

Search Proposal



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August 11, 2021

Mr. Alonzo Burton
Superintendent

Dear Mr. Burton and Members of the Board of Education:

Thank you for the opportunity to present an overview of **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** and the services we can provide for your Superintendent search. Our firm prides itself on providing a quality search process that will result in a great leader for the Raytown School District.

SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT, founded in 2004, is in its seventeenth year. Our diverse firm is comprised of more than 60 men and women who are or have been leaders in quality school districts throughout the country. We have an unusually high degree of success, which we attribute to the quality of our associates, the excellence of our protocols, and our ability to find the best educational leaders who match the needs of our clients.

We define our success by the longevity of the leaders we place, our repeat services to client districts, and the positive and long-lasting relationships we establish with the boards with whom we work. We will learn your strengths and needs through conversations with the members of the Board, staff, and your entire constituency. Our recruitment and interview process aligned to this understanding will result in well-vetted, highly qualified candidates from which to make your selection of a new Superintendent.

Thank you for considering our proposal for your Superintendent search. We would enjoy working with you to achieve the mutual goal of finding great leadership for the students in the Raytown School District.

Sincerely,

Kevin O'Mara Ed.D, President
SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT

kevin.omara@schoolexecconnect.com
708.516.0793

Consultants (see page 7)

- Dr. Kevin J. O'Mara, President, kevin.omara@schoolexeconnect.com 708-516-0793
- Dr. David McGehee, Associate, david.mcgehee@schoolexeconnect.com 816-365-0343

Proposed Timeline (see page 10)

- Phase A: August 2021
- Phase B: September-October 2021
- Phase C: October-November 2021
- Phase D: November 2021

Costs (see page 14)

- Consulting Fee: \$13,500
- Expenses not to exceed: \$7,500

Our Guarantees (see page 15)

An overview of how **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** will provide our services is outlined below:

- Mutually planning and tailoring your search process and timelines with the Board
- Working closely with your District staff members who assist the Board
- Preparing and providing written materials needed for the search process
- Assisting the Board in establishing criteria for a New Superintendent Profile including desired qualifications and leadership attributes
- Accepting applications on the **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** website with access from your District's website
- Using our national network to recruit candidates meeting the qualifications established by your Board
- Presenting a slate of qualified and well-vetted candidates to the Board
- Preparing the Board for first and second interviews
- Facilitating Board interviews at the Board's request
- Preparing Stakeholder Committees for interviews
- Recommending an in-depth vetting process for the final candidate. Options include a site visit, Board reference calls, and a deep criminal background check.
- Assisting the Board with new Superintendent contract negotiation and compensation recommendations
- Communicating diligently with the Board and staff throughout the search
- Assisting with news releases announcing the new Superintendent

Why is **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** so successful? We are one of the leading private search firms because we give school districts the personalized and individualized services each search deserves. Our firm is diverse, comprised of consultants who are knowledgeable and work closely together. We are large enough to have an exceptionally strong network, but are small enough to give your District the focus and attention your search needs.

SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT was founded 17 years ago and quickly established itself as one of the leading educational search firms in the Midwest with 60 consultants, more than 500 searches completed throughout the United States, and a 97% placement success rate.

SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT specializes in executive searches for school districts, private schools, charter schools, and consortium schools.

Dr. Kevin O'Mara, President, **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** is the retired Superintendent of Argo (IL) Public Schools and currently serves as Associate Professor in the Department of Leadership at Concordia University Chicago. Dr. O'Mara has led more than 30 searches in the United States.

SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT is a two-proprietor corporation founded in 2004 in Highland Park, Illinois. The corporation has never operated under another name and has been in continuous operation since 2004.

SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT's background and qualifications

- School Exec Connect has two senior Partners, twelve Partners, seven Senior Associates, and forty-one Associates working in eight states.
- Partners, Senior Associates and Associates working for our firm include retired Superintendents, sitting Superintendents, college professors, human resource directors, special education Superintendents, and regional Superintendents.
- Since 2004, we have successfully completed more than 400 Superintendent searches for educational institutions.
- All searches conducted by School Exec Connect have been completed on time and within budget.
- Our entire team of 60 consultants works closely together, supporting each search to find qualified candidates from across the country that match each district's needs.
- A hallmark of School Exec Connect is our Annual Training Conference at which we train new associates, review our past year, improve our practices, and get to know each other better to assure ongoing support and communication for our work together.
- We stay informed on legislative changes that affect school districts.
- Our survey gives substantive information to Boards of Education about the various stakeholders' thinking. Given a large enough response, we can even report various subgroups' responses to a variety of topics important to your District.
- We have never been sued or refused any portion of payment by a district; nor have we ever had a search terminated.
- We provide complete written materials to support the needs of the District staff when preparing materials.

FINANCIAL

- We provide exceptional training and written materials for Boards and constituents who are involved in candidate interviews.
- The thoroughness of our community engagement gives the Board valuable information throughout the process, while leaving the search decisions in the hands of the Board.
- **Our record of success is outstanding. More than 97% of our Superintendent placements have been in good standing with their Boards after the first contract.**

SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT has a steady record of profit since its inception in 2004. We have never filed for bankruptcy, been sued or involved in any litigation with a client, school district, consultant, or candidate, had any search terminated nor been refused payment.

The consultants who will assist you with your search:

- **Dr. Kevin O'Mara, President, SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT**, has been with the firm for seven (7) years and has performed numerous searches throughout the Midwest. He is the retired Superintendent of Argo Community High School District and is currently Associate Professor in Educational Leadership at Concordia University Chicago teaching doctoral students and helping them pursue their principal and superintendent licensure credentials. He knows the key to great education leadership is to collaborate and let the people around him know that their dedication, knowledge and input are the key to enriching young lives. He is father to three (3) wonderful children, and husband to his wife of 30 years, Sharon. He is one of eight (8) children, and a son of two teachers. He owes his successes to the loving, supportive family he has, as well as to the truly talented people he has worked with during his career as an educator. He has served in public education for thirty (30) years as a teacher, Dean of Students, Principal, and Superintendent. Dr. O'Mara has had many accomplishments: United States State Department Fulbright Foundation candidate stationed to Argentina, Illinois High School Organization; President, Illinois Association of School Administrators Board of Directors; St. Ignatius College Prep President's Medal Awardee, and Rosary College Graduate of the Last Decade (GOLD) Awardee, Governor Pritzker's Education Transition Committee. He has a bachelor's degree in Mathematics from Dominican University, a master's degree in Public School Administration and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership, both from Concordia University Chicago.
- **Dr. David McGehee, Associate, SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT**, is an accomplished educational leader with more than 30 years of experience serving public education. His ability to foster continuous improvement and focus on consensus building aimed at meeting the needs of each student are hallmarks of his successful career. It is this unrelenting emphasis on meeting the needs of each student and unwillingness to settle for the success of the majority that has resulted in Dr. McGehee's proven track record of leadership. Prior to retirement he served as a superintendent in Missouri for 18 years in settings ranging from small rural to large suburban districts; including Sparta, Raymore-Peculiar, and most recently Lee's Summit R-7 School Districts. Prior to serving as superintendent he was a high school principal and a middle school classroom teacher. He currently works as an education consultant for the Prairie Advisors Group, auditing school district operations and providing budget saving solutions. Dr. McGehee's unwavering advocacy for students and encouragement of innovative practices earned him both the New Superintendent Award and Missouri Superintendent of the Year honors. He is the co-founder and visionary behind the nationally acclaimed Missouri Innovation Campus which was proclaimed by the President of the United States as "a workforce development model for the rest of the nation." He has served in numerous leadership capacities, including regional and state education organizations, and as a member of the American Association of School Administrators Governing Board for eight years. Dr. McGehee earned his bachelor's degree from Missouri Valley College, both a master's and specialist's degree from Missouri State University, and his doctorate from Saint Louis University. He is the father to two daughters; Megan, a recent UMKC Law School graduate and Laura, a graduate of the University of Arkansas. He is a Missouri native, having grown up in Boonville Missouri and serving his entire career in districts throughout the state.

REFERENCE DISTRICTS

Park Hill School District
Search Year: 2015-16

11,000 students
Kansas City, MO
Boon Lee, Board President
816-210-7369
leeb@parkhill.k12.mo.us

Parkway School District
Search Year: 2011-12

17,500 students
Chesterfield, MO
Beth Feldman, Board President
314-495-1293
bfeldman@parkwayschools.net

Ritenour School District
Search Year: 2012-13

6,000 students
St. Louis, MO
Tom Drennan, Board President
314-493-6010

Rockwood School District
Search Year: 2013-14

23,000 students
Eureka, MO
Bill Brown, Board President
314-750-8491
wbrown0151@gmail.com

St. Joseph School District
Search Year: 2017-18

11,493 students
St. Joseph, MO
Martin Rucker, Board President
Marti.rucker@sjsd.k12.mo.us

Special School District of St. Louis County
Search Year: 2018-19

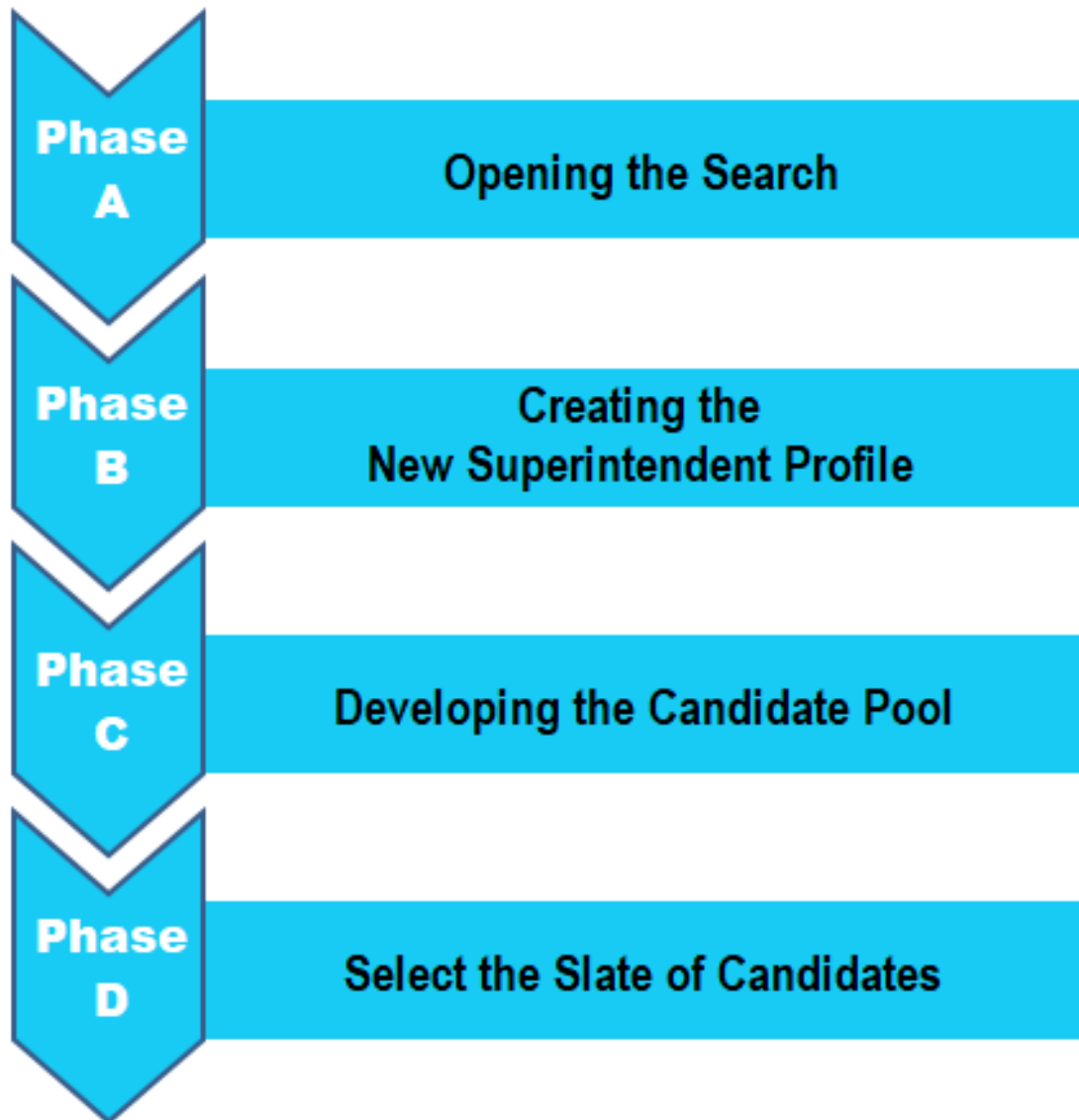
56,000 students served within partner districts
St. Louis, MO
Jan Goodman, Board President
Jangoodman67@hotmail.com

The School District of University City
Search Year: 2015-16

3,000 students
University City, MO
Dr. Lisa Brenner, Board President
314-210-8035
lbrenner@ucityschools.org

PROPOSED SEARCH PLAN

Comprehensive Plan to accomplish tasks in the search process
(All dates to be confirmed with the Board)



Phase A: Opening the Search (August 2021)

- The search process begins with the signing of the Letter of Agreement.
- An initial Planning Meeting is held with the Board to establish the scope and timeline of services.

Phase B: Creating the New Superintendent Profile (September-October 2021)

- Board members are interviewed to understand the qualities, skills, and experiences they seek in a new Superintendent.
- Focus groups are held with various constituencies including parents, community members, teachers, support staff, administrators, students, and community/business leaders.
- A District-wide online survey, tailored for your District, is designed to allow staff and community members to give input to the search process. The survey is available in multiple languages.
- A New Superintendent Profile is developed using the information gained from Board interviews, focus groups, individual interviews, and written feedback. The Board approves the New Superintendent Profile.

Phase C: Developing the Candidate Pool (October-November 2021)

- The search process and calendar are posted on your District's website.
- The vacancy is advertised nationally and statewide and posted on the **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** website.
- The Consultants accept applications and recruit candidates who match your District's New Superintendent Profile.
- The Consultants screen and interview selected candidates using The New Superintendent Profile.
- Internal candidates follow the same process as external candidates.
- References and Internet checks are conducted on potential candidates.
- Highly qualified candidates (typically five to seven) are presented to the Board and the Board decides whom to interview.

Phase D: Selecting the Candidates (November 2021)

- The Consultants hold a Board Interviewing Workshop prior to the first interviews.
- The Consultants facilitate Board interviews of the slate of candidates and the Board narrows the field to three finalists.
- Interview Committee(s) comprised of staff, parents and community members interview the finalists in a structured process and each member writes individual feedback to the Board.
- The Board will ask the final candidates to give a short formal presentation to observe the candidates' presentation skills.
- The Board conducts a second using feedback from the Interview Committees in a formal and informal setting.
- The Board chooses one candidate from among the three finalists, and may choose to make reference calls or conduct a site visit to the final candidate's home district.
- The Board negotiates and takes action on the new Superintendent's contract – April 2021.

Methods to communicate with the School Board

We have found the best method to communicate with a Board of Education is through a Board Liaison and District Staff Liaison. We use phone, email, scanning and texting. However, we will communicate using the method that works best for all Board members. Our consultants are available to meet with the Board as often as requested. During the search, we provide updates and formal reports as needed and present the *Slate of Candidates*. We will recommend that the Search Process, Search Timeline, and original Profile Report be displayed on your District's website for all constituents, staff members, Board members and candidates to see.

Timelines, pre-qualifications and final recommendation processes

Our suggested timeline is listed with a detailed search description. We find that bringing a slate of five (5) to seven (7) pre-qualified candidates to the Board works the best. We then provide training for the Board to interview and reduce the slate to three (3) finalists in first interviews. We also recommend interview committees to make non-ranked, individual recommendations to the Board before their final candidate interviews. The Consultants may facilitate these interviews.

Our role in assisting the Board with candidate selection

We will provide the Board with detailed written interview guidelines, including questions for the candidates. We conduct training for the Board in interviewing techniques, and we can produce written materials for the *Interview Committees* and facilitate those interviews if requested.

Recommendations for community participation

We recommend that the Board involve both citizens and staff in the interviewing of final candidates.

Information needed from Board and staff

In every search, there are specific duties and actions that can be performed only by District Board and staff liaisons. We recommend one designated Board member as the liaison for the overall communication purposes of the search and one staff member assigned to the search for logistical purposes.

Designated staff member(s) will be asked to do the following tasks:

- Oversee the posting of the position and related Superintendent search information (developed by the Consultants) on your District's website with links
- Send the survey link to community and post on District website
- Provide logistical support for Focus Groups
- Duplicate copy-ready materials for the interview committees
- Oversee arrangements for the interview locations and equipment needed for each space
- Assist in making dinner arrangements for the Board and the finalist candidates. (Optional)
- Distribute the Committee feedback for each board member after each finalist interview.
- Assist the Board liaison and Consultants as search issues arise



Methods to identify and recruit candidates

To identify prospective candidates, we use a variety of methods. The most efficient way is through our *Colleague Network*. We have 60 consultants in **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** who work very closely together to identify candidates. Our national network has been effective in identifying candidates from in- and out-of-state. We use regional, state, and national venues to advertise the position and will work with your Board to design your complete advertising approach for the position. Because candidates know and trust our firm, they will check our website and your District's website for information about your position.

Superintendent Search Work/Task Plan

BOARD	JOINT	CONSULTANT
<p style="text-align: center;">Planning Meeting Timeline, process, advertising</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Community Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus groups - On-line survey - New Superintendent profile 		
<p style="text-align: center;">Board Approval New Superintendent Profile</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Candidate Search</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advertise - Network & recruit prospects - Interview selected applicants 		
<p style="text-align: center;">Board Workshop Interview Strategies</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Board First-Round Interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Five to six candidates - Select three to move forward 		
<p style="text-align: center;">Final Preparations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare committee(s) for interviews; arrange logistics and compile questions - Salary research 		
<p style="text-align: center;">Board Second Interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Candidate presentations - Committee feedback - Board dinner/final interview - Final candidate selected 		
<p style="text-align: center;">Final Decision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Background check - Board reference calls - Contract offer 		
<p style="text-align: center;">Name the New Superintendent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board action - News release - Introduction to community 		
<p style="text-align: center;">Close Search</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inform all candidates of Board's decision - Assist Board if needed 		
<p style="text-align: center;">New Superintendent Begins Duties</p>		

CONSULTING FEE

Fee:

The consulting fee for your search will be \$13,500. It is inclusive and no hourly fees will be charged in addition. The consulting fee may be reduced and negotiated if the level of search services is reduced.

Expenses:

Regular expenses for the consultants will not exceed \$7,500. These include, but are not limited to printing, secretarial support, consultant travel expense, supplies, and interview costs.

Advertising:

Advertising costs are determined and paid by the District. Costs range from \$500-\$2,500, depending on how extensively the Board decides to advertise. Options include:

- Print and online advertising in *Education Week*
- LinkedIn targeted posting/promotion
- Connections to the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and MASA websites
- E-mail blasts to selected Superintendents and contacts throughout the country
- Posting on the **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** website (included in your fee)

Other Expense Information:

- **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** will invoice your District twice: First, after signing the *Letter of Agreement* and, second, upon the Board's approval of your new Superintendent's contract.
- After the candidate pool has been presented to the Board, the District incurs the costs related to candidate travel. This may include mileage, meals, lodging, etc.
- It is recommended that the finalist undergoes a criminal background check before a contract is signed; this option is a \$750 expense.

OUR GUARANTEES

GUARANTEE #1

In the event that the first slate of candidates does not include a Superintendent the Board wishes to hire, the Consultants will continue to bring candidates forward for actual expenses only until the Board has found a Superintendent to whom they wish to offer a contract. No additional consulting fees will be charged.

GUARANTEE #2

If the Superintendent leaves for any reason within twenty-four months of the starting date, the Consultants will conduct a new search for no additional Consulting Fee. The Board will pay only the actual expenses of the search as listed above under Expenses.

GUARANTEE #3

SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT guarantees that our consultants will not recruit your new Superintendent for the duration of his/her first two contracts.