The community also has specific communication preferences, such as receiving text messages from school principals and the district, which may be more accessible and effective for them. Additionally, there's a demand for more educational programs, particularly those that can help parents understand and utilize technology, exemplified by the request for programs similar to 'tamales.' These programs could provide practical guidance on navigating digital tools and platforms used by the schools. Finally, the Latino community wishes to be actively involved in significant decisions, such as the hiring of the new superintendent, underscoring their desire for representation and a voice in processes that directly affect their children's education.



STUDENT GROUP

On January 17, St. Louis Park Public School and MSBA staff met with 30 students and asked them four open-ended questions. The results of the listening sessions were reviewed by MSBA representatives. Below is a summary of the discussion for each question.

1. What are some good things happening in St. Louis Park Public Schools?

St. Louis Park Public Schools are distinguished by a variety of positive initiatives and resources that contribute to a supportive and inclusive educational environment. The SOAR program is a notable aspect of the school's offerings. The active solicitation of student input, as evidenced by meetings specifically designed for this purpose, demonstrates the school's commitment to involving students in the decision-making process. However, there is some uncertainty among students about whether their feedback is truly considered and actually acted upon.

The availability of mental health resources, including therapy dogs, is another significant benefit students appreciate, reflecting the school's recognition of the importance of student well-being beyond academic achievement. The provision of tutoring services further illustrates the school's commitment to academic support. The quality of teaching staff is highly regarded, contributing to the overall positive educational experience for students. Moreover, the school is generally characterized by a strong, peaceful community atmosphere, which likely plays a crucial role in fostering a safe and conducive learning environment. These elements collectively depict St. Louis Park Public Schools as forward-thinking and student-focused, prioritizing both academic and emotional support.

2. What are some challenges you see or that you see other students facing?

Students in St. Louis Park Public Schools are confronting several social and academic challenges. Socially, issues like bullying, Islamophobia, and racism are prevalent, creating an environment where students often feel unsafe and disrespected. This situation is compounded by concerns of student censorship and a general feeling among students that their voices and experiences are not fully believed or valued. The need for a safer, more inclusive, and respectful school climate is clear.

Academically, the challenges are diverse. There is a need for more varied and effective teaching methods, particularly in subjects like math. The transition to high school, especially for 9th graders, is difficult, with students requiring more support to maintain their grades. There are noticeable racial disparities in enrollment in advanced courses such as AP, IB, and Honors, with some students believing they're not being encouraged to take these classes due to their race. Additionally, the school faces issues with under-resourcing and the impact of financial barriers on students' ability to participate in activities. Students also advocate for better representation in decision-making processes and for more support for first-generation students, particularly in college application processes, along with a need for more resources to address the diverse backgrounds of the entire student body.



3. What personal characteristics, skills, or areas of expertise are important for the new superintendent to have?

According to SLP students the new superintendent should possess a unique combination of personal characteristics, skills, and expertise to effectively lead and resonate with the diverse school community. A strong emphasis is placed on the ability to be an authentic listener, inclusive, and empathetic, particularly towards people of color. Creativity, innovation, and out-of-the-box thinking are highly regarded, along with honesty, fairness, and open-mindedness. The superintendent should be prepared to address tough questions about racial equity and not shy away from confronting difficult issues.

In addition to these personal traits, students felt the superintendent should have a solid understanding of business and financial management, including budgeting and resource allocation. They should be genuinely concerned about student experiences and actively engage with students, demonstrating visibility and involvement in their daily school life. Understanding the specific dynamics of the community, such as balancing the needs of an old community and a first-ring suburb, is crucial. The superintendent should be accessible, adept at building relationships, and support student voices and ideas. Decision-making should be prompt and informed, with an ability to implement systemic changes at an appropriate pace. Involving students in problem-solving, serving as a role model, maintaining policy transparency, and actively addressing current events that impact the community are also key expectations. Overall, the students desire a superintendent who can effectuate real, systematic change, not just performative actions.

4. What does the new superintendent need to understand about St. Louis Park students to be successful?

The new superintendent must recognize and appreciate the rich diversity within the St. Louis Park student body, which spans across various dimensions such as race, religion, gender, and socioeconomics. This diversity necessitates an approach to education and decision-making that is flexible and tailored to individual needs rather than a one-size-fits-all strategy. The superintendent should acknowledge there are multiple perspectives to every issue and be open-minded and willing to learn from these varied viewpoints.

It is also important for the superintendent to value and actively utilize student input. Students are eager to contribute their ideas and insights but want assurance that their feedback will lead to concrete actions and be incorporated into the planning and decision-making processes. Emphasizing equity over equality is a key principle, acknowledging that different students have different needs and require varying levels of support to succeed. Additionally, there's a desire for transparency in the superintendent hiring process, with students wanting to be kept informed about the progress and considerations. Understanding the challenges and hurdles within the school system is also vital, as it enables students to be more aware and engaged in the educational landscape of their school district and community.



Stakeholder input during the interview process

MSBA's process offers three options to school boards for including stakeholders in their finalist interviews. Below is a short summary of the board's choices:

1. Rely on the Stakeholder Summary Report to represent stakeholder voices throughout the interview process. MSBA reviews this report with the board during interview training, and boards often choose to use this document for reference throughout the search (i.e. when screening applications, developing interview questions, conducting the interviews, and during board deliberations following both Round 1 and Round 2 interviews). No other stakeholder input is gathered as part of the interview process.
2. Create interview committee(s) – these groups interview all finalists separately in addition to the school board interviews. It is important that members of the interview committees not be chosen by the board – instead stakeholder groups should be invited to send a representative on their behalf. These groups must then be trained by MSBA to ensure adherence to EEOC protocols (interview format, legality of questions, etc.). These committees would report to the board following their interviews, but prior to the board's final deliberations. It's also important not to call these groups "hiring committees," as this creates unfair expectations and potentially deep resentment regarding the hiring process utilized by the school board.
3. Invite stakeholder groups to send one representative to observe school board interviews of the finalists, then those individuals provide feedback through an online Audience Input Form which asks them to share their thoughts on each candidate's top three strengths and top three opportunities for growth. MSBA then provides the board with this data shortly after their interviews, but prior to the board's final deliberations.

There are pros and cons to each of these options, all of which are discussed with the board prior to making a decision regarding stakeholder input in the interview process.

NOTE: Over the past three years most boards have selected Option 1, some boards have chosen Option 3, and only two boards have selected Option 2. This illustrates a shift away from involving stakeholders in the interview process, with most boards relying heavily on the Stakeholder Summary Report as the voice of the stakeholders throughout the search process; however, you should choose whichever option best fits your district.

Audience Input Forums

Stakeholder groups to consider

When discussing potential stakeholder groups to participate beyond the stakeholder survey, consider any groups the school board would typically reach out to in support of a school district levy. Also consider any group that is a sub-group of your district's community, parents, staff and students. Some people will tick more than one box. You may consider inviting the leadership of these groups, or an even better choice is to request they select someone from their membership themselves. Each bargaining unit should be represented.

Possibilities include:

- Principals' association (selected by the membership)
- Teachers representing early childhood, elementary, middle, and high school level (selected by the membership)
- District administration (selected by the membership)
- Executive assistant
- Buildings and grounds
- Food service
- Transportation
- Para-professional staff
- Secretarial staff
- ELL director or cultural liaisons
- Parent representative(s)
- Student representative who may serve on the school board
- Representative of any district partnerships with the business community or higher education institutions
- Chamber of Commerce representative
- Leadership of any major district funders, donors or foundations
- Representative from any substantive grassroots community organization

The number of stakeholders should not exceed 15. An ideal-size group is 7-10 participants.



SCHOOL BOARD INTERVIEW TRAINING AND PREPARATION

MSBA EXECUTIVE SEARCH SERVICES



MSBA Executive Search Service



St. Louis Park Public Schools is seeking an exceptional leader to serve as **Superintendent**

St. Louis Park Public Schools is a west metro district that covers 11 square miles and serves the city of St. Louis Park, a first-ring suburb of Minneapolis. District Points of Park Pride and awards include:

- ◆ Strong community support: 70.46% of voters supported the 2022 referendum
- ◆ Dynamic college and career readiness opportunities for students, including a CNA (certified nursing assistant) program
- ◆ 2023 Youth Data Analysts (interns within Assessment, Research and Evaluation department) conduct youth participatory action research (YPAR) addressing racial equity in St. Louis Park Public Schools
- ◆ 289 teachers with advanced degrees
- ◆ 49+ different languages spoken at home by district families
- ◆ 26 varsity athletic teams offered at St. Louis Park High School
- ◆ Robust elementary enrichment program provides culturally relevant talent development programming 120 minutes a week to every K-5 student through STEAM
- ◆ Honors-level literacy for all students
- ◆ 4th and 5th grade band and orchestra
- ◆ Vigorous curriculum and program design and review process
- ◆ SY2021– significantly expanded enrichment programming and access for all students
- ◆ Aquila was named Bronze Best Elementary School in Minnesota's Best 2022
- ◆ Language and Culture Program at the elementary level includes Arabic and Ojibwe
- ◆ International Baccalaureate (IB) programming at three elementary schools, middle school, and the high school
- ◆ Vibrant Community Ed program serves early childhood through seniors

The school district operates its own food service and contracts out for transportation services.

Application Deadline

To be considered for this position, an applicant's completed file must be received by MSBA prior to 11:59 p.m. on February 7, 2024.

What keeps families in St. Louis Park Public Schools?

- ◆ **Dedicated Teachers** - Teachers go above and beyond to help students thrive
- ◆ **Sense of Community** - SLP is a small school district with a close-knit community
- ◆ **Academic Opportunities** - Wide range of academic opportunities focusing on real-world skills and ideas (i.e. rigorous academics in core curriculum, college and career readiness, PSEO, IB program, advanced classes, electives, band, social justice curriculum, language programs, and Spanish immersion)
- ◆ **Diversity and Inclusion** - Deeply committed to equity, anti-racism, and LGBTQ+ inclusion

By the Numbers

- ◆ Student enrollment: 4,840
- ◆ Licensed staff members: 355
- ◆ Non-licensed staff members: 318
- ◆ Principals / Assistant Principals: 7 / 5
- ◆ Full-time District Office staff: 51
- ◆ District buildings maintained: 8

Search Timeline

Announce Vacancy	December 21, 2023
Application Deadline	February 7, 2024
Applicant Screening	February 8 - 21, 2024
First Round Interviews	Feb. 28 & Mar. 1, 2024
Second Round Interviews	March 13, 2024
Approve Contract	March 26, 2024
Superintendent Begins	July 1, 2024

Leadership Profile

The St. Louis Park School Board seeks a superintendent with strong leadership skills who:

- ◆ Develops trust and is committed to promoting a positive, collaborative, and professional environment for employees, students, and families, and has demonstrated successful experience working with diverse populations and cultures across all stakeholder groups both internally and externally.
- ◆ Has knowledge of and experience with equity leadership challenges and opportunities, and has demonstrated success in addressing inequities and racism in practices, policies, programs, services, facilities, and curriculum.
- ◆ Ensures and encourages a culture that centers anti-racism, equity, inclusion, diversity, and belonging, including but not limited to diversity of race, socioeconomic status, ability, language, and other measures that can impact our students' opportunities to thrive and succeed.
- ◆ Effectively mediates and accommodates different perspectives and is an inquisitive, engaged, approachable, and inclusive leader who possesses excellent people skills and makes student-centered decisions, all while creating positive working conditions for the adults who serve them.
- ◆ Models the highest degree of moral, professional and ethical behaviors and high standards of integrity across the district and creates a safe environment for students and staff.
- ◆ Develops and directs an effective leadership team and relentlessly advocates for diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging throughout St. Louis Park Public Schools.
- ◆ Provides the constructs needed for recruiting, employing, supporting, and retaining high-quality staff, particularly Staff of Color, at all levels of the organization, with an organizational structure that is effective and efficient.
- ◆ Is a visible, approachable, and highly collaborative leader who builds a strong team, solicits input from stakeholders, and supports the well-being of all employees.
- ◆ Maintains a visible and active presence in the community representing the district, engaging with stakeholders and seeking their input as appropriate.
- ◆ Is able to lead a large organization dedicated to achieving ambitious goals that will increase student achievement across all demographic groups. Holds a track record of making strategic decisions that consider both immediate needs as well as long-term goals, and of creating systems and budgets to ensure long-term success.

Previous superintendent experience preferred, but not required.

ST. LOUIS PARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT

St. Louis Park Public Schools sees, inspires, and empowers each learner to live their brilliance in an environment that centers student voice and experience to create racially equitable learning that energizes and enhances the spirit of our community.

About the Community

St. Louis Park's location is just minutes away from some of the Twin Cities' most attractive amenities, including the Chain of Lakes, the downtown theater district, shopping, universities and major league sporting events. Additional highlights of the city include:

- ◆ Approximately 50,000 diverse individuals call St. Louis Park home, including recent immigrant and refugee families
- ◆ Residential areas are diverse in their social, religious and ethnic heritage
- ◆ Numerous parks, trails, and greenspaces throughout the city
- ◆ Westwood Hills Nature Center is a 160-acre natural area and environmental learning center that partners with St. Louis Park Public Schools
- ◆ Year-round arts and culture activities and events such as a film festival, outdoor concerts, art fairs, museums, and public art
- ◆ Recreational opportunities for all ages
- ◆ The West End offers a vibrant shopping, dining and entertainment hub
- ◆ A splash pad and aquatic park feature waterslides, zero-depth entry pool, water geysers, and obstacle course for water fun

Salary and Benefits

The current superintendent's base salary for the 2023-24 school year is \$210,904. A competitive compensation and benefits package will be negotiated commensurate with experience and qualifications. Contract length is negotiable as provided in Minnesota Statute.

District Vision Statement

St. Louis Park Public Schools – Where students are seen and valued and become their best selves as racially conscious, globally minded contributors to society.

District Financial Highlights

- ◆ General Fund Revenue: \$ 72,000,000
- ◆ General Fund Expenditures: \$ 75,000,000*
- ◆ Unreserved Fund Balance: \$ 6,200,000
- ◆ Total General Fund Balance: \$ 12,100,000

* Currently spending down operating capital and LTFM fund balances

Screening Team

A team from the Minnesota School Boards Association's Executive Search Service (MSBA) has been selected to assist the School Board in securing and screening applicants. The search team will be led by Barb Dorn, MSBA Director of Leadership Development and Executive Search.

Deadline and Selection

MSBA's Executive Search Service uses an online application process. Applicants begin the application process at mnmsba.myrevelus.com. To be considered for this position, an applicant's completed file must be received by MSBA prior to 11:59 p.m. on February 7, 2024.

Questions can be directed to MSBA's St. Louis Park Superintendent Search Team:

- Barb Dorn, bdorn@mnmsba.org or 507-508-5501
- John Ward, jward@mnmsba.org or 507-479-0935
- Craig Morris, cmorris@mnmsba.org or 612-834-0594

Applicants are requested to not contact school board members.

St. Louis Park Public Schools is an equal opportunity employer. The MSBA Executive Search Service is an equal opportunity search agency.

Deadline to apply: February 7, 2024

St. Louis Park Public Schools – Superintendent Search Timeline

December 19, 2023 <i>(6:30 pm, Special Meeting)</i>	Planning meeting – Board adopts search timeline, reviews hiring criteria, search procedures, market positioning, and stakeholder involvement
December 21, 2023 – January 18, 2024	Stakeholder survey open / multi-lingual families and student voice survey groups conducted
January 3, 2024 <i>(4:00 pm)</i>	MSBA facilitates virtual informational Q&A session
December 21, 2023 – February 7, 2024	MSBA posts opening on websites (MSBA, MASA, EdPost, Revelus), advertises position vacancy, receives applications, and responds to applicants’ inquiries
February 7, 2024 <i>(7:00 pm, Special Meeting)</i>	Board meets for interview training, and to discuss stakeholder report, interview questions and procedures
February 7, 2024	Application Deadline
February 8 – 21, 2024	MSBA conducts screening, preliminary verification of references, pre-interviews of recommended applicants
February 9 – 21, 2024	Board members review applications
February 21, 2024 <i>(6:00 pm, Special Meeting)</i>	Board meets to determine finalists, interview questions and procedures; MSBA reviews interview training
February 28 and March 1, 2024 <i>(5:15 pm and 2:00 pm, Special Meeting)</i>	Board conducts first round of interviews
March 13, 2024 <i>(3:30 pm, Special Meeting)</i>	Board conducts reference checks and holds second round of interviews; Board selects lone finalist and sets negotiations process
March 14, 2024	Board designee begins negotiations of employment contract with lone finalist
March 26, 2024 <i>(6:30 pm, Regular Meeting)</i>	Board meets to approve employment contract
July 1, 2024	New superintendent reports to work

Relevant Law

All school board meetings related to the superintendent search must be open meetings. Applicants' materials contain data that are classified as private data. The law provides that the names of applicants for employment are private, but the names of finalists are public (M.S. 13.43, Subd. 3.). Once the finalists are named, the school board can only release the following information on applicants for a position: name (only finalists), veteran status, relevant test scores, rank on eligible list, job history, education and training, and work availability. All other information about applicants is private, as are the names and information of all other applicants who are not finalists.

Don't Ask

Both state and federal law prohibit questions regarding "protected categories." Indirect questions regarding protected categories are also a violation of the law. Some of the protected categories are listed below.

Protected Categories	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Race or color• National origin• Religion or creed• Age• Status with regard to public assistance• Familial status• Marital status• Pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sexual orientation• Disability• Sex• Membership or activity in a local commission• Veteran status• Genetic information

What is an indirect question that may violate one or more protected categories? Some examples are provided below.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How much longer do you plan to work before you retire? (The answer to this question may reveal information that discriminates with regard to age.)• Do you own a home? Have you ever filed for bankruptcy? (The answers to these questions may reveal information that discriminates with regard to public assistance or disability.)• How will you make dependent care arrangements? (The answer to this question may reveal information that discriminates with regard to marital and familial status.)

School boards should be particularly careful during follow-up questions. The school board should be cautious and agree beforehand how follow-up questions will be handled. Going "off script" increases the risk of an inappropriate question being asked. When in doubt, check with an attorney or contact MSBA.

Interview Questions: Non-Discrimination Laws

Anti-discrimination laws affect all steps of the employee hiring process. Knowledge of the characteristics on which these laws prohibit inquiry is especially critical when conducting interviews. Sloppy interview practices can result in the appearance of discrimination or even actual discrimination.

Interviewers should avoid seeking information that is not job related. The school board should assume that a rejected applicant may believe that all information acquired during an interview will be used in the hiring decision. The school district will have the burden to explain that not all information elicited during the interview process was used – a very difficult burden when the information involves race, sex, religion, age, disability, etc. Information needed for insurance, tax, social security, or similar purposes should be obtained after employment. The following list of protected characteristics may not be complete because of the rapidly changing nature of discrimination laws.

Protected Category	Not Permissible to Ask	Permissible to Ask
Race and color	What race are your parents?	
Alienage, ancestry, national origin, nationality, and citizen status (provided the individual is authorized to work in the U.S.)	In what country were you born? In what country were your parents born? Are you a naturalized citizen?	Are you legally authorized to work in the United States? What languages do you read, speak, or write fluently? (if related to the job requirements)
Marital status	Are you married? Single? Divorced? Engaged? Are you living with someone? Would your spouse move with you if you got this position? What is your maiden name?	
Gender, including parental and pregnancy status	What are your future family plans? Are you pregnant? Do you have children? What are their ages?	Are you available to work overtime? (if related to the job requirements)

Protected Category	Not Permissible to Ask	Permissible to Ask
Sexual orientation, including actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or gender-related identity	Do you have a spouse or partner – which?	What kinds of experiences have you had working with others with different backgrounds than your own?
Religion or creed	What religious holidays do you celebrate?	Are you available to work “X” to “X”?
Age	When do you plan to retire? How would you feel about working for someone younger than you?	What are your long-term career goals?
Military status	Will you miss work because you are a member of a U.S. Reserve unit, such as, Army Reserve or Marine Corps Reserve, or a member of a National Guard unit?	How does your military training or experience prepare you for this job?*
Unfavorable discharge from military service	Under what circumstances were you discharged from the service?	<i>*This question is permissible only if information about military status is provided by the applicant, otherwise it is not permissible to ask any military status-related questions.</i>
Arrest record	Have you ever been arrested? Spent time in jail?	
Use of lawful products during non-working hours	Do you smoke or use tobacco products during non-working hours? Do you consume alcoholic beverages during non-working hours?	
Genetic information	What were the results of any diagnostic, predictive, or pre-symptomatic genetic testing that you’ve had?	See section on <i>disability</i> below.

Protected Category	Not Permissible to Ask	Permissible to Ask
<p>Credit history/report, unless the Employee Credit Privacy Act permits a satisfactory credit history to be a job requirement, such as, the position's duties include custody of or unsupervised access to cash or marketable assets valued at \$2,500 or more</p>	<p>Unless the Employee Credit Privacy Act permits a satisfactory credit history to be a job requirement for a specific position, do not ask:</p> <p>Do you have a good credit score?</p> <p>Have you been denied a credit card within the last 5 years?</p> <p>Have you ever filed bankruptcy?</p>	

Disability

Inquiries that are likely to elicit information about a disability, before a bona fide job offer is made, are prohibited. Inquiries about the ability to perform job functions that do not ask about disabilities are permissible.

Protected Category	Not Permissible to Ask	Permissible to Ask
Disability	<p>Have you had any recent illnesses or operations?</p> <p>Do you have AIDS?</p> <p>Do you have asthma?</p> <p>Do you have a disability which would interfere with your ability to perform the job?</p> <p>How many days were you sick last year?</p> <p>Have you ever filed for workers' compensation?</p> <p>Have you ever been injured on the job?</p> <p>How much alcohol do you drink each week?</p> <p>Have you ever been treated for alcohol problems?</p> <p>Have you ever been treated for mental health problems?</p> <p>What prescription drugs are you currently taking?</p>	<p>Can you perform the functions of this job (essential and/or marginal), with or without reasonable accommodation?</p> <p>Please describe/demonstrate how you would perform these functions (essential and/or marginal).</p> <p>Have you ever been disciplined (oral or written reprimand, suspension, or termination) for attendance violations or problems?</p> <p>Do you have the required licenses to perform this job?</p>

Adopted: _____

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 401

Orig. 1995

Revised: _____

Rev. 2017

401 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

[Note: School districts are not required by statute to have a policy addressing these issues. However, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission strongly encourages the adoption of a policy and will look for such a policy during accreditation visits, audits, or investigations.]

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal employment opportunity for all applicants for school district employment and school district employees.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. The policy of the school district is to provide equal employment opportunity for all applicants and employees. The school district does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, or veteran status. The school district also makes reasonable accommodations for disabled employees.

[Note: The Minnesota Human Rights Act defines “sexual orientation” to include “having or being perceived as having a self-image or identity not traditionally associated with one’s biological maleness or femaleness.” Minn. Stat. § 363A.03, Subd. 44.]

B. The school district prohibits the harassment of any individual for any of the categories listed above. For information about the types of conduct that constitute impermissible harassment and the school district’s internal procedures for addressing complaints of harassment, please refer to the school district’s policy on harassment and violence.

C. This policy applies to all areas of employment including hiring, discharge, promotion, compensation, facilities, or privileges of employment.

D. Every school district employee shall be responsible for following this policy.

E. Any person having a question regarding this policy should discuss it with _____ (specify, e.g., the Personnel Manager).

Legal References: Minn. Stat. Ch. 363A (Minnesota Human Rights Act)
29 U.S.C. § 621 *et seq.* (Age Discrimination in Employment Act)
29 U.S.C. § 2615 (Family and Medical Leave Act)

38 U.S.C. § 4211 *et seq.* (Employment and Training of Veterans)
38 U.S.C. § 4301 *et seq.* (Employment and Reemployment Rights of Members of the Uniformed Services)
42 U.S.C. § 2000e *et seq.* (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act)
42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.* (Equal Opportunity for Individuals with Disabilities)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 402 (Disability Nondiscrimination)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 405 (Veteran’s Preference)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 413 (Harassment and Violence)

Adopted: _____

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 406

Orig. 1995

Revised: _____

Rev. 2014

406 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PERSONNEL DATA

[Note: The provisions of this policy accurately reflect the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and are not discretionary in nature.]

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to school district employees as to the data the school district collects and maintains regarding its personnel.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. All data on individuals collected, created, received, maintained or disseminated by the school district, which is classified by statute or federal law as public, shall be accessible to the public pursuant to the procedures established by the school district.
- B. All other data on individuals is private or confidential.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. “Public” means that the data is available to anyone who requests it.
- B. “Private” means the data is available to the subject of the data and to school district staff who need it to conduct the business of the school district.
- C. “Confidential” means the data is not available to the subject.
- D. “Parking space leasing data” means the following government data on an application for, or lease of, a parking space: residence address, home telephone number, beginning and ending work hours, place of employment, location of parking space, and work telephone number.
- E. “Personnel data” means government data on individuals maintained because they are or were employees of the school district, applicants for employment, or volunteers or independent contractors for the school district, or members of or applicants for an advisory board or commission. Personnel data include data submitted to the school district by an employee as part of an organized self-evaluation effort by the school district to request suggestions from all employees on ways to cut costs, make the school district more efficient, or to improve school district operations. An employee who is identified in a suggestion shall have access to all data in the suggestion except the identity of the employee making the suggestion.

- F. “Finalist” means an individual who is selected to be interviewed by the school board for a position.
- G. “Protected health information” means individually identifiable health information transmitted in electronic form by a school district acting as a health care provider. “Protected health information” excludes health information in education records covered by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and employment records held by a school district in its role as employer.
- H. “Public officials” means business managers; human resource directors; athletic directors whose duties include at least 50 percent of their time spent in administration, personnel, supervision, and evaluation; chief financial officers; directors; and individuals defined as superintendents and principals.

IV. PUBLIC PERSONNEL DATA

- A. The following information on employees, including volunteers and independent contractors, is public:
 - 1. name;
 - 2. employee identification number, which may not be the employee’s social security number;
 - 3. actual gross salary;
 - 4. salary range;
 - 5. terms and conditions of employment relationship;
 - 6. contract fees;
 - 7. actual gross pension;
 - 8. the value and nature of employer-paid fringe benefits;
 - 9. the basis for and the amount of any added remuneration, including expense reimbursement, in addition to salary;
 - 10. job title;
 - 11. bargaining unit;
 - 12. job description;
 - 13. education and training background;
 - 14. previous work experience;

15. date of first and last employment;
16. the existence and status of any complaints or charges against the employee, regardless of whether the complaint or charge resulted in a disciplinary action;
17. the final disposition of any disciplinary action, as defined in Minn. Stat. § 13.43, Subd. 2(b), together with the specific reasons for the action and data documenting the basis of the action, excluding data that would identify confidential sources who are employees of the school district;
18. the complete terms of any agreement settling any dispute arising out of the employment relationship, including superintendent buyout agreements, except that the agreement must include specific reasons for the agreement if it involves the payment of more than \$10,000 of public money, and such agreement may not have the purpose or effect of limiting access to or disclosure of personnel data or limiting the discussion of information or opinions related to personnel data;
19. work location;
20. work telephone number;
21. badge number;
22. work-related continuing education;
23. honors and awards received; and
24. payroll time sheets or other comparable data that are used only to account for employee's work time for payroll purposes, except to the extent that release of time sheet data would reveal the employee's reasons for the use of sick or other medical leave or other not public data.

B. The following information on applicants for employment is public:

1. veteran status;
2. relevant test scores;
3. rank on eligible list;
4. job history;
5. education and training; and
6. work availability.

- C. Names of applicants are private data except when certified as eligible for appointment to a vacancy or when they become finalists for an employment position.
- D. Applicants for appointment to a public body.
 - 1. Data about applicants for appointment to a public body are private data on individuals except that the following are public:
 - a. name;
 - b. city of residence, except when the appointment has a residency requirement that requires the entire address to be public;
 - c. education and training;
 - d. employment history;
 - e. volunteer work;
 - f. awards and honors;
 - g. prior government service;
 - h. any data required to be provided or that are voluntarily provided in an application for appointment to a multimember agency pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 15.0597; and
 - i. veteran status.
 - 2. Once an individual is appointed to a public body, the following additional items of data are public:
 - a. residential address;
 - b. either a telephone number or electronic mail address where the appointee can be reached, or both at the request of the appointee;
 - c. first and last dates of service on the public body;
 - d. the existence and status of any complaints or charges against an appointee; and
 - e. upon completion of an investigation of a complaint or charge against an appointee, the final investigative report is public, unless access to the data would jeopardize an active investigation.

3. Notwithstanding paragraph 2., any electronic mail address or telephone number provided by a public body for use by an appointee shall be public. An appointee may use an electronic mail address or telephone number provided by the public body as the designated electronic mail address or telephone number at which the appointee can be reached.
- E. Regardless of whether there has been a final disposition as defined in Minn. Stat. § 13.43, Subd. 2(b), upon completion of an investigation of a complaint or charge against a public official, as defined in Minn. Stat. § 13.43, Subd. 2(e), or if a public official resigns or is terminated from employment while the complaint or charge is pending, all data relating to the complaint or charge are public, unless access to the data would jeopardize an active investigation or reveal confidential sources.
- F. Data relating to a complaint or charge against a public official is public only if: (1) the complaint or charge results in disciplinary action or the employee resigns or is terminated from employment while the complaint or charge is pending; or (2) potential legal claims arising out of the conduct that is the subject of the complaint or charge are released as part of a settlement agreement. Data that is classified as private under another law is not made public by this provision.

V. PRIVATE PERSONNEL DATA

- A. All other personnel data are private and will only be shared with school district staff whose work requires such access. Private data will not be otherwise released unless authorized by law or by the employee's informed written consent.
- B. Data pertaining to an employee's dependents are private data on individuals.
- C. Data created, collected or maintained by the school district to administer employee assistance programs are private.
- D. Parking space leasing data are private.
- E. An individual's checking account number is private when submitted to a government entity.
- F. Personnel data may be disseminated to labor organizations to the extent the school district determines it is necessary for the labor organization to conduct its business or when ordered or authorized by the Commissioner of the Bureau of Mediation Services.
- G. The school district may display a photograph of a current or former employee to prospective witnesses as part of the school district's investigation of any complaint or charge against the employee.
- H. The school district may, if the responsible authority or designee reasonably determines that the release of personnel data is necessary to protect an employee from harm to self or to protect another person who may be harmed by the employee,

release data that are relevant to the concerns for safety to:

1. the person who may be harmed and to the attorney representing the person when the data are relevant to obtaining a restraining order;
 2. a pre-petition screening team conducting an investigation of the employee under Minn. Stat. § 253B.07, Subd. 1; or
 3. a court, law enforcement agency, or prosecuting authority.
- I. Private personnel data or confidential investigative data on employees may be disseminated to a law enforcement agency for the purpose of reporting a crime or alleged crime committed by an employee, or for the purpose of assisting law enforcement in the investigation of such a crime or alleged crime.
- J. A complainant has access to a statement provided by the complainant to the school district in connection with a complaint or charge against an employee.
- K. When allegations of sexual or other types of harassment are made against an employee, the employee shall not have access to data that would identify the complainant or other witnesses if the school district determines that the employee's access to that data would:
1. threaten the personal safety of the complainant or a witness; or
 2. subject the complainant or witness to harassment.

If a disciplinary proceeding is initiated against the employee, data on the complainant or witness shall be available to the employee as may be necessary for the employee to prepare for the proceeding.

- L. The school district shall make any report to the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board or the state board of education as required by Minn. Stat. § 122A.20, Subd. 2, and shall, upon written request from the licensing board having jurisdiction over a teacher's license, provide the licensing board with information about the teacher from the school district's files, any termination or disciplinary proceeding, and settlement or compromise, or any investigative file in accordance with Minn. Stat. § 122A.20, Subd. 2.
- M. Private personnel data shall be disclosed to the department of economic security for the purpose of administration of the unemployment insurance program under Minn. Stat. Ch. 268.
- N. When a report of alleged maltreatment of a student in a school is made to the Commissioner of Education, data that are relevant and collected by the school about the person alleged to have committed maltreatment must be provided to the Commissioner on request for purposes of an assessment or investigation of the maltreatment report. Additionally, personnel data may be released for purposes of

informing a parent, legal guardian, or custodian of a child that an incident has occurred that may constitute maltreatment of the child, when the incident occurred, and the nature of the conduct that may constitute maltreatment.

- O. The school district shall release to a requesting school district or charter school private personnel data on a current or former employee related to acts of violence toward or sexual contact with a student, if an investigation conducted by or on behalf of the school district or law enforcement affirmed the allegations in writing prior to release and the investigation resulted in the resignation of the subject of the data; or the employee resigned while a complaint or charge involving the allegations was pending, the allegations involved acts of sexual contact with a student, and the employer informed the employee in writing, before the employee resigned, that if the employee resigns while the complaint or charge is still pending, the employer must release private personnel data about the employee's alleged sexual contact with a student to a school district or charter school requesting the data after the employee applies for employment with that school district or charter school and the data remain classified as provided in Minn. Stat. Ch. 13. Data that are released under this paragraph must not include data on the student.
- P. The identity of an employee making a suggestion as part of an organized self-evaluation effort by the school district to cut costs, make the school district more efficient, or to improve school district operations is private.
- Q. Health information on employees is private unless otherwise provided by law. To the extent that the school district transmits protected health information, the school district will comply with all privacy requirements.
- R. Personal home contact information for employees may be used by the school district and shared with another government entity in the event of an emergency or other disruption to ensure continuity of operation for the school district or government entity.
- S. The personal telephone number, home address, and electronic mail address of a current or former employee of a contractor or subcontractor maintained as a result of a contractual relationship between the school district and a contractor or subcontractor entered on or after August 1, 2012, are private data. These data must be shared with another government entity to perform a function authorized by law. The data also must be disclosed to a government entity or any person for prevailing wage purposes.
- T. When a teacher is discharged immediately because the teacher's license has been revoked due to a conviction for child abuse or sexual abuse or when the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) makes a final determination of child maltreatment involving a teacher, the school principal or other person having administrative control of the school must include in the teacher's employment record the information contained in the record of the disciplinary action or the final maltreatment determination, consistent with the definition of public data under Minn. Stat. § 13.41, Subd. 5, and must provide the

Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board and the licensing division at MDE with the necessary and relevant information to enable the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board and MDE's licensing division to fulfill their statutory and administrative duties related to issuing, renewing, suspending, or revoking a teacher's license. In addition to the background check required under Minn. Stat. § 123B.03, a school board or other school hiring authority must contact the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board and MDE to determine whether the teacher's license has been suspended or revoked, consistent with the discharge and final maltreatment determinations. Unless restricted by federal or state data practices law or by the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, the responsible authority for a school district must disseminate to another school district private personnel data on a current or former teacher (employee or contractor) of the district, including the results of background investigations, if the requesting school district seeks the information because the subject of the data has applied for employment with the requesting school district.

VI. MULTIPLE CLASSIFICATIONS

If data on individuals are classified as both private and confidential by Minn. Stat. Ch. 13, or any other state or federal law, the data are private.

VII. CHANGE IN CLASSIFICATIONS

The school district shall change the classification of data in its possession if it is required to do so to comply with other judicial or administrative rules pertaining to the conduct of legal actions or with a specific statute applicable to the data in the possession of the disseminating or receiving agency.

VIII. RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY

The school district has designated [*name and title, telephone*] as the authority responsible for personnel data. If you have any questions, contact [*him/her*].

IX. EMPLOYEE AUTHORIZATION/RELEASE FORM

An employee authorization form is included as an addendum to this policy.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 (Minnesota Government Data Practices Act)
Minn. Stat. § 13.02 (Definitions)
Minn. Stat. § 13.37 (General Nonpublic Data)
Minn. Stat. § 13.39 (Civil Investigation Data)
Minn. Stat. § 13.43 (Personnel Data)
Minn. Stat. § 13.601, Subd. 3 (Elected and Appointed Officials)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.20, Subd. 2 (Mandatory Reporting)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, Subds. 13 and 16 (Employment; Contracts; Termination)

Minn. Stat. § 626.556, Subd. 7 (Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors)
P.L. 104-191 (HIPAA)
45 C.F.R. Parts 160 and 164 (HIPAA Regulations)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 206 (Public Participation in School Board Meetings/Complaints about Persons at School Board Meetings and Data Privacy Considerations)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)
MSBA Service Manual, Chapter 13, School Law Bulletin “T” (School Records – Privacy – Access to Data)

Adopted: _____

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 205

Orig. 1995

Revised: _____

Rev. 2017

205 OPEN MEETINGS AND CLOSED MEETINGS

[Note: The provisions of this policy accurately reflect the Open Meeting Law statute and are not discretionary in nature.]

I. PURPOSE

- A. The school board embraces the philosophy of openness in the conduct of its business, in the belief that openness produces better programs, more efficiency in administration of programs, and an organization more responsive to public interest and less susceptible to private interest. The school board shall conduct its business under a presumption of openness. At the same time, the school board recognizes and respects the privacy rights of individuals as provided by law. The school board also recognizes that there are certain exceptions to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law as recognized in statute where it has been determined that, in limited circumstances, the public interest is best served by closing a meeting of the school board.
- B. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to assure the rights of the public to be present at school board meetings, while also protecting the individual's rights to privacy under law, and to close meetings when the public interest so requires as recognized by law.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. Except as otherwise expressly provided by statute, all meetings of the school board, including executive sessions, shall be open to the public.
- B. Meetings shall be closed only when expressly authorized by law.

III. DEFINITION

“Meeting” means a gathering of at least a quorum or more members of the school board, or quorum of a committee or subcommittee of school board members, at which members discuss, decide, or receive information as a group on issues relating to the official business of the school board. The term does not include a chance or social gathering or the use of social media by members of a public body so long as the social media use is limited to exchanges with all members of the general public. For purposes of the Open Meeting Law, social media does not include e-mail.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Meetings

1. Regular Meetings

A schedule of the regular meetings of the school board shall be kept on file at its primary offices. If the school board decides to hold a regular meeting at a time or place different from the time or place stated in its schedule, it shall give the same notice of the meeting as for a special meeting.

2. Special Meetings

- a. For a special meeting, the school board shall post written notice of the date, time, place, and purpose of the meeting on the principal bulletin board of the school district or on the door of the school board's usual meeting room if there is no principal bulletin board. The school board's actions at the special meeting are limited to those topics included in the notice.
- b. The notice shall also be mailed or otherwise delivered to each person who has filed a written request for notice of special meetings.
- c. This notice shall be posted and mailed or delivered at least three days before the date of the meeting. As an alternative to mailing or otherwise delivering notice to persons who have filed a written request, the school board may publish the notice once, at least three days before the meeting, in the official newspaper of the school district or, if none, in a qualified newspaper of general circulation within the area of the school district.
- d. A person filing a request for notice of special meetings may limit the request to particular subjects, in which case the school board is required to send notice to that person only concerning those particular subjects.
- e. The school board will establish an expiration date on requests for notice of special meetings and require refiling once each year. Not more than 60 days before the expiration date of request for notice, the school board shall send notice of the refiling requirement to each person who filed during the preceding year.

3. Emergency Meetings

- a. An emergency meeting is a special meeting called because of circumstances that, in the judgment of the school board, require immediate consideration.

[Note: While the statute leaves the question to the board of whether the circumstances require immediate consideration at an emergency meeting, the advisory opinions of the Commissioner of Administration would limit

such meetings to responding to natural disasters or health epidemics caused by an event such as an accident or terrorist attack.]

- b. If matters not directly related to the emergency are discussed or acted upon, the minutes of the meeting shall include a specific description of those matters.
- c. The school board shall make good faith efforts to provide notice of the emergency meeting to each news medium that has filed a written request for notice if the request includes the news medium's telephone number.
- d. Notice of the emergency meeting shall be given by telephone or any other method used to notify the members of the school board.
- e. Notice shall be provided to each news medium which has filed a written request for notice as soon as reasonably practicable after notice has been given to the school board members.
- f. Notice shall include the subject of the meeting.
- g. Posted or published notice of an emergency meeting shall not be required.
- h. The notice requirements for an emergency meeting as set forth in this policy shall supersede any other statutory notice requirement for a special meeting that is an emergency meeting.

4. Recessed or Continued Meetings

If a meeting is a recessed or continued session of a previous meeting, and the time and place of the meeting was established during the previous meeting and recorded in the minutes of that meeting, then no further published or mailed notice is necessary.

5. Closed Meetings

The notice requirements of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law apply to closed meetings.

6. Actual Notice

If a person receives actual notice of a meeting of the school board at least 24 hours before the meeting, all notice requirements are satisfied with respect to that person, regardless of the method of receipt of notice.

7. Health Pandemic or Declared Emergency

In the event of a health pandemic or an emergency declared under Minn. Stat. Ch. 12, a meeting may be conducted by telephone or other electronic means in compliance with Minn. Stat. § 13D.021.

8. Meetings Conducted by Interactive Technology

A meeting may be conducted by interactive technology, Skype, or other similar electronic means in compliance with Minn. Stat. § 13D.02.

B. Votes

The votes of school board members shall be recorded in a journal kept for that purpose, and the journal shall be available to the public during all normal business hours at the administrative offices of the school district.

C. Written Materials

1. In any open meeting, a copy of any printed materials, including electronic communications, relating to the agenda items prepared or distributed by the school board or its employees and distributed to or available to all school board members shall be available in the meeting room for inspection by the public while the school board considers their subject matter.
2. This provision does not apply to materials not classified by law as public, or to materials relating to the agenda items of a closed meeting.

D. Data

1. Meetings may not be closed merely because the data to be discussed are not public data.
2. Data that are not public data may be discussed at an open meeting if the disclosure relates to a matter within the scope of the school board's authority and is reasonably necessary to conduct the business or agenda item before the school board.
3. Data discussed at an open meeting retain the data's original classification; however, a record of the meeting, regardless of form, shall be public.

E. Closed Meetings

1. Labor Negotiations Strategy

- a. The school board may, by a majority vote in a public meeting, decide to hold a closed meeting to consider strategy for labor negotiations, including negotiation strategies or developments or discussion and review of labor negotiation proposals.

- b. The time and place of the closed meeting shall be announced at the public meeting. A written roll of school board members and all other persons present at the closed meeting shall be made available to the public after the closed meeting. The proceedings shall be tape recorded, and the tape recording shall be preserved for two years after the contract discussed at the meeting is signed. The recording shall be made available to the public after all labor contracts are signed by the school board for the current budget period.

2. Sessions Closed by Bureau of Mediation Services

All negotiations, mediation sessions, and hearings between the school board and its employees or their respective representatives are public meetings. These meetings may be closed only by the Commissioner of the Bureau of Mediation Services (BMS). The use of recording devices, stenographic records, or other recording methods is prohibited in mediation meetings closed by the BMS.

3. Preliminary Consideration of Charges

The school board shall close one or more meetings for preliminary consideration of allegations or charges against an individual subject to its authority. If the school board members conclude that discipline of any nature may be warranted as a result of those specific charges or allegations, further meetings or hearings relating to those specific charges or allegations held after that conclusion is reached must be open. A meeting must also be open at the request of the individual who is the subject of the meeting. A closed meeting must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

4. Performance Evaluations

The school board may close a meeting to evaluate the performance of an individual who is subject to its authority. The school board shall identify the individual to be evaluated prior to closing a meeting. At its next open meeting, the school board shall summarize its conclusions regarding the evaluation. A meeting must be open at the request of the individual who is the subject of the meeting. A closed meeting must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

5. Attorney-Client Meeting

A meeting may be closed if permitted by the attorney-client privilege. Attorney-client privilege applies when litigation is imminent or threatened, or when the school board needs advice above the level of general legal

advice, i.e., regarding specific acts and their legal consequences. A meeting may be closed to seek legal advice concerning litigation strategy, but the mere threat that litigation might be a consequence of deciding a matter one way or another does not, by itself, justify closing the meeting. The motion to close the meeting must specifically describe the matter to be discussed at the closed meeting, subject to relevant privacy and confidentiality considerations under state and federal law. The law does not require that such a meeting be recorded.

6. Dismissal Hearing

- a. A hearing on the dismissal of a licensed teacher shall be public or private at the teacher's discretion. A hearing regarding placement of teachers on unrequested leave of absence shall be public.
- b. A hearing on dismissal of a student pursuant to the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act shall be closed unless the pupil, parent or guardian requests an open hearing.
- c. To the extent a teacher or student dismissal hearing is held before the school board and is closed, the closed meeting must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

7. Coaches; Opportunity to Respond

- a. If the school board has declined to renew the coaching contract of a licensed or nonlicensed head varsity coach, it must notify the coach within 14 days of that decision.
- b. If the coach requests the reasons for the nonrenewal, the school board must give the coach the reasons in writing within 10 days of receiving the request.
- c. On the request of the coach, the school board must provide the coach with a reasonable opportunity to respond to the reasons at a school board meeting.
- d. The meeting may be open or closed at the election of the coach unless the meeting is closed as required by Minn. Stat. § 13D.05, Subd. 2, to discuss educational or certain other nonpublic data.
- e. A closed meeting must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

8. Meetings to Discuss Certain Not Public Data

Any portion of a meeting must be closed if the following types of data are discussed:

- a. data that would identify alleged victims or reporters of criminal sexual conduct, domestic abuse, or maltreatment of minors or vulnerable adults;
- b. active investigative data collected or created by a law enforcement agency;
- c. educational data, health data, medical data, welfare data, or mental health data that are not public data; or
- d. an individual's personal medical records.
- e. A closed meeting must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

9. Purchase and Sale of Property

- a. The school board may close a meeting:
 - (1) to determine the asking price for real or personal property to be sold by the school district;
 - (2) to review confidential or nonpublic appraisal data; and
 - (3) to develop or consider offers or counteroffers for the purchase or sale of real or personal property.
- b. Before closing the meeting, the school board must identify on the record the particular real or personal property that is the subject of the closed meeting.
- c. The closed meeting must be tape recorded at the expense of the school district. The tape must be preserved for eight years after the date of the meeting and be made available to the public after all real or personal property discussed at the meeting has been purchased or sold or the school board has abandoned the purchase or sale. The real or personal property that is the subject of the closed meeting must be specifically identified on the tape. A list of school board members and all other persons present at the closed meeting must be made available to the public after the closed meeting.

- d. An agreement reached that is based on an offer considered at a closed meeting is contingent on its approval by the school board at an open meeting. The actual purchase or sale must be approved at an open meeting and the purchase price or sale price is public data.

10. Security Matters

- a. The school board may close a meeting to receive security briefings and reports, to discuss issues related to security systems, to discuss emergency response procedures, and to discuss security deficiencies in or recommendations regarding public services, infrastructure, and facilities, if disclosure of the information discussed would pose a danger to public safety or compromise security procedures or responses.
- b. Financial issues related to security matters must be discussed and all related financial decisions must be made at an open meeting.
- c. Before closing a meeting, the school board must refer to the facilities, systems, procedures, services, or infrastructures to be considered during the closed meeting.
- d. The closed meeting must be tape recorded at the expense of the school district and the recording must be preserved for at least four years.

11. Other Meetings

Other meetings shall be closed as provided by law, except as provided above. A closed meeting must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

F. Procedures for Closing a Meeting

The school board shall provide notice of a closed meeting just as for an open meeting. A school board meeting may be closed only after a majority vote at a public meeting. Before closing a meeting, the school board shall state on the record the specific authority permitting the meeting to be closed and shall describe the subject to be discussed.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 (Minnesota Government Data Practices Act)
Minn. Stat. Ch. 13D (Open Meeting Law)
Minn. Stat. § 121A.47, Subd. 5 (Student Dismissal Hearing)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.33, Subd. 3 (Coaches; Opportunity to Respond)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, Subd. 14 (Teacher Discharge Hearing)

Minn. Stat. § 179A.14, Subd. 3 (Labor Negotiations)
 Minn. Rules Part 5510.2810 (Bureau of Mediation Services)
Brown v. Cannon Falls Township, 723 N.W.2d 31 (Minn. App. 2006)
Brainerd Daily Dispatch v. Dehen, 693 N.W.2d 435 (Minn. App. 2005)
The Free Press v. County of Blue Earth, 677 N.W.2d 471 (Minn. App. 2004)
Prior Lake American v. Mader, 642 N.W.2d 729 (Minn. 2002)
Star Tribune v. Board of Education, Special School District No. 1, 507
 N.W.2d 869 (Minn. App. 1993)
Minnesota Daily v. University of Minnesota, 432 N.W.2d 189 (Minn. App.
 1988)
Moberg v. Independent School District No. 281, 336 N.W.2d 510 (Minn.
 1983)
Sovereign v. Dunn, 498 N.W.2d 62 (Minn. App. 1993), *rev. denied.* (Minn.
 1993)
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 19-008 (May 22, 2019)
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 19-006 (April 9, 2019)
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 18-019 (December 28, 2018)
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 17-005 (June 22, 2017)
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 13-009 (March 19, 2013)
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 12-004 (March 8, 2012)
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 11-004 (April 18, 2011)
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 10-020 (September 23, 2010)
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 09-020 (September 8, 2009)
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 08-015 (July 9, 2008)
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 06-027 (September 28, 2006)
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 04-004 (February 3, 2004)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 204 (School Board Meeting Minutes)
 MSBA/MASA Model Policy 206 (Public Participation in School Board
 Meetings/Complaints about Persons at School Board Meetings and Data
 Privacy Considerations)
 MSBA/MASA Model Policy 207 (Public Hearings)
 MSBA/MASA Model Policy 406 (Public and Private Personnel Data)
 MSBA/MASA Model Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)
 MSBA Service Manual, Chapter 13, School Law Bulletin “C” (Minnesota’s
 Open Meeting Law)

Other search considerations based upon statute

Minnesota Statute 122A.40 (excerpt provided below) addresses two areas school boards must also be aware of during the superintendent search process:

1. Residency
2. Candidates who may be related to a board member (additional information provided in School Board Guidelines for Special Voting Situations)

122A.40 EMPLOYMENT; CONTRACTS; TERMINATION.

Subdivision 1. Teacher defined.

A principal, supervisor, and classroom teacher and any other professional employee required to hold a license from the state department shall be deemed to be a "teacher" within the meaning of this section. A superintendent is a "teacher" only for purposes of subdivisions 3 and 19.

Subd. 3. Hiring, dismissing.

School boards must hire or dismiss teachers at duly called meetings. Where a husband and wife, brother and sister, or two brothers or sisters, constitute a quorum, no contract employing a teacher shall be made or authorized except upon the unanimous vote of the full board. A teacher related by blood or marriage, within the fourth degree, computed by the civil law, to a board member shall not be employed except by a unanimous vote of the full board. The initial employment of the teacher in the district must be by written contract, signed by the teacher and by the chair and clerk. All subsequent employment of the teacher in the district must be by written contract, signed by the teacher and by the chair and clerk, except where there is a master agreement covering the employment of the teacher. Contracts for teaching or supervision of teaching can be made only with qualified teachers. A teacher shall not be required to reside within the employing district as a condition to teaching employment or continued teaching employment.

In addition, Minnesota Statute 123B.143 (excerpt provided below) addresses the role of a superintendent and the board's contractual parameters.

123B.143 SUPERINTENDENT.

Subdivision 1. Contract; duties.

All districts maintaining a classified secondary school must employ a superintendent who shall be an ex officio nonvoting member of the school board. The authority for selection and employment of a superintendent must be vested in the board in all cases. An individual employed by a board as a superintendent shall have an initial employment contract for a period of time no longer than three years from the date of employment. Any subsequent employment contract must not exceed a period of three years. A board, at its discretion, may or may not renew an employment contract. A board must not, by action or inaction, extend the duration of an existing employment contract. Beginning 365 days prior to the expiration date of an existing employment contract, a board may negotiate and enter into a subsequent employment contract to take effect upon the expiration of the existing contract.



School Board Guidelines for Special Voting Situations

Subject	Vote	Minn. Stat.
Initial hire of a teacher related to a board member	Unanimous vote of the full board	122A.40, Subd. 3
Termination of continuing contract teacher	Majority roll call vote of the full board	122A.40, Subd. 7
Placement of teacher on unrequested leave of absence	Majority vote unless defined otherwise in the negotiated ULA language in a Master Agreement	122A.40, Subd. 11
District may reimburse employee for legal expenses	Majority vote Board member who is witness or alleged victim may not vote on reimbursement	123B.02, Subd. 20
School board member's right to employment	Majority approval at a meeting at which all board members are present	123B.195
School district general obligation bonds not exceeding 5-1/10 percent of the net tax capacity	2/3 majority vote of all the members of the board	128D.11, Subd. 3
Removal of board member for cause and fill vacancy	Concurrent vote of at least four board members	123B.09, Subd. 9
Designation of voting hours	Majority vote	205A.09
Designation of newspaper <u>other than</u> a 'qualified newspaper'	Unanimous vote	331A.04, Subd. 6(a)(4)
Donation or gift to the school district	2/3 majority vote	465.03

72

Subject	Vote	Minn. Stat.
Contract with employee class and a board member's spouse is in the class (spouse cannot receive a special benefit)	Majority of disinterested board members vote to approve the contract School board member-spouse must be directed to abstain from voting; essential facts of contract must be set forth at the meeting	471.88, Subd. 21
Designation of district bank/savings association School board member who is 'interested' shall disclose that the member is a director or employee; disclosure is entered in minutes; disclosure shall be made when bank or savings association is first designated as depository or source of borrowing or when member is elected (whichever is later)	Unanimous vote	471.88, Subd. 2
Official newspaper <u>with an interested board member</u> and the paper is the only newspaper complying with legal requirements on designation or publication	Unanimous vote	471.88, Subd. 3
District contract with a cooperative association that has an interested board member as shareholder or stockholder	Unanimous vote	471.88, Subd. 4
A contract that does not require bids <u>and</u> the contract involves an interested board member	Unanimous vote	471.88, Subd. 5
Contract to provide construction materials/services contract with interested board member when the school district population is equal to or less than 1,000	Unanimous vote Interested board member may not vote on the contract	471.88, Subd. 12
Application for federal or state grant for housing, community, or economic development and a board member may benefit	Unanimous vote Interested board member must abstain on voting on measures related to the grant	471.88, Subd. 17

73



Common Interview Mistakes

Below are ten common interview mistakes. School board members are wise to review the list prior to the interviews.

- 1. Poor or incomplete selection criteria.** If the school board hasn't carefully considered the skills and qualities needed for the position, the school board's interview questions won't get to the key issues.
- 2. Making a bad impression.** Plan ahead so the school board appears cohesive and organized. Start the interview on time and give the candidates your undivided attention. Avoid talking too much – whether it's in the formal interview or informal chitchat – the candidates should be the ones doing most of the talking. School boards don't want the best candidates to have an unfavorable opinion of the school board or school district.
- 3. Violations of the "Don't Ask" list.** Asking "Don't Ask" questions during an interview – intentionally or unintentionally – could subject the school district to a lawsuit. Remember, the "Don't Ask" questions pertain to every step of the process.
- 4. Vague questions, vague answers.** School board members shouldn't be left to interpret what a candidate said or meant. Interview questions should be open-ended but should not invite vague answers. Rather, when possible, ask the candidate to provide current and/or previous examples (i.e., How did you ...).
- 5. Forgetting the whole picture.** When the school board spends too much time on a particular topic, or the questions keep returning to a single topic, the "whole picture" is lost and important areas don't get covered. School board members also sometimes cling to one important characteristic – such as good communication skills – at the expense of considering other weaknesses. The reverse is also true.
- 6. Failure to probe motivation.** School board members certainly want to focus on a candidate's skills. However, the school board should also learn about the candidate's motivation and passion for the job. If the candidate isn't supportive of the school board's goals, the lack of support will be evident in his or her performance. Finding the right candidate is more than learning if a candidate can do the job; the issue is will he or she do it and do it well?
- 7. Treating the interview like a one-way street.** The school board must make sure the interview is a two-way conversation – the school board asks the candidates questions, yet ensures the candidates have time to ask their own questions.
- 8. Incomplete notes.** Without notes, school board members are unlikely to remember key points of each interview – especially after talking to several candidates. Good notes help ensure equal consideration of all candidates; otherwise, the first and last candidates tend to stand out and gain an unfair advantage.
- 9. Quick decisions.** Individuals without a great deal of interview experience may find it difficult to avoid first impressions and assign characteristics based on their own personal interpretations. However, school board members should take their time and make confident, measured decisions based on the pre-established selection criteria.
- 10. Accepting the wrong fit.** Being without a full-time, permanent superintendent for long is neither easy nor desirable. However, lowering the school board's standards to fill the position quickly is worse. When dealing with a high-profile job in a public institution, the process counts. Take your time.
- 11. Not checking your bias at the door.** See the following page for more information on the role Implicit Bias plays in candidate interviews.

WHAT IS BIAS?

First, it's important to understand what bias is and why we all have biases.

Bias is often regarded negatively. For the purpose of this discussion, we consider bias in the context of partiality, preconceived notion and predisposition. The reality is that biases naturally come from our brains' use of schemas. A schema can be described as a template of knowledge. We use schemas to process the information that bombards our senses every moment of every day. This is simply a way for us to sort information into categories that make sense to us. We have schemas about objects, processes and other human beings.

For example, our brain uses a schema to assign the category of "chair" to an object based on its flat seat, back and legs, even though the chair might be plain wood or lavishly upholstered. We may have a negative bias about plain wood chairs because we have had the uncomfortable experience of sitting in one for an extended period of time. We have a schema for the process of ordering food at a restaurant. We know what it means when a smiling person hands us a laminated document with descriptions of various dishes and prices. And, by observing assorted traits, we use schemas to naturally assign people into categories such as age, gender, race and role.

There are two types of bias, explicit and implicit. Both types of bias include stereotypes and attitudes.

STEREOTYPES are traits that we associate with a category. These associations may arise from direct personal experience or they might be relayed to us through stories, media and culture. "Elderly people are frail" is an example of a stereotype.

ATTITUDES are overall evaluative feelings that are positive or negative. If we meet someone who graduated from the same university, we tend to feel more at ease with that person.

WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

Implicit biases are those we carry without awareness or conscious direction. It is the result of our human brains using schemas to organize information into categories. Most of the work our brains do occurs on the unconscious level. Implicit bias does not mean that we hide our prejudices. We are unaware of these biases and they are generally not an indication of our beliefs and values.

This is important for interviewers to understand because without awareness we cannot know if we are acting on hidden biases. Implicit bias is also referred to as hidden or unconscious bias.

WHAT IS EXPLICIT BIAS?

In contrast, explicit bias means that we are aware that we have a particular thought or feeling. It sometimes means we understand the source of that thought or feeling. If you have an explicitly positive attitude toward chocolate, you consciously endorse and celebrate that preference.



Deliberation Scenarios

In preparation for deliberating in public, it can be helpful to discuss possible scenarios and plan in advance how the board might handle them. Below are some examples of what can occur during the deliberation process. Although these types of situations are rare, please discuss how your board might manage these scenarios in order to conduct open, honest, and positive deliberations regarding your district's candidates.

1. The Board is deadlocked regarding two finalists. As each side digs in, they drill deeper and deeper into the reasons they want their candidate. These reasons could be because they think the candidate will move to the area or are young and vital and will be visible and energetic. How could your board manage that discussion?
2. The debate regarding who should be offered the job is heated and begins to unravel. It reaches a point where comments are becoming personal from board member to board member or even questioning the chair's intentions and character. How do you respond in order to keep the discussion collaborative and professional?
3. During deliberations on the final candidates, one board member states they have information from credible sources that one candidate has issues in their background that the rest of the board does not know about and that is why they won't support their candidacy. How could your board manage the deliberations?

Again, these situations are rare; however, should they arise what can your board agree upon as fundamental principles to help keep the deliberations as respectful as possible? Please list them below.

Sample Interview Questions

Professional Information

1. Why are you interested in this position?
2. What do you consider to be your proudest accomplishment as an educator?
3. How do you systematically improve your knowledge and skills as an administrator?
4. In which professional area of expertise would you most like to improve?

Biographical and Self-Assessment

5. What administrative strengths will you bring to this school district?
6. If we visited with your staff, what would they say is your most obvious strength?
Weakness?
7. How does this position fit in with your long-term goals?
8. Do you consider yourself an “out front” leader or a “behind-the-scenes” leader?
9. Why are you seriously interested in becoming our superintendent?
10. What aspects of your education and experience would be especially helpful in this position?
11. How do you respond and personally deal with criticism?
12. What would you like to accomplish in your present position but doubt that you will be able to accomplish? Why?
13. Assume for the moment that you have completed a long successful career in the school district. What would you hope to be the three most significant achievements you will be remembered for?
14. What are your long-term career objectives?
15. What has been the most unpopular decision you have had to make and how did you handle the reaction to this decision?
16. What qualities do you possess that you believe make you an outstanding administrator?

School Board/Superintendent Relations

17. What is your responsibility if the school board proposes something that you think is educationally unsound?
18. What role do you think the school board should play in the hiring process for various categories of personnel, such as secretaries, teachers, and building administrators?
19. What would you do if you believed one or more school board members were exceeding the proper exercise of their office in the day-to-day operations of the school district?
20. How should a school board member respond to a constituent’s complaint concerning a teacher in an elementary school?
21. What is your definition of an ideal school board/superintendent relationship?
22. How would you help the school board maintain its leadership role in this world of educational change?
23. What would be your reaction if the school board opposes something which you thought was sound? What if the school board proposes something which you think is unsound or inappropriate?
24. How would you expect to be evaluated?
25. How would you work with a chronically “split board”?
26. What kind of understanding would you hope to establish between the school board and yourself in order to administer this school district effectively?

27. How would you keep the school board informed about what is happening in the school district?
28. How would you expect the school board to help you as a superintendent?
29. Describe your vision of the perfect relationship between the school board and the superintendent. What have you done in your past assignments to help achieve that relationship?
30. What types of events or behaviors have caused you to feel at odds with your school board and how have you resolved those situations?
31. Describe how you keep your school board fully informed between meetings.
32. Describe how you would prepare an agenda for the next school board meeting. What is your procedure for determining how items get on the agenda?
33. How would you prepare the school board to make a decision on a politically sensitive or controversial issue?
34. How do you feel the annual evaluation of superintendent performance should be handled? What elements should be included in the evaluation?
35. What is your role in developing school board policy?
36. What role should the superintendent play in orienting new school board members? How should this be accomplished?
37. How would you propose to have your performance evaluated? By whom? On what criteria? How often?
38. Tell us about your past relations with your school board.
39. How do you balance conflicting interests between school board and school district support groups?

Personnel, Management, and Administration

40. Describe your philosophy of effective delegation.
41. What do you consider to be the most important duties of a CEO?
42. How would you set up an accountability system for personnel?
43. How would you motivate the teaching, administrative, and support staff to achieve new levels of excellence in education for children of all abilities?
44. What do you understand to be your responsibility in providing professional educational leadership?
45. How have you shared decision making with staff and citizens?
46. How aggressive would you be in creating change within the school district?
47. How would you build trust and collaboration within the school district?
48. How would you describe your management style? Would your subordinates describe it the same way?
49. What is your understanding of the administrative team concept? How would you implement that concept?
50. How do you delegate responsibility to others?
51. How would you improve the abilities of the professional staff?
52. Is there a difference between management and leadership? If so, what might that be? Can an individual be a manager and a leader?
53. How would you describe your management philosophy? Your managerial strengths and weaknesses?
54. How would you go about evaluating the effectiveness of our current administrative team? If you were to feel some re-alignment were necessary, how would you go about making a change?

55. How do you make decisions? Please relate the process you used in making your last important decision.
56. What process do you use (or would you use) to hire staff? At the school district level? At the building level?
57. How do you handle a conflict between parents and a building principal over school rules?
58. What is your philosophy concerning the recruitment of personnel?
59. What procedures do you find most useful in recruiting administrators and teachers?
60. Describe your experience with negotiations. What role do you prefer to play? How much has your school board been involved?
61. How do you maintain a collaborative relationship with the staff and/or teachers' association?
62. What kind of authority do you give to principals, and how do you hold them accountable?
63. If a teacher expresses concern to you about a principal's written evaluation of his/her performance, what would you do?
64. What is your philosophy concerning human resource development?
65. Tell us about your training in conflict management and consensus building.

Finance and Building Programs

66. What is your procedure in developing a school district-wide budget?
67. What are some of the techniques you would recommend the school district use to cut the budget if that becomes necessary?
68. How would you suggest this school district handle long-range financial planning?
69. What is your experience in organizing and successfully passing bond issues?
70. Explain how you achieved success in past assignments that required coping with flat or minimally increasing revenues in the face of substantially increasing student enrollments.
71. Explain how you have achieved the appropriate balance between the need to protect the taxpayer's wallet and the need to have an outstanding program for students.
72. How would you develop a budget for the school district?
73. What is the school board's role in the budget process?
74. How would you involve the school board, staff, and the community in the budget process?
75. What is your experience in passing referendums?
76. How would you describe your understanding of school district finance? What do you know of finance issues?
77. Describe the budget-making process you have used.
78. What has been your experience with budget management, budgetary controls, and budget reduction?
79. What financial responsibilities have been assigned to others in your school district?
80. How would you suggest establishing a reasonable balance between budgeting for needed school district improvements and maintaining the fiscal integrity of the school district?
81. What financial difficulties have you encountered? What did you do?
82. How involved are you in the budgeting process and financial planning of your school district or do you leave those decisions to a business manager? (Superintendents from large school districts usually have a business manager.)

Community Relations

83. Describe ways you would help build public confidence in this school district.
84. How would you be involved in the community?
85. How have you effectively kept the public involved with the school district?

86. As CEO, how would you establish partnerships with the business community to support the school district?
87. What is the role of the superintendent and the school board in developing community support for the schools?
88. How would you involve the business community in the schools?
89. How would you involve the community in the schools?
90. Describe what you believe is an effective public information program.
91. How would you, as superintendent, be involved in the civic affairs of the community?
92. How do you make yourself available to community members/groups who have need of information, questions, concerns?
93. Give some specific examples of ways you have successfully communicated to your shareholders accomplishments and problems.
94. How is the content of regular reports to the community determined?
95. What evidence can you cite which indicates your success in gaining school board and community support for educational programs?
96. How important do you feel it is for the superintendent to be visible throughout the community? How would you decide what activities/organizations are worth the time and effort of active participation?
97. How would you inform the staff of action taken at the last school board meeting?
98. How would you handle parent complaints about teacher performance?
99. What role do you believe you should play in community organizations?
100. How do you maintain visibility in the school district where you work now?
101. Describe your relations with your business community.
102. How have you succeeded in maintaining connection with and support from families who no longer have children in the schools?

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

103. How will you lead to ensure that the diverse and rich backgrounds of all members in our school community will be heard and included?
104. Please provide an example of how you have intentionally sought out diverse perspectives to reach a more just and equitable outcome.
105. Please share your understanding of how diversity, equity, and inclusion are interconnected.
106. How will you work to improve educational experiences and outcomes for our students who have been historically underserved and underrepresented?
107. Please describe your approach to recruiting, hiring, and retaining more educators of color? (Or Please describe your approach to recruiting, hiring, and retaining more Black and Indigenous educators and educators of color?)
108. What does educational equity mean to you?
109. How has your racial identity and culture shaped and informed your world view? How are you actively working to increase and grow your own racial and cultural critical consciousness?
110. How will you develop authentic and enduring partnerships with various district stakeholder groups to support the achievement of all students?
111. Describe how you would handle the inevitable opposition that often accompanies the courageous work of educational equity.
112. School districts are responsible for providing a high quality, equitable education for each and every student. What does an equitable education look like to you and how will you lead with an equity lens?

113. Share examples of systemic and institutional racism in our education system. How will you work toward dismantling those barriers?
114. Provide an example of the strategies you have used to create an inclusive learning environment for all students, regardless of ability, race, or life experiences.
115. How would you advocate for equity and diversity initiatives with both staff and community members that don't see its value?
116. Why do you think it's important to address diversity and equity issues in this position, and what are some ways you might do that?
117. As a member of district administration, what does it mean to you to use an "equity lens" in your decision-making processes?
118. Has the pandemic changed your perceptions of equity issues in public education, and if so, in what ways?

Negotiations

119. Do you prefer to use traditional or collegial process for bargaining? Why?
120. If we talked to a union representative in your school district, how would he or she describe your relationships?
121. Have you worked with outside consultants in the area of collective bargaining? How do you choose and work with outside consultants?
122. Describe your experience in working with employee unions.

Curriculum and Instruction

123. How have you been involved in using technology in administration and instructional programs?
124. Describe how you would evaluate the instructional programs of this school district.
125. What have you found to be effective in increasing the achievement of low socio-economic and minority students?
126. How would you determine the educational strengths and weaknesses of the school district?
127. How would you achieve and maintain the proper balance between academics and extracurricular programs?
128. Describe the techniques you have found most successful to maintain and improve the quality of instruction in classrooms with a stable and long-tenured staff.
129. Describe the educational change in your previous school district of which you are most proud.
130. What criteria do you use in evaluating an instructional program?
131. What, if any, new educational programs are available which are likely to improve schooling for pre-kindergarten students? Elementary students? Middle school students? High school students?
132. What have you done to upgrade the educational programs in schools under your supervision? How have you evaluated the results?
133. During your first year as our superintendent, how might you go about determining the strengths and weaknesses of this school district?
134. What educational programs at the federal level do you consider most significant at this time?
135. Describe your most successful efforts to use the influence of the superintendency to increase student achievement at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels.
136. How would you determine whether an excellent school system needs to be improved?
137. How would you conduct an assessment of the school district's current curriculum and its instructional programs?

138. Describe an appropriate role for the school board in curriculum development.
139. Discuss how you would ensure the relevance of a school district's educational program for students in the next century.
140. What do you see as the emerging role of technology as used in education?
141. What curricular innovations have you implemented in your school district?
142. What worthwhile educational trends do you see as having a significant impact on education in the immediate future?
143. What process do you use to bring about curriculum changes in your school district?
144. What are your thoughts on "inclusion" for multi-needs special education students?

Accountability

145. What do you view as your major responsibilities in helping our school district meet the requirements of the accountability system?
146. What were some of your previous successes in meeting the state standards?
147. What else should be included in a local accountability system beyond those required by the state?
148. Describe your involvement and successes in the establishment or revision of legislation favorable to schools in general and your past school districts in particular.

Grant Writing and Administration

149. What are some examples that demonstrate your background in grant writing and administration?
150. How should a school district implement a successful grant writing and administration program?
151. Who are some of the key people involved in a successful grant program?
152. What is your basic philosophy regarding the use of grants to fund public education?
153. What grants have you written and how have they impacted student learning?

Leadership

154. What are the strongest leadership characteristics you bring to the position of superintendent?
155. What would your former subordinates say about your leadership style?
156. Give us a couple of examples of tough leadership situations you've faced in the past and how you handled them.
157. What's your approach for dealing with the different leadership styles among those leaders who work for you?
158. What would your school board/administration say are your strengths/weaknesses?
159. In considering your last one or two positions, describe a few accomplishments which you would attribute to your leadership.

Dealing with Change

160. How do you intend to deal with the significant number of changes occurring in education today?
161. What are some examples of significant changes you instituted in your past organizations?
162. How do you build the support needed throughout the organization for needed changes?
163. How do you motivate those in the school district who tend to resist needed changes?

Planning

164. How are the school board's role and the superintendent's role in school district planning different?
165. How should the community be involved in school district planning?
166. How would you lead the school district in developing long-range strategic and short-range operational plans?
167. What type of information about school district operations should the superintendent supply to school board members?
168. How would you determine long-range and short-range goals for the school district? Whom would you involve in the planning process? Have you worked on a strategic plan for your school district?
169. How would you implement short- and long-range school district goals? How would you monitor and evaluate their implementation?
170. When, if ever, do you feel the use of staff or community advisory committees is appropriate? How would you use them?
171. How do you delegate to others? How do you monitor the performance of those who are responsible?

Technology

172. Give an example of how your school district now uses technology.
173. Explain how your present school district uses technology in the classroom.
174. Describe how you have been involved in implementing technology in your school district.
175. What does the research tell you about the use of technology in the classroom?

Summary

176. If selected, when would you be able to assume this position?
177. Upon review of the school district's hiring criteria, is there anything about your past work experience that you would like to share with us?
178. Do you have any questions you would like to ask school board members?

The Candidate's Turn

The school board has its questions answered; now it's the candidate's turn. The school board plans time in the interviews so candidates can ask questions about the school board's expectations and the school district. If the school board-superintendent relationship is akin to a "marriage," then both parties need to understand the other before making a commitment. The superintendent wants the school district to be a good fit for him/her as much as the school board wants the superintendent to be a good fit for the school district.

With a small pool of qualified candidates and a highly competitive environment, school board members should be prepared to explain why their school district is a good place to work, while acknowledging the challenges they face.

School board members should be aware that candidates, especially those who consider themselves finalists, are asking tougher and tougher questions.

Sample Candidate Questions

- How do you evaluate your superintendent?
- What are the strengths of the school district?
- What are the school board's short- and long-term goals? What is the school district's vision?
- What are the school district's biggest challenges?
- How would you describe the relationship between the administration and teachers?
- What is the school district's financial condition?
- What does the school board see as its role? What about the superintendent's role?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses as a school board?
- Does the school district have any problems of which I should be aware?
- What does your community expect in terms of my involvement in the community?
- How will key administrators be selected?
- What are the most important skills you expect a superintendent to possess?
- How does the school board involve itself in the operation of the school district?

Sample Reference Check Questions

Remember, the reference check questions asked should relate both to the candidate's work and the school board's established hiring criteria. Some sample questions to ask references are provided below.

Questions to Ask School Board Members

- How often and under what circumstances did XXX contact you?
- What is XXX's role in building the agenda for the school board meeting?
- What is XXX's role at a school board meeting?
- How does XXX deal with school board members who have different agendas or points of view?
- Has XXX shown the ability to hold employees accountable for results?

Questions to Ask School District Employees

- Does XXX know your name?
- How do representatives of your employee group discuss work-related issues with XXX?
- Does XXX formally or informally recognize employees for good work?
- Can you identify a situation that has caused XXX to terminate the employment of, or to reprimand, an employee? How was it handled?

Questions to Ask Citizens

- Describe XXX's level of involvement in the community.
- What is the community's impression of XXX's ability to maintain control of school district costs?
- What is the community's perception of the quality of education in your school district?
- How has XXX developed support from businesses and other stakeholders?
- What is most needed in your school district?

Tips for Conducting Reference Checks

- *Always* check references.
- Do not ask “Don’t Ask” questions.
- Avoid asking “yes/no” questions.
- Ask about the candidate’s working relationship with other administrators and staff.
- Ask follow-up questions to get specifics. “Can you provide me a specific example?”
- Ask in what areas the candidate could use additional training or experience.
- Ask the critical questions: “Would you rehire the individual? If no, why?”
- Call past employers as well. The current employer may have reasons for wanting the candidate to leave, and this may distort the answers you received.

Deliberating in Public

The most difficult part of the superintendent search typically involves the final step: debating which finalist best meets the school district’s needs.

The debate is public. Many school board members struggle to balance meeting the spirit of the Open Meeting Law with the logistics of an open, honest discussion about the candidates’ attributes. How can school board members ensure they don’t offend any of the candidates? After all, what will happen if the top candidate declines the position and the school board has alienated its second or third choice?

While these concerns are legitimate, the school board must remember that it is analyzing the candidates because the candidates “voluntarily” sought the position. Candidates for a high-profile public position, such as the superintendency, know they will be judged on criteria set by the school board and/or community and that they will be judged against other candidates. As professionals, they willingly put themselves in that position in order to seek out opportunities in other school districts.

However, school board members should not launch into the process until they are prepared. School board members are reminded to treat the candidates fairly and with respect by emphasizing the candidates’ positive attributes instead of pointing out negative ones. This approach will call attention to a school board’s professionalism. If questions arise, school board members should seek advice from an MSBA search consultant.

If the school board has determined the qualifications it wants and carefully constructs the interview questions, the debate will follow logically. Do not, as individuals, go off on “fact-finding” missions. Do not entertain the demands of one self-interest group while ignoring others. Remember, the school board is trying to find someone to lead the entire school district, and the school board must try to match that individual’s skills with the individuals already employed by the school district.

School boards that plan ahead, abide by the law, and treat people with respect seldom have difficulty in finding new leadership for their school districts. By conducting a quality search, school boards will help usher in new leadership and elevate their stature as quality school boards with a quality educational product.

Do:	Don’t:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on the positive attributes of candidates during public discussion rather than negative ones.• Judge candidates based on the school board’s pre-established criteria.• Treat the candidates the way you would want to be treated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Go on individual fact-finding missions.• Let a special interest group shape the process.• Alienate any of the finalists.• Discuss the candidates in between interviews – save that discussion until you’ve completed the interviews for that round.

SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT

ARTICLE I PURPOSE

This Contract is entered into between Independent School District No. _____, _____, Minnesota, hereinafter referred to as the School District, and _____, hereinafter referred to as the Superintendent, a legally qualified and licensed superintendent who agrees to perform the duties of the Superintendent of the School District.

ARTICLE II APPLICABLE STATUTE

This Contract is entered into between the School District and the Superintendent in conformance with M.S. 123B.143.

ARTICLE III LICENSE

The Superintendent shall furnish the School Board, throughout the life of this Contract, a valid and appropriate license to act as superintendent in the State of Minnesota as provided by applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

ARTICLE IV DURATION, EXPIRATION, TERMINATION DURING THE TERM, MUTUAL CONSENT, AND CONTINGENCY

Section 1. Duration: This Contract is for a term of _____ years commencing on July 1, 20____, and ending on June 30, 20____. It shall remain in full force and effect unless modified by mutual consent of the School Board and the Superintendent or unless terminated as provided in this Contract.

NOTE 1: Pursuant to M.S. 123B.143, Subd. 1., a School Board may enter into a Contract with a Superintendent for a period of time no longer than three (3) years. The Contract must provide that the School Board, at its discretion, may or may not enter into a subsequent Contract. Such a Contract may not be extended during its term. However, during the last three hundred sixty-five (365) days of such a Contract, a School Board may negotiate and enter into a subsequent Contract to take effect upon the expiration of the existing Contract. Such subsequent Contract must be contingent upon the Superintendent completing the terms of the existing Contract.

Section 2. Expiration: This Contract shall expire at the end of the term specified in Section 1. above. At the conclusion of its term, neither party shall have any further claim against the other, and the School District's employment of the Superintendent shall cease, unless a subsequent Contract is entered into in accordance with M.S. 123B.143, Subd. 1.

NOTE 2: See "NOTE 1."

Section 3. Termination During the Term: The Superintendent's employment may be terminated during the term of this Contract only for cause as defined in M.S. 122A.40, Subd. 9. and Subd. 13., but, except for purposes of describing grounds for discharge, the provisions of M.S. 122A.40 shall not be applicable. If the School Board proposes to terminate the Superintendent during the term of this Contract for cause as described in M.S. 122A.40, Subd. 9. or Subd. 13., it shall notify the Superintendent in writing of the proposed grounds for termination. The Superintendent shall be entitled to a hearing before an arbitrator provided the Superintendent makes such a request in writing to the School Board Chair within

fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the written notice of the proposed termination. In such event, the parties shall jointly petition the Minnesota Bureau of Mediation Services (BMS) for a list of five (5) arbitrators. The arbitrator shall be selected by the parties through the striking process as provided by BMS rules. The arbitrator shall conduct a hearing under arbitration procedure rules and issue a written decision. The decision of the arbitrator shall be final and binding on the parties, subject to judicial review of arbitration decisions as provided by law. The Superintendent may be suspended with pay pending final determination by the arbitrator. If the Superintendent fails to request a hearing as provided in this section within the fifteen (15)-day calendar period, he/she shall be deemed to have acquiesced to the School Board's proposed action, and the proposed action shall become final on such date as determined by the School Board, and the Superintendent shall have no further claim or recourse.

Section 4. Mutual Consent: This Contract may be terminated at any time by mutual consent of the School Board and the Superintendent.

Section 5. Contingency: If this Contract is a subsequent Contract entered into prior to the completion of an existing Contract, this subsequent Contract is contingent upon the Superintendent completing the terms of the existing Contract.

ARTICLE V DUTIES

The Superintendent shall have charge of the administration of the schools under the direction of the School Board. The Superintendent shall be the chief executive officer of the School District; shall direct and assign teachers and other School District employees under the Superintendent's supervision; shall organize, reorganize, and arrange the administrative and supervisory staff, including instruction and business affairs, as best serves the School District subject to the approval of the School Board; shall select all personnel subject to the approval of the School Board; shall, from time to time, suggest policies, regulations, rules, and procedures deemed necessary for the School District; and, in general, perform all duties incident to the office of the Superintendent and such other duties as may be prescribed by the School Board from time to time. The Superintendent shall abide by the policies, regulations, rules, and procedures established by the School Board and the State of Minnesota. The Superintendent shall have the right to attend all School Board meetings and all School Board and citizen committee meetings, serve as an ex-officio member of the School Board and all School Board committees, and provide administrative recommendations on each item of business considered by each of these groups.

ARTICLE VI DUTY YEAR AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Section 1. Basic Work Year: The Superintendent's duty year shall be for the entire twelve (12)-month Contract year, and the Superintendent shall perform duties on those legal holidays on which the School Board is authorized to conduct school if the School Board so determines. The Superintendent shall be on duty during any emergency, natural or unnatural, unless otherwise excused in accordance with School Board administrative policy.

Section 2. Vacation: The Superintendent shall earn _____ working days of annual paid vacation each Contract year. Unused vacation must be taken within six (6) months after the end of the Contract year in which it is earned. Upon voluntary termination of employment or expiration of the Contract, if not offered a subsequent Contract, the Superintendent shall be entitled to payment for any unused vacation days earned and accrued pursuant to the provisions of this section; however, if the Superintendent is involuntarily terminated, he/she shall not be entitled to unused earned and accrued vacation days.

Section 3. Holidays: The Superintendent shall be entitled to _____ paid holidays as designated by the School Board each Contract year.

NOTE 3: The specific holidays should be listed.

Section 4. Sick Leave: The Superintendent shall earn paid sick leave at the rate of ____ day(s) each working month, and earned sick leave may accumulate to a maximum of ____ days. Upon voluntary termination of employment or expiration of the Contract, if not offered a subsequent Contract, the Superintendent shall be entitled to payment for any unused sick leave days earned and accrued pursuant to the provisions of this section; however, if the Superintendent is involuntarily terminated, he/she shall not be entitled to unused earned and accrued sick leave days.

Section 5. Workers' Compensation: Pursuant to M.S. Chapter 176, the Superintendent injured on the job in the service of the School District and collecting workers' compensation insurance may draw sick leave and receive full salary from the School District, the salary to be reduced by an amount equal to the insurance payments, and only that fraction of the days not covered by insurance will be deducted from accrued sick leave.

Section 6. Bereavement Leave: The Superintendent shall be granted bereavement leave for a death within the Superintendent's immediate family. The time utilized shall be in an amount to be determined after conferring with the School Board Chair. Days utilized [*will or will not*] be deducted from the Superintendent's sick leave. "Immediate family" is defined as the Superintendent's spouse, child, parent, brother, sister, or other relative who was living in the same household as the Superintendent.

Section 7. Emergency Leave: The Superintendent may be granted paid emergency leave at the discretion of the School Board.

Section 8. Jury Service: The Superintendent who serves on jury duty shall be granted the day or days necessary as stipulated by the court to discharge this responsibility without any salary deduction or loss of basic leave allowance. The compensation received for jury duty service shall be remitted to the School District.

Section 9. Military Leave: Military leave shall be granted pursuant to applicable law.

Section 10. Disability: If the Superintendent is unable to perform his/her regular duties because of personal illness or disability and has exhausted all accumulated sick leave, the School Board shall provide additional paid sick leave at a salary equal to _____ percent of the Superintendent's regular salary until the expiration of the waiting period for long-term disability insurance.

Section 11. Medical Leave: Pursuant to M.S. 122A.40, Subd. 12., the Superintendent shall have a right to a leave of absence for health reasons.

Section 12. Insurance Application: A Superintendent on unpaid leave is eligible to continue to participate in group insurance programs if permitted under the insurance policy provisions. The Superintendent shall pay the entire premium for such insurance commencing with the beginning of the leave and shall pay to the School District the monthly premium in advance. In the event the Superintendent is on paid leave from the School District under Section 4. above or supplemented by sick leave pursuant to Section 5. above, the School District will continue insurance contributions as provided in this Contract until sick leave is exhausted. Thereafter, the Superintendent must pay the entire premium for any insurance retained.

ARTICLE VII INSURANCE

Section 1. Health and Hospitalization and Dental Insurance: The School District shall provide the Superintendent and the Superintendent's dependents with health and hospitalization and dental insurance coverage under the School District's group health and hospitalization and dental insurance plans at the expense of the School District.

[or]

The School District shall provide the Superintendent and the Superintendent's dependents with health and hospitalization insurance coverage under the School District's group health and hospitalization insurance plan. The School District shall contribute the sum of \$_____ per month toward the premium for such insurance. The balance of the premium shall be paid by the Superintendent through payroll deduction. The School District shall also provide the Superintendent and the Superintendent's dependents with dental insurance coverage under the School District's group dental insurance plan. The School District shall contribute the sum of \$_____ per month toward the premium for such insurance. The balance of the premium shall be paid by the Superintendent through payroll deduction.

NOTE 4: In the event this Contract will cause or does cause penalties, fees, or fines to be assessed against the School District, the parties agree to reopen negotiations that result in a revised Contract between the parties that eliminates or reduces penalties, fees, or fines to be assessed against the School District. The amount of any reduction in the School District's contribution toward the Superintendent's healthcare benefits as a result of addressing the "highly compensated employee" component of the ACA will be placed into another School District provided benefit(s) (i.e., a retirement HRA, salary, etc.) as agreed upon between the parties.

Section 2. Life Insurance: The School District shall provide, at its own expense, term life insurance for the Superintendent under the School District's group term life insurance plan in the amount of \$_____, payable to the Superintendent's named beneficiary(ies).

NOTE 5: According to the Internal Revenue Service rules, the amount of School District premium contribution that pays for life insurance coverage in excess of \$50,000 is considered taxable income, so the School District should be certain that it is reporting that contribution as such, and the Superintendent needs to know why that amount is being reported.

Section 3. Long-Term Disability Insurance: The School District shall provide, at its own expense, long-term disability insurance for the Superintendent under the School District's group long-term disability insurance plan.

Section 4. Eligibility: The eligibility of the Superintendent and the Superintendent's dependent(s) and beneficiary(ies) for insurance benefits shall be governed by the terms of the insurance policies purchased by the School District pursuant to this article.

Section 5. Claims Against the School District: The School District's only obligation is to purchase the insurance policies described in this article, and no claim shall be made against the School District as a result of denial of insurance benefits by an insurer if the School District has purchased the policies and paid the premiums described in this article.

ARTICLE VIII OTHER BENEFITS

Section 1. Tax-Sheltered Annuities: The Superintendent is eligible to participate in a tax-sheltered annuity plan through payroll deduction established pursuant to Section 403(b) of the Internal

Revenue Code of 1986, M.S. 123B.02, Subd. 15., School District policy, and as otherwise provided by law.

Section 2. Vehicle: The School District shall compensate the Superintendent for business use of his/her private vehicle at the rate of ____ cents per mile pursuant to M.S. 471.665, Subd. 1.

[or]

The School District shall provide the Superintendent with a monthly allowance of \$____ for business use of his/her private vehicle pursuant to M.S. 471.665, Subd. 3.

NOTE 6: Prohibition Against Combination of Options. One of the two options above should be selected, and the other option deleted. Some School Districts have been utilizing a combination of M.S. 471.665, Subd. 1. and Subd. 3. – i.e., in-district travel and out-of-district travel. However, an opinion by the Minnesota Attorney General indicates that using the combination is improper (see Op. Atty. Gen. 11/20/95).

NOTE 7: Prohibition Against Personal Use of School District Vehicle. Two opinions by the Minnesota Attorney General conclude that a School District may not provide a school district-owned vehicle which the Superintendent utilizes for personal use even if the Superintendent pays for such personal use (see Op. Atty. Gen. 161b-12 1/24/89 and Op. Atty. Gen. 395b- 10/24/89).

NOTE 8: Statutory Restrictions on Personal Use of District-Owned Vehicles. M.S. 471.666 prohibits personal use of a vehicle owned, leased by, or loaned to a School District, except for incidental use related to School District business. Such a vehicle may not be used for transportation to or from the residence of the School District employee except for narrow, incidental use related to the School District's business. The effect of this restriction is so limiting that a School District's provision of District-owned, leased, or loaned vehicles for any personal use by the Superintendent is impractical (see M.S. 471.666).

Section 3. Conferences and Meetings: The School District shall pay all legally valid expenses and fees for the Superintendent's attendance at professional conferences and meetings with other educational agencies when such attendance is required, directed, or permitted by the School Board. The Superintendent shall periodically report to the School Board relative to all meetings and conferences attended. The Superintendent shall file itemized expense statements to be processed and approved as provided by School Board policy and law.

ARTICLE IX SALARY

The Superintendent shall be paid an annual salary of \$_____ for the 20__-20__ Contract year, \$_____ for the 20__ - 20__ Contract year, and \$_____ for the 20__ - 20__ Contract year. During the term of this Contract, the annual salary may be modified but shall not be reduced. The annual salary shall be paid in ____ equal installments during the Contract year.

[or]

The Superintendent shall be paid an annual salary of \$_____ for the 20__ - 20__ Contract year. The parties shall endeavor to agree by April 1 of each subsequent year as to the amount of the salary for the following year. During the term of this Contract, the annual salary may be modified but shall not be reduced. The annual salary shall be paid in ____ equal installments during the Contract year.

NOTE 9: Options. School Boards should use only one of the paragraphs above. The first paragraph fixes a salary for more than one year, while the second paragraph fixes the salary for one year and

requires mutual agreement for the subsequent year(s). Practices vary from School District to School District.

ARTICLE X EVALUATE PERFORMANCE

The School Board shall oversee, direct, and evaluate the Superintendent's performance as the School Board sees fit.

NOTE 10: The School Board and Superintendent should discuss a process for conducting at least an annual evaluation of the Superintendent's performance.

ARTICLE XI OTHER PROVISIONS

Section 1. Outside Activities: While the Superintendent shall devote full time and due diligence to the affairs and the activities of the School District, he/she may also serve as a consultant to other school districts or educational agencies, lecture, engage in writing and speaking activities, and engage in other activities if, as solely determined by the School Board, such activities do not impede the Superintendent's ability to perform the duties of the superintendency. However, the Superintendent may not engage in other employment, consultant service, or other activity for which a salary, fee, or honorarium is paid without the prior approval of the School Board.

Section 2. Indemnification and Provision of Counsel: In the event that an action is brought or a claim is made against the Superintendent arising out of or in connection with his/her employment and the Superintendent is acting within the scope of employment or official duties, the School District shall defend and indemnify the Superintendent to the extent provided by law. Indemnification, as provided in this section, shall not apply in the case of malfeasance in office or willful or wanton neglect of duty, and the obligation of the School District in this regard shall be subject to the limitations as provided in M.S. Chapter 466.

Section 3. Dues: The Superintendent is encouraged to belong to and participate in appropriate professional, educational, economic development, community, and civic organizations when such membership will serve the best interests of the School District. Accordingly, the School District will pay the membership dues for such organizations as are required, directed, or permitted by the School Board. The Superintendent shall present appropriate statements for approval as provided by law.

NOTE 11: Until 2007, School Districts were restricted to paying dues for their superintendents to belong to professional and educational organizations, but the 2007 Minnesota Legislature enacted M.S. 123B.02, Subd. 24., allowing School Districts to pay dues for other organizations if their School Boards deemed such membership to be appropriate.

Section 4. Medical Examination: The Superintendent shall have a comprehensive medical examination not less than once every ____ years. A summary document from the physician certifying the fitness of the Superintendent to perform the duties of the position shall be provided to the School Board Chair. The cost of said examination not covered by the School District's insurance program shall be paid by the School District.

[Section 5. Other Applicable Provisions: In this section, other terms and conditions of employment as agreed on between the parties should be included. Items such as severance pay, payment for unused sick leave, and extended leaves of absence, if provided to the Superintendent, are examples of what could be included. Since superintendents' contracts vary greatly in the manner in which they address such provisions, no attempt has been made to develop specific model Contract language.

However, if the parties are considering the inclusion of such provisions, both MSBA and MASA may be able to provide sample language upon request.]

NOTE 12: Since July 31, 1993, severance pay for highly compensated employees has been restricted. A "highly compensated employee" is an employee with estimated annual wages that are greater than sixty percent (60%) of the governor's salary and are equal to, or greater than, eighty percent (80%) of the estimated annual wages of the second highest paid employee of the School District. Severance pay for highly compensated employees is restricted to an amount equivalent to six (6) months of wages. For purposes of this restriction, payments for accumulated vacation and sick leave liquidated to cover the cost of group term insurance may be paid in addition to the six (6) months of severance pay. For exceptions to the six (6)-month restriction, see M.S. 465.722, Subd. 3., which may be found in section "D.5." of "Chapter 3" in the MSBA Service Manual.

ARTICLE XII
SEVERABILITY

The provisions of this Contract shall be severable, and if any such provision or the application of any such provision under any circumstances is held invalid, it shall not affect any other provisions of this Contract or the application of any provision thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have subscribed
my signature this ____ day of
_____, 20____.

Superintendent

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have subscribed
our signatures this ____ day of
_____, 20____.

School Board Chair

School Board Clerk

