



Board Meeting Date: 2/23/26

Title: Employment Agreement for Superintendent Dr. Daniel Bittman

Type: Action

Presenter: Board Governance Committee

Description: On January 8, 2026, Edina School Board voted to enter into employment contract negotiations with Dr. Daniel Bittman. His interim contract expires on June 30, 2026. The new contract will be for the three year time period beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2029. The contract being voted on tonight has been negotiated over the past six weeks, and represents the due diligence of the Board, district staff, and a jointly bargained compromise of terms. The current terms of the contract have been approved by Dr. Bittman, and have been reviewed thoroughly by district legal counsel and the Board's Governance Committee. All financial modeling has been completed to ensure the contract is fiscally feasible and adheres to the Board's fiduciary responsibility.

Background Information: Whenever a district negotiates a superintendent contract, it provides an opportunity to benchmark the current contract against the individual's skill set, experience and situation as well as comparable districts in the market. Given Dr. Bittman's 15 years of experience as a superintendent and in looking at a review of superintendent salaries in the Lake Conference and around the state, the Governance Committee determined that our current contract is comparably less than what other like districts are offering and not competitive. Some relevant data points include:

- The 2026-2027 base salary of Edina's predecessor contract was scheduled to be \$266,298. When comparing Edina's predecessor's 2026-2027 base salary to comparable districts, we find base salaries of:
 - Eden Prairie Superintendent: \$285,803;
 - Minnetonka Superintendent: \$298,910;
 - Wayzata Superintendent: \$295,000*
 - *Wayzata's figure from Superintendent vacancy brochure
 - Edina's current base salary is 10.12% below other comparable districts.

- When considering superintendent salaries and contracts we need to look at the total package, not just the base salary to fairly compare.

Some superintendent contracts include various categories of cash or cash-equivalent forms of compensation that add to the base salary, making the potential total payout significantly higher than the base salary being offered. Examples of this can include: annual pay out for vacation and sick leave, longevity bonus, performance bonus. Edina has historically not structured their contracts this way. When comparing Edina's predecessor's 2026-2027 total contract to the above mentioned Lake Conference comparable districts we find:

- Edina's total contract package ranges 26.3%-72.5% below comparable Lake Conference districts, with the average being 49% below these districts.
- We currently rank last (4 of 4) in Superintendent total contract package when we compare to our benchmark Lake Conference districts.

*As stated above, Wayzata is conducting a Superintendent Search so does not currently have board-approved, comparable data for 2026-27, but their 2025-2026 data is included in this percentage spread.

- To help explain this structuring difference, we need to provide context of comparable districts. These examples help to showcase the different structures of contract but don't completely capture the difference due to the reality that how these categories are structured can vary by district (i.e. health insurance and retirement benefits).

Sample Comparable District Total Contract: Base Salary + Performance Incentive + Annual Vacation Payout + Annual Sick Payout.

Base - \$292,000, Bonuses - \$108,000; Total compensation - \$400,000

Edina Public Schools: Base Salary + Technology Allowance.

Base-\$364,000, Technology Allowance-\$400; Total Compensation- \$364,400.

- In analyzing compensation models, the Governance Committee discussed the advantages and disadvantages of adding the compensation through supplemental categories versus incorporating compensation into the base salary. Ultimately the Governance Committee determined that by adding the increase in compensation into the base salary, the contract is more transparent and better reflects the market demand for an experienced superintendent. The Governance Committee fully understands that this approach is different than is sometimes done in other districts and may lead to inaccurate comparisons being made when looking at other superintendent contracts without doing a true apples to apples comparison.
- Another factor the Governance Committee was cognizant about during negotiations was to avoid adding categories or benefits to this contract that would set a precedent for future superintendent contracts.
- Due to the additional 15 years of superintendent experience that Dr. Bittman has compared with his predecessor and the knowledge that we were on average 49% below our

comparable Lake Conference districts, there is a recommended 36.7% adjustment to the base salary and a 40.1% total package increase for the 2026-2029 contract.

- Dr. Bittman's new base salary for all three years will be \$364,000.
- This contract increase represents a .06% increase to the total district budget for next year.
- This increase is a reflection of the executive leadership experience Dr. Bittman brings to the role coupled with bringing the total compensation package to market level.

This increase will ensure Dr. Bittman's salary is comparable to other Lake Conference superintendents. If approved, this contract will put us as:

- 3rd or 4th among the four districts referenced in this document, and,
- on average, 6.02% less than the total contracts of those districts.

*Final numbers are dependent on how Wayzata settles their pending contract.

The Governance Committee believes this investment is critical to the health, stability and future success of Edina Public Schools. High-performing experienced superintendents are in demand and superintendent leadership is foundational to district performance, strategic implementation, staff retention, and community trust. We recognize both the demands and complexity of the role as well as the Board and community expectations that come along with holding the role of Edina Public Schools Superintendent.

Recommendation: The board reviews and approves the attached contract.

Attachment(s): 2026-2029 Superintendent Contract for Dr. Daniel Bittman