



New England School Development Council  
28 Lord Road  
Marlborough, MA 01752  
www.nesdec.org

September 18, 2025

Rachel Billings, Procurement and Liability Manager  
City of Amesbury School District  
City Hall  
62 Friend Street  
Amesbury, MA 01913

Dear Ms. Billings and Members of the Amesbury School Committee:

We are delighted to be assisting in the search for a Superintendent for Amesbury Public Schools.

Enclosed please find an Agreement for services. If the Agreement meets with your approval, please return a copy to our office with an authorized signature on Page 7. We will then sign it on our end and send you a copy of the fully executed Agreement.

If there are questions about the Agreement or the Executive Search process, please call.

We thank the Amesbury School Committee for choosing NESDEC for this project.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David DeRuosi, Jr.", is written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

David DeRuosi, Jr., Ed.D.  
Executive Director

# **AGREEMENT**

## **AMESBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND NEW ENGLAND SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL FOR SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH CONSULTING SERVICES**

The New England School Development Council (NESDEC) is pleased to submit this Agreement to Amesbury Public Schools describing the services we will provide in the search for a Superintendent of Schools.

### **SCOPE OF WORK**

The Scope of Services will be provided by Dr. Mary Malone, NESDEC Search Consultant.

#### **DEVELOP A SCHEDULE FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH**

Before initiating an executive search, NESDEC recommends meeting with the School Committee to ensure that all the elements of the search expected by the Committee are included and that the timeline is constructed so as to accommodate the agreed-upon search activities. The NESDEC consultant will confer with the School Committee to develop an event schedule/timeline for the entire process. The schedule will detail the major tasks in the search process and delineate the respective responsibilities of the consultant and the School Committee.

*Please Note: In addition to being held in-person, meetings arranged for this executive search may be conducted via videoconference or telephone conference call if deemed advisable by the parties.*

#### **PUBLICIZE VACANCY: ADVERTISING AND ELECTRONIC OUTREACH**

NESDEC begins by preparing a customized application form which will include a permission statement for release and verification of records. The application is hosted on the NESDEC website, [www.nesdec.org](http://www.nesdec.org) and is advertised there as well.

NESDEC has a well-developed outreach network both in Massachusetts and throughout the New England states. NESDEC has the capability to communicate in hardcopy, electronically, and by telephone with a wide range of potential applicants. In our outreach, we focus upon individuals who likely possess the qualities, characteristics, skills, knowledge, and experiences preferred for a particular position.

NESDEC will draft a personalized informational letter (one page) describing the position, the school district, and the community. The School Committee and/or a representative will provide the input for the letter and will approve the final copy. The letter and any additional contents are designed to fit into a regular No. 10 business envelope (4 1/8" X 9 1/2"), up to one-ounce total weight. NESDEC can have the letter printed on school district or NESDEC stationery as selected by the School Committee. NESDEC mails the

informational letter announcing the vacancy and requesting nominations to the NESDEC Recruiting Network, including:

- Superintendents, assistant superintendents and job-related personnel in Massachusetts
- Member communities of the New England School Development Council
- Superintendents, assistant superintendents, and job-related personnel in selected school districts throughout New England, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania with characteristics similar to Amesbury

Using the informational letter as a model, NESDEC develops an electronic advertisement and distributes it on the following job boards (unless noted below, all electronic advertising is included in the professional fee charged to the district for the search):

- **SchoolSpring:** online, national advertisement, 30 days
- **Top School Jobs** (the online advertising service of *Education Week*): national advertisement, 30 days
- **American Association of School Administrators** (AASA) website **Job Bulletin:** online, national announcement, 30 days
- School Leadership 2.0 (SL20) website **School Leadership Jobs:** online, regional announcement, 40 days
- NESDEC routinely posts vacancies on targeted diversity websites, including: the **NABSE** (National Alliance of Black School Educators) **Career Center** and **ALAS** (Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents)
- NESDEC will place announcements in assorted superintendent/school board association websites
- NESDEC will discuss with the School Committee options for fee-based advertising of the vacancy in other selected venues

NESDEC prepares a customized email blast campaign of the vacancy and sends it at strategic points in the recruitment process to:

- member communities of the New England School Development Council
- superintendents, assistant superintendents, and job-related personnel in Massachusetts
- selected New England, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania superintendents and job-related personnel in school districts with similar characteristics to Amesbury
- Executive Directors of study councils affiliated with the National School Development Council (NSDC)
- Placement offices of colleges and universities throughout the nation that prepare school administrators
- Selected educational leadership professors throughout New England
- Other colleges and institutions as suggested by the School Committee
- Officers of the Suburban School Superintendents (National)
- Selected Executive Directors of state superintendent and school board associations in the United States

If requested, NESDEC can prepare newspaper copy for use in advertisements as directed by the School Committee. This is available as a fee-based service; please see page 8.

### **REGIONAL AND NATIONAL RECRUITMENT OF CANDIDATES**

Using its proprietary network, NESDEC recruits at the state, regional and national levels. Although NESDEC is a nationally recognized search firm, our national reach is further enhanced through our association with the National School Development Council (NSDC).

NESDEC actively recruits candidates for the position from its network of educational leaders representing school study councils nationwide, urban and suburban school superintendents, professors of educational administration and national professional associations.

### **DEVELOP A SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE PROFILE**

*Community Needs Assessment:* NESDEC meets with the School Committee to develop a plan for assessing the needs of the school system as seen by a cross-section of staff, students, parents, and other community members.

The consultant will conduct up to four focus groups with school/community representatives (combination of virtual and in-person) to receive their input regarding the new Superintendent. The focus groups will be scheduled as mutually agreed by the NESDEC consultant and the School Committee. If requested by the School Committee, the focus groups will be augmented through telephone/ videoconference interviews of selected officials, educational leaders, citizens, and others in the community. (Please see page 8 for the option of additional focus groups.)

If requested by the School Committee, NESDEC, using its proprietary web-based Community Input Questionnaire, will seek the views of school district and community stakeholders/ representatives regarding the characteristics and competencies desired in the new Superintendent.

*Analyze Data:* Incorporating the input provided through the focus groups, interviews and electronic survey, the consultant will conduct a facilitated conversation with the School Committee to discuss the qualities sought in the new Superintendent and the priorities for his/her/their attention once appointed. The results of the facilitated conversation will be developed into a *Successful Candidate Profile* and criteria to be used as applications are screened and candidates interviewed.

### **ASSIST IN SCREENING APPLICATIONS**

The consultant will develop with the School Committee a process for the screening of candidates. Since there are several alternatives, the process can be tailored to meet the needs of the School Committee. If a Screening Committee is to be used, NESDEC will suggest various models and membership for the Committee.

## **ASSIST IN INTERVIEWS OF CANDIDATES**

The consultant will conduct a workshop with the School Committee/Screening Committee to assist them in the interviewing and selection process. The consultant assists in the preparation of questions, in the development of rating scales, and in the planning of interviewing techniques.

NESDEC arranges the interview schedules and provides the Screening Committee with secure access to the dossier on each of the candidates via NESDEC's proprietary executive search website.

During the interview workshop, NESDEC will discuss with the School Committee/Screening Committee the role of the consultant during the preliminary interview phase of the search. Although the consultant will not attend the interviews, she will be available to debrief with the School Committee/Screening Committee and the candidates after each round of interviews. The consultant can assist throughout the interview process, as requested.

Once the Screening Committee has determined the finalists, NESDEC conducts credential verification and additional reference checks and supports members of the School Committee in making independent reference checks. If requested, NESDEC will assist with arrangements for School Committee members to communicate with representatives of the finalists' present school districts or institutions.

NESDEC assists with arrangements for finalists' interviews and in developing further interactions/exchanges with the school district and the community. The consultant will also be available to facilitate a meeting of the School Committee after the finalists' interviews, if requested. NESDEC will assist the School Committee in the final selection process, including the development of an "Agreement in Principle" with each of the finalists to discuss the terms and conditions of an offer before the selection.

## **ADMINISTER ALL SEARCH DETAILS**

During the application process, NESDEC responds to questions from interested candidates and directs them to the online application.

NESDEC receives all applications at its headquarters and create/maintain candidate files. Upon receipt, NESDEC will check all applications to determine they are complete, and if not complete, follow up with the potential candidate so that all material might be received by the closing date.

NESDEC communicates with unsuccessful candidates at appropriate stages during the search process. Once the School Committee has selected the new Superintendent, NESDEC will inform the unsuccessful candidates and other groups in our network about the School Committee's choice.

## **MAINTAIN ON-GOING COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

NESDEC's intent is to keep the School Committee informed about what is occurring at each stage of the search process, so that you will have the tools you need to communicate with your constituents. The consultant confers with the School

Committee/Screening Committee as needed throughout the search. Status updates are given regularly by telephone, text, email and/or videoconference, with the consultant providing progress reports to the Chairperson and/or the designated liaison.

### **FOLLOW-UP**

Once the successful candidate is chosen, NESDEC invites the new Superintendent to confer with one of our consultants to discuss the transition process particularly as it relates to his/her/their Entry Plan. NESDEC can assist with initial contract arrangements between the new Superintendent and the School Committee, if requested.

### **SEARCH DESIGN FLEXIBILITY**

*Please note:* NESDEC has the capacity to design a search around the School Committee's specific needs in order to accommodate such things as: desired timeline, degree of community involvement, and/or cost.

### **LANGUAGE TRANSLATION SERVICES**

*Please note:* This Agreement does not include language translation services of any kind. It is assumed that this type of assistance will be the responsibility of the District/ municipality.

However, if language translation services are required, NESDEC can coordinate with the local district-assigned translator to ensure the inclusion of members of the community in need of this service.

### **WARRANTY**

The search will be deemed completed upon the appointment of the new Superintendent to the position. If, after due consideration, the School Committee determines that it does not wish to appoint any of the candidates who have applied for the position, NESDEC will conduct a follow-up search for the same position and will provide consulting and support services at no cost except for advertising and search related expenses. (Fixed search-related expenses are noted on page 6.)

If a candidate chosen as the result of a NESDEC executive search should leave the position either voluntarily or involuntarily for any reason other than retirement or a transfer/appointment in the school system or transfer/appointment to a position in the municipality within an eighteen-month period of the employment start date, NESDEC will provide free of charge consulting and support services comparable to those of the initial search, on a one-time basis, exclusive of advertising and related expenses, to conduct a new search for the same position. (Fixed search-related expenses are noted on page 6.)

### **NESDEC AFFILIATION**

Amesbury Public Schools is a NESDEC affiliate and, therefore, entitled to a 20% discount on our consulting fee.

# COSTS FOR SERVICES

## FEES AND EXPENSES

### Professional Consulting Fee

The professional consulting fee includes not only the services specifically described above, but also the secretarial and clerical services performed at the NESDEC office. Our professional fee to Amesbury Public Schools for an Executive Search as described in this Agreement will be:

**Fixed Consulting Fee: \$11,600 (\$14,500 less the 20% NESDEC affiliate discount of \$2,900)**

### Search Related Expenses

Search related expenses, which must be borne by the School Committee include: printing, photocopying, telephone, postage, consultant travel expenses and consumable supplies. The fixed cost of these expenses will be:

**Fixed Expenses: \$2,160**

## TOTAL COST OF SEARCH

Fixed Consulting Fee	\$11,600
Fixed Expenses	\$2,160
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$13,760</b>

Please note: This quote includes all electronic advertising and recruitment outreach as detailed in this Agreement.

Expenses related to candidate travel, as determined by the School Committee or its designee, are billed to the Amesbury School Committee. NESDEC can assist in the development of a budget for this item if requested.

*This price quote will remain in effect through November 30, 2025.*

## INVOICING SCHEDULE

One-half of the fixed consulting fee, \$5,800, will be due and payable within 15 days of the signing of the agreement. One-half of the fixed consulting fee, \$5,800, will be due and payable within 30 days of the presentation of the dossiers.

Search-related expenses of \$2,160 described above will be billed in four monthly installments of \$540.

## SIGNATURES

In order to accept and approve the work described above, an authorized official signs below.

For Amesbury Public Schools:

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Signature

Title

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Date

For the New England School Development Council:

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David DeRuosi, Jr., Ed.D.

Executive Director

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Date

## **ADDITIONAL FEE-BASED OPTIONS**

In addition to the services detailed in this Agreement, NESDEC has the capacity to offer supplementary fee-based options at discounted rates, if purchased as part of the search. (If these options are purchased independently of the search, the discounted rates quoted below do not apply.)

### **Community Focus Groups**

Focus groups beyond those detailed in the Agreement can be arranged.

*Additional cost: \$425 per group*

### **Entry Planning Consultation**

NESDEC would invite the new Superintendent to confer with one of our consultants to discuss the transition process particularly as it relates to his/her/their Entry Plan.

*Additional cost: Quote furnished upon request*

### **Team/Governance Retreat and Follow-up**

The search consultant or one of NESDEC's team-building consultants would conduct a half-day workshop with the new Superintendent and the School Committee. The goal of the workshop and follow-up would be to build the foundation for an effective and collaborative approach to school district governance.

*Additional cost: \$1,250*

### **Long-term Executive Coaching**

NESDEC has the capacity to provide sustained coaching services for the new Superintendent. These fee-based services vary in length and are tailored to meet the needs of the new Superintendent and the district.

*Additional cost: Quote furnished upon request*

### **Search Brochure**

NESDEC would prepare a personalized brochure describing the position, the school district, and the community. The School Committee and/or representatives would provide the input for the brochure and would approve the final copy. NESDEC would have the brochure printed in a color, format and style selected by the School Committee.

*Additional cost: Quote furnished upon request*

### **Fee-Based Hardcopy Advertising**

NESDEC would place a hardcopy advertisement in *Education Week*, which would run for one week.

*Additional cost: Quote furnished upon request; billed at cost*