



**Superintendent Search  
Services**

**Tennessee School Boards Association  
525 Brick Church Park Drive  
Nashville, TN 37207**

**800-448-6465  
[www.tsba.net](http://www.tsba.net)**

The Superintendent Search Service offers maximum flexibility to the Board and assures the Board has total control of the decision-making process. The search consultant performs the legwork associated with the search, allowing the Board to concentrate on the most critical steps in the search--setting the criteria, interviewing the most qualified candidates and selecting the next superintendent.

The search process must be planned step-by-step to meet the needs and expectations of the Board of Education. Generally, the Search Service consists of the following elements:

### **1. GENERAL CONSULTATION**

A TSBA consultant makes an initial trip to the district, at no charge or obligation, to discuss options with the Board and to explain the Search Service in detail. Specific items to be covered at that time include planning a tentative timeline; defining the scope of the search; and discussing qualifications, contractual details, community/staff involvement, media relations and confidentiality.

### **2. ADOPTION OF TIMELINE AND PROCEDURES**

When the Board decides to utilize the Superintendent Search Service, they must adopt a timeline. Normally, a full search from announcement to employment takes four to six months. The search consultant will propose a tentative timeline. The timeline is planned so the search can be thorough yet progress steadily. Every item on the timeline that is listed under "Board Decision" requires public notice.

The Board should determine the most ideal time for the new superintendent to begin employment, and direct its efforts toward that date. Most important, the Board must be willing to commit time to the interview and selection process.

At the onset of the search, the Board should adopt the procedures that will guide it throughout the process. The consultant will present recommended procedures for the Board's consideration.

Throughout the search process, the consultant will update the Board regularly about the search and meet at scheduled intervals with the Board to assist it with its responsibilities.

### **3. COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

In the timeline, the Board approves a date(s) to conduct community meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to allow the consultant to gather information from the

community on what it believes to be the strengths of the system, the challenges a new superintendent will face coming into that system and the qualifications and characteristics the community expects in a new superintendent. After the consultant gathers this information, he/she presents it to the Board for its review.

The search consultant will set meetings with students, teachers, principals, central office staff, parents, teacher assistants, secretaries, business officials, community leaders, city council or county commission, mayor and aldermen, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, maintenance workers and other groups identified by the Board. In addition, the consultant may schedule an evening community forum to accommodate those individuals who cannot attend one of the day meetings. During these meetings, the consultant will ask attendees to complete a survey form regarding the most essential characteristics and qualifications of a superintendent. Participants will have the opportunity to suggest names of persons to be invited to submit credentials for consideration. (The consultant does not conduct community meetings in the Plan 1 search service, but the consultant will advise the Board on how to conduct the meetings if it wishes to do so.)

#### **4. INTERIM REPORT AND ADOPTION OF CRITERIA**

After the community meetings, TSBA will tabulate the survey results and develop a set of proposed criteria. The final report of the proposed criteria will include comments made at each of the group meetings (the Board may modify the proposed criteria). Once the Board adopts the criteria, TSBA will advertise the position and recruit candidates.

#### **5. VACANCY NOTIFICATIONS**

TSBA will distribute vacancy notifications to the following agencies:

For Plans 1 and 2---

- All Tennessee Superintendents
- TN Organization of School Superintendents
- TN Commissioner of Education
- Association of Independent and Municipal Schools
- TN School Systems for Equity
- TN Supervisors Association
- TN Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
- TN Principals Association, and Lobbyist
- TN Association of Secondary School Principals
- Southern Region state school boards associations

TSBA also will post the vacancy on its website.

For Plan 3---

As above, with the addition of the following:

- All State School Board Associations
- National School Boards Association
- Appropriate State and National publications
- Selected publications for administrators
- Paid advertising -optional (*Education Week, School Board News, etc.*)

TSBA will develop and print a brochure, with the Board-adopted criteria, to advertise the position and to outline the search procedures. TSBA will send copies of the brochure to all or some of the aforementioned organizations, to all persons requesting information about the job, to persons recommended for the position, to board members and to the Central Office. The brochure also will be available electronically.

Individuals interested in the position should submit the following information to TSBA for the purpose of an initial screening:

- A letter of interest
- An up-to-date resume', including accomplishments by position
- A copy of the candidate's Tennessee or any other state's superintendent license if applicable
- University transcripts
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of five professional references

To insure that his or her credentials will be reviewed by the Board, an individual must submit the information by a specified deadline. The consultant may recruit other individuals who have not responded to the vacancy notice and request submission of credentials from those individuals even after the established deadline.

TSBA will send an employment application form to candidates who submit credentials.

### **CREDENTIALS PROCESSING**

When interested persons inquire, TSBA will send them a brochure outlining system specifics and search procedures.

TSBA checks all individuals' submissions, and creates candidate files. Any candidate who does not submit all required information is notified of deficiencies and asked to supply the needed details.

## **7. SELECTING CANDIDATES**

The screening process has been developed carefully to assure effectiveness, fairness and confidentiality. A screening committee is selected, consisting of a TSBA search consultant and other qualified educational professionals. Committee selection is a function of the search consultant.

Referring to the Board-adopted criteria, the screening committee will assess how well the candidates' credentials match the Board's expectations.

## **8. FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION OF CANDIDATES**

Individuals accepted by the screening committee will be considered formal candidates for the vacancy. Following the screening committee meeting, the search consultant will return to the district to present the Board with a written report that includes the comments from the community, criteria, interviewing procedures and the candidates' names and supporting materials. The Board reserves the right to interview any or all of the recommended candidates. These materials will be subject to Tennessee's "Open Records Act."

The search consultant will schedule interviews for the candidates in accordance with the actions of the Board.

## **9. INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES**

Consultants do not participate in the interview process. The search consultant will present interviewing and reference-checking techniques to the Board, as well as a list of sample questions to be asked of candidates. Throughout the interviewing period, the search consultant is available to research and respond to questions about salary and fringe benefits, contract details, legal concerns, etc.

The consultant also may upon request conduct post-interview debriefings to determine if candidates are still interested, hear their concerns and refer this information back to the Board before it makes subsequent decisions.

## **10. REFERENCE CHECKING**

After the Board has conducted initial interviews, it may want one or more of the candidates to return for a second interview. If the Board is interested in pursuing a candidate further, it should conduct independent reference checks of current and former employers, colleagues, staff, community residents, etc. Up to this point, screening has primarily involved references solicited by the consultant, not necessarily the references submitted by the candidate. It is the responsibility of the Board to take an active role in this process.

## 11. SELECTING THE CANDIDATE

One of the most important duties of the Board is the selection of the superintendent. This duty cannot be delegated. The search consultant's role is to advise the Board as to how to proceed with the offer as well as to explain features of an employment contract.

## 12. ANNOUNCING THE SELECTION

The Board should consider a news conference or at least prepare a press release about the new superintendent once it announces its selection. A public reception for the new superintendent, hosted by the Board, provides the community an opportunity to meet the individual.

Once the Board has made its selection, it will send a letter to each candidate interviewed but not selected as superintendent.

## Costs

The cost of a superintendent search varies according to the level of service desired by the Board.

### **PLAN 1      \$5,000**

- Advertise and assist the Board regarding the search process.
- Publish descriptive brochure
- Distribute brochure to the following:
  - Each school system in Tennessee
  - Tennessee colleges/universities with teacher training programs
  - State school Board associations in the southern region
- Advertise the vacancy via Web site
- Recruit candidates who meet the Board's criteria
- Receive credentials from candidates
- Respond to inquires regarding the vacancy
- Conduct checks of credentials and references
- Schedule interview dates with finalists
- Notify candidates who were not selected as finalists
- Provide interview guides for Boards
- Assist the Board with the development of an employment contract
- Negotiate the Board's contract offer with the candidate

### **PLAN 2      \$8,500**

- Provide all services listed in Plan 1
- Conduct up to 10 meetings with the community groups
- Conduct individual interviews with each Board member
- Report results of community meetings to the Board
- Recommend criteria to be adopted by the Board

### **PLAN 3      \$20,000**

- Provide all services listed in Plan 1 and 2
- Include involvement of National School Boards Association
- Distribute brochures to all school Board associations
- Advertise vacancy through national publications and organizations

### **SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION    \$1,500**

The search consultant will assist the Board in conducting the new superintendent's first year performance evaluation, including the development of a performance agreement with measurable objectives. The consultant will guide the Board through the entire evaluation process with the new superintendent during his/her first year of service with the Board. This service is \$2,000 when not included as a part of a superintendent search.

### **GUARANTEE**

If a vacancy occurs during the two-year period following the employment of the candidate recommended, the search consultant will advertise, recruit, screen and refer to the Board additional candidates who meet the established criteria. This service will be provided without charge.

## SUGGESTED TIMETABLE FOR SEARCHES

While searches often seem to take on a life of their own, an appropriate timetable, such as the one outlined below, will provide an operational guideline.

Depending on the time of the year, and taking into account vacation and other schedules, a Plan 1 or 2 search will "normally" take from four to six months.

ACTIVITY	Week of Search
Consult evaluation visit with School Board and community	1
Preparation of descriptive materials, brochures and announcements	2-5
Advertising and solicitation of nominations and recommendations	5-7
Processing and screening of candidate's credentials	7-12 *
Interviewing of selected candidates (approx. 16 to 20) by consultant	13
Investigation and evaluation of short-listed candidates (approx. 5)	13-14
Presentation of candidates to School Board	15
School Board interviews candidates	16-18
School Board focuses on one candidate at a time, conducts in-depth reference check	18-23
School Board appoints Superintendent	24

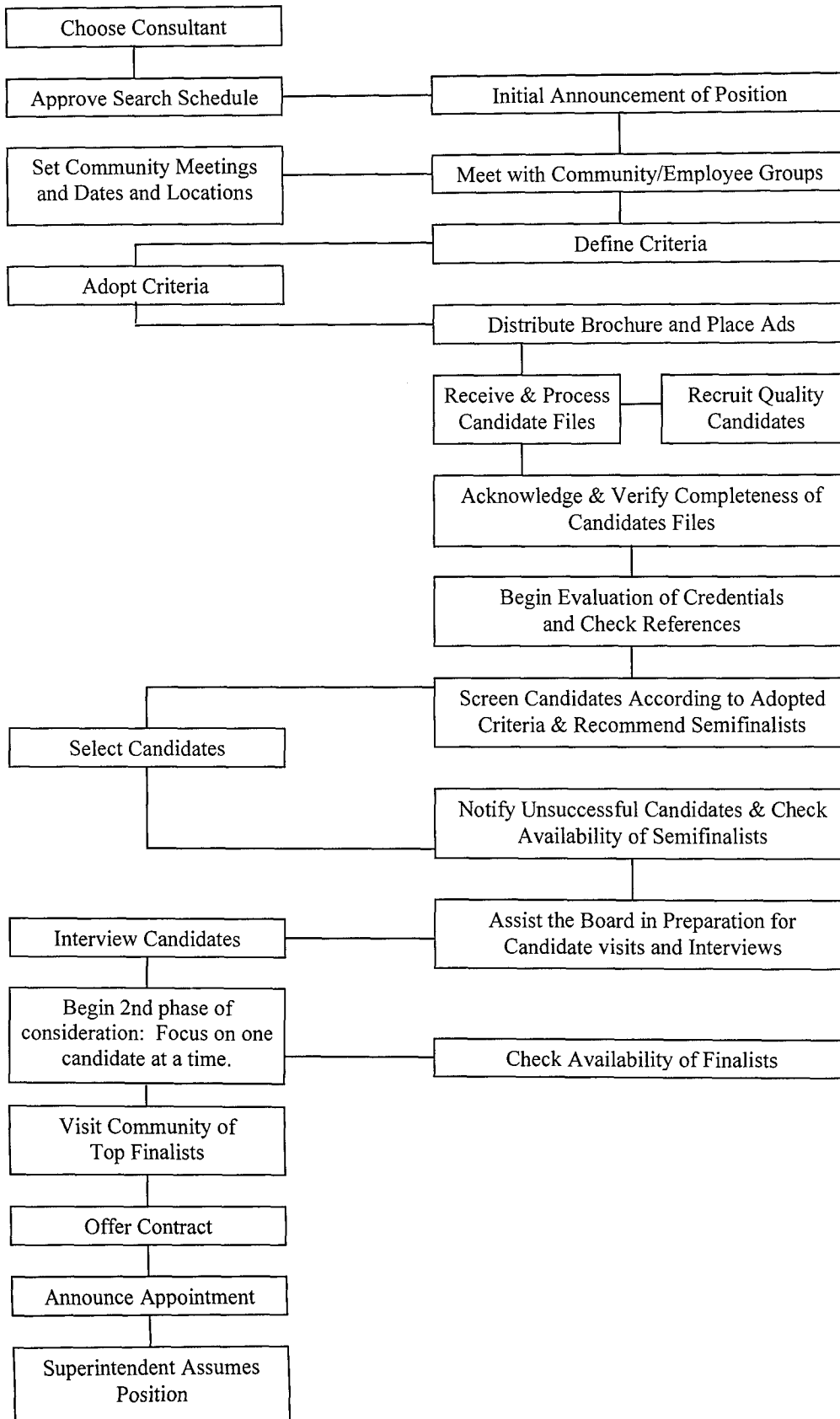
\* Determined by length of time allowed for advertising and deadlines.

**PROGRESS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH  
TIMELINE AND CRITICAL DECISION SEQUENCE**

Dates:

Board Decision

Consultant Activities & Recommendations



**SAMPLE COMMUNITY MEETING SCHEDULE**

- 8:30 a.m. Central Office Staff, Supervisors, and Principals
- 10:00 a.m. Secretaries, Aides and Bus Drivers
- 11:30 a.m. Luncheon-County Commission, Business Leaders, & the School Board  
*City Council*
- 2:00 p.m. Cafeteria Workers, Custodians & Maintenance Workers
- 3:30 p.m. Teachers
- 6:00 p.m. Community meeting

**PROGRESS COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM**  
**Application for Employment for Superintendent of Schools &**  
**Authorization to Release Information**

I understand the requirements for the position of Superintendent of Schools for Progress County and can perform all essential functions, with or without reasonable accommodation.

I have the legal right to work in the United States of America

I authorize Progress County Schools to investigate all statements contained in this Application for Employment and Authorization to Release Information and all information contained in any other materials submitted by me for consideration of the position of Superintendent of Schools.

I understand that this Application for Employment and Authorization to Release Information and other materials submitted by me and the records of any investigations conducted by the school system as a result of my application for the position of Superintendent of Schools are public records with the school system cannot, as a matter of law, keep confidential.

I understand that misrepresentation of facts in this Application for Employment and Authorization to Release Information or any other materials submitted by me, may be cause for me not to be hired or, if hired, may cause me to be dismissed or suspended.

I understand and agree that if offered the position of Superintendent of Schools for Progress County, the terms of that employment will be mutually agreed upon by the Board of Education and me and will be contained in a separate employment contract.

I hereby authorize all persons, including educational institutions, employers, and personal references, to respond fully to verbal or written inquiries from the Progress County School System about me and to release any record including education and employment records, concerning me to the Progress County School System EXCEPT that I do not hereby authorize the release of any information or records concerning: (1) my medical history and (2)

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(list any topic(s) for which disclosure is not authorized)

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If I am offered the position of Superintendent of Schools for Progress County I understand that I may be required by the Board of Education to submit to an annual physical exam, the results of which I will release to the Board.

