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6060 Blake Ridge Road Edina, MN 55436  
Phone: 952-210-2790 Fax: 877.705.5392 [www.schoolexeconnect.com](http://www.schoolexeconnect.com)

## **BECKER PUBLIC SCHOOLS Becker, Minnesota**

### **SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROPOSAL October 23, 2018**

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# SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT

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October 23, 2018

Mr. Aaron Jurek  
Chair, Board of Education  
Ms. Connie Robinson, Board Member  
Becker Public Schools  
12000 Hancock St.  
Becker, MN 55308

Dear Mr. Jurek, Ms. Robinson 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 Becker Public Schools.

**SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT**, founded in 2004, is in its fifteenth year. Our diverse firm is comprised of more than 60 men and women who 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 understand your strengths and needs through conversations with the members of the Board, and staff. 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 Becker Public Schools.

Sincerely,

*Kenneth Dragseth*

Kenneth Dragseth Ph.D. President  
**SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT**

## MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

*Our understanding of the search services required and an overview of how **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** will provide these services.*

- 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 links to 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 Interview Committees for interviews
- Recommending an in-depth vetting process for the final candidate. Options include a site visit, and a deep criminal background check.
- Assisting the Board with 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 PROFILE

### 1. Overview of SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT

SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT was founded 15 years ago and since inception, SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT has become one of the leading educational search firms in the Midwest with 60 consultants, more than 260 searches completed throughout Mid-America and a 96% placement success rate, defined as renewal of contracts for the superintendent.

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

Address: 6060 Blake Ridge Road, Edina, MN. 55436  
Phone: 952-210-2790  
Fax: 877-705-5392  
Email: mdragseth@comcast.net  
Website: [www.schoolexeconnect.com](http://www.schoolexeconnect.com)

**Dr. Kenneth Dragseth**, President, SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT is the retired Superintendent of Edina (MN) Public Schools and recently retired as Director of Administrative Licensure at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Dragseth has led/participated in more than 60 searches in the Midwest. He has been National Superintendent of the Year and Minnesota Superintendent of the Year.

### 2. Length of time in business

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.

### 3. Outline of SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT's background and qualifications

- SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT has eleven Partners, seven Senior Associates and forty-one Associates working out of 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 300 superintendent searches for educational institutions.
- 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* where 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.

- All searches conducted by **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** have been completed on time and within budget.
- 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.
- We provide exceptional training and written materials for Boards and constituents who are involved in candidate interviews.
- The thoroughness of our community engagement gives a 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 96% of our superintendent placements have been in good standing with their Boards after the first contract.

#### **4. Personnel to be used to complete the search**

If our firm is selected, the following consultants will assist you directly with your search:

**Dr. Kenneth Dragseth, President, SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** is the retired superintendent of Edina Public Schools. In addition to the information about Dr. Dragseth earlier in the proposal he has been a consultant and presenter nationwide on a variety of educational issues including: Board and superintendent relationships, district leadership training and achieving academic excellence in schools. As Superintendent he was first in the nation to alter school start times for high school students due to the research on adolescents sleep patterns and needs. He led a district that is recognized for excellence and high performing students. He has been a principal, Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Assistant Superintendent. He acquired his Ph.D. and M.A. from the University of Minnesota. He is the past President of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators.

**Contact Information:** Dr. Kenneth Dragseth, Edina, MN  
Phone: 952-210-2790 [mdragseth@comcast.net](mailto:mdragseth@comcast.net)

**Mr. Robert Ostlund, Partner, SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT**, retired as superintendent of the Wayzata MN Public Schools in 2008. He served MN schools as a chemistry and biology teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, and as a headmaster or superintendent for a total of 42 years. Prior to his service as Superintendent of the Wayzata schools, he served for many years as Superintendent of the Shakopee MN Public Schools, as Interim Superintendent of the North St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakwood MN School District, and as Interim Headmaster at St. Thomas Academy in Mendota Heights, MN. Mr. Ostlund was selected as the Twin City metro area Administrator of the Year. He also served as the President of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators. Mr. Ostlund earned his Master of Science degree from the University of Virginia, and completed his administrative licensure requirements at the University of Minnesota. He has participated in or led/participated in over 35 searches.

**Contact Information:** Mr. Robert Ostlund, Walker, MN  
Phone: 612-308-8997 [ostlundbob@aol.com](mailto:ostlundbob@aol.com)

## 5. Financial stability

SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT has a steady record of profit since inception in 2004. We have never filed for bankruptcy, been sued or involved in any litigation with a client, school district, consultant, or candidate, or had any search terminated or been refused payment.

## 6. Reference Districts

### **Brainerd**

**Search Year: 2013-14**

**6,800 students**

Brainerd, MN  
Ruth Nelson, Board President  
218-821-9168  
[ruth.nelson@isd181.org](mailto:ruth.nelson@isd181.org)

### **Walker-Hackensack-Akeley School District**

**Search Years: 2013-14**

**770 students**

Walker, MN  
Lori Stein, Board President  
218-547-3069  
[ljbstein@hotmail.com](mailto:ljbstein@hotmail.com)

### **Sauk Rapids-Rice Public Schools**

**Search Years: 2017-18**

**4,500 students**

Sauk Rapids, MN  
Mark Hauck, Board Chair  
320-259-5296

### **Sartell-St. Stephens School District 748**

**Search Year: 2013-14**

**3,200 students**

Sartell, MN  
Michelle Meyer, Board President  
320-761-2000  
[Michelle.Meyer@sartell.k12.mn.us](mailto:Michelle.Meyer@sartell.k12.mn.us)

### **St. Cloud Area School District 742**

**Search Year: 2012-13**

**10,200 students**

St. Cloud, MN  
Bruce Mohs, Board Chair  
320-259-4489

### **ROCORI**

**Search Year: 2017-18**

**2,100 students**

Cold Springs, MN  
Kara Habben, Board Chair  
[habbenk@rocori.k12.mn.us](mailto:habbenk@rocori.k12.mn.us)

### **Hibbing Public Schools**

**Search Year: 2014-15**

**2,400 students**

Hibbing, MN  
Jeff Polcher, Chair pro-tem  
218-969-7791  
[jpolder@gmail.com](mailto:jpolder@gmail.com)

### **Roseville Area Schools**

**Search Years: 2014-15**

**7,500 students**

Roseville, MN  
Erin Azer, Board Chair  
612-251-6910  
[erin.azer@isd623.org](mailto:erin.azer@isd623.org)

### **ISD 728 ( Elk River)**

**Search Year: 2016-17**

**13,000 students**

Elk River, MN  
Shane Steinbrecher, Board Chair  
[Shane.steinbrecher@isd728.org](mailto:Shane.steinbrecher@isd728.org)

## PROPOSED SEARCH PLAN

### 1. **Comprehensive Plan to accomplish tasks in the search process (All dates to be confirmed or modified with the Board in the planning meeting.)**

#### **Phase A: Opening the Search (November 2018)**

- 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 (November-December 2018)**

- Board members are interviewed to understand the qualities, skills and experiences they seek in a new superintendent.
- Other focus groups are held with groups recommended by the School Board. These may include: parents, certified and non-certified staff, governmental, service group and Faith leaders, students, administrators and directors, and an open community meeting for anyone to attend.
- An online survey is posted for all to complete. This is available in 8 languages in addition to English.
- A *New Superintendent Profile* is developed using the information gained from Board, all focus groups and the online survey. The Board affirms by consensus or vote the *New Superintendent Profile*.

#### **Phase C: Developing the Candidate Pool (November 2018-January 2019)**

- 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 confidentially accept applications and recruit candidates who match your District's *New Superintendent Profile*.
- The Consultants screen and interview selected candidates face-to-face 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 (January 2019)**

- The Consultants facilitate Board interviews of the slate of candidates and the Board narrows the field to three semi-finalists.
- *Interview Committee(s)* comprised of staff, parents and community members interview the semi-finalists in a structured process and each member writes individual feedback.
- The Board may have the semi-final candidates give a short *Formal Presentation* to observe the candidates' presentation skills.
- The Board conducts a second set of interviews using feedback from the *Interview Committees* in a formal and informal setting.
- The Board may choose to conduct a site visit to the final candidate's home district.

- The Board negotiates and takes action on the new superintendent's contract.
- The Consultants hold a *Board Interviewing Workshop* prior to the first interviews.

## **2. 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 in the way best for all Board members in your District. Our consultants are available to meet with the Board in person as often as requested. During the search, we provide updates and formal reports when we conduct the *Planning Meeting* with the Board, present the *Superintendent Profile* and present the *Final Report* and *Slate of Candidates*. We will recommend that the Search Process, Search Timeline, Survey Results and Profile Report be displayed on your District's website for all constituents, staff members, Board members and candidates to see.

## **3. Timelines, pre-qualifications and final recommendation processes**

Our suggested timeline is listed with the 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 after the first interviews. We also recommend interview committees to make non-ranked, individual recommendations to the Board before their final candidate interviews. The Consultants will facilitate these interviews.

## **4. 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 will also provide training for the Board in interviewing techniques. We also provide all written materials for the *Interview Committees* and will facilitate the interviews.

## **5. Recommendations for community participation**

Community engagement is one of the hallmarks of our success. We will ask the Board to suggest individuals who could participate in the final round of interviews. Then each individual completes a structured feedback form which is copied for every Board member as they prepare for their interview with each of the last two or three finalists.

## **6. 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.



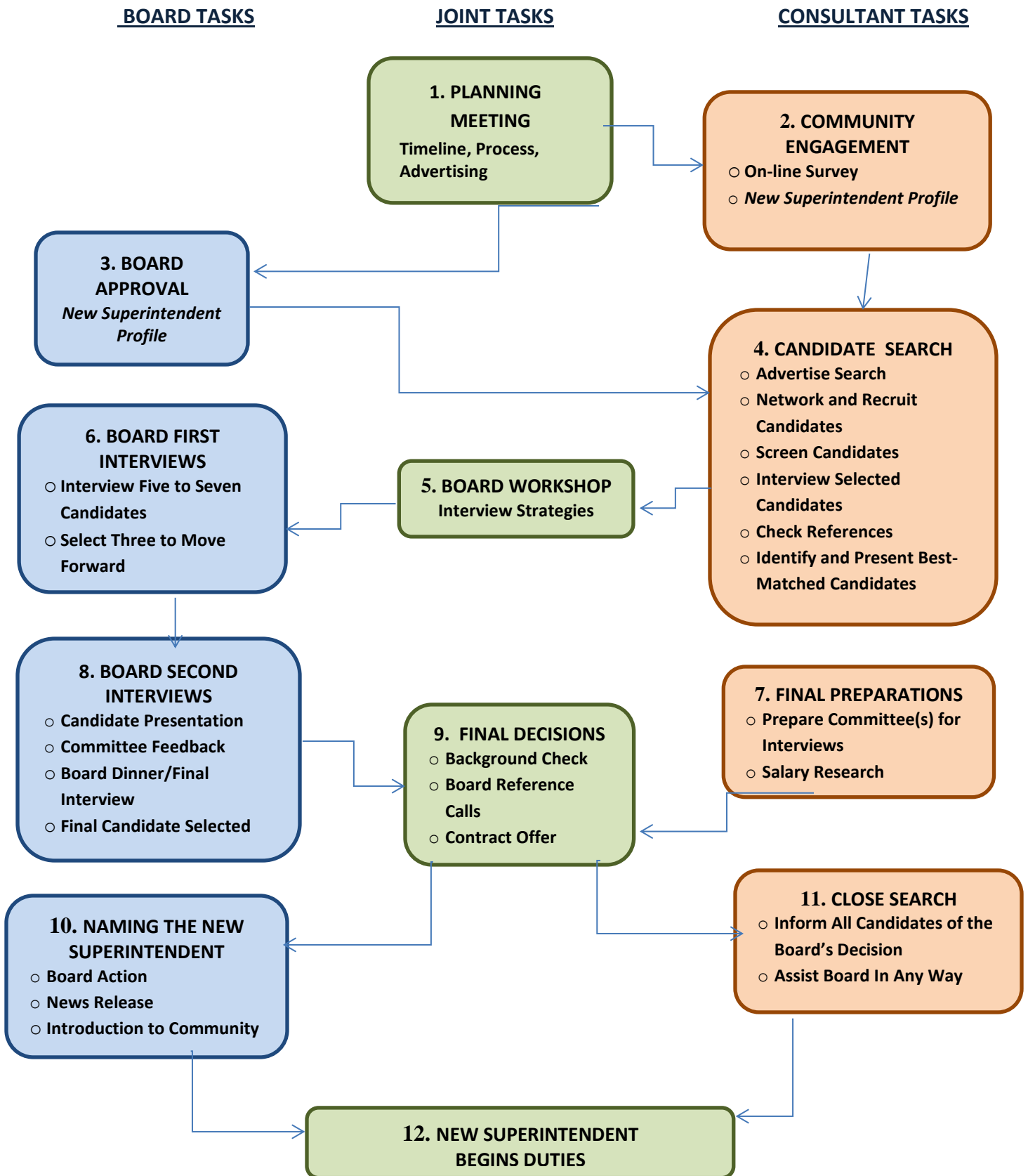
Designated staff member(s) will be asked to do the following tasks:

- 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
- Duplicate copy ready materials for the interview committees
- Oversee arrangements for the interview places and equipment needed for them
- Assist in making dinner arrangements for the Board and the finalist candidates (Optional)
- Duplicate the Committee feedback for each board member after the finalist interviews
- Assist the Board liaison and Consultants as needed in the search process

## **7. 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*. Our firm is able to heavily recruit candidates unlike other organizations who may be recruiting from their membership. 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 out-of-state. We will use regional and state 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.

## SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT PLAN OF WORK: SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH



## FEES

### Consulting Fee:

The consulting fee for your search will be \$12,500. 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 will not exceed \$1,200. These include, but are not limited to copying, secretarial support, consultant travel expense, supplies and interview costs.

### Advertising:

Advertising costs are determined and paid by the District. Options include:

- Print and online advertising in *Education Week*
- Connections to the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and MASA websites and the MSBA website
- Posting on the **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** website
- E-mail blasts to selected superintendents and contacts throughout the country
- One on one recruiting

### 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 of the search for the candidate's expenses. This may include: travel, lodging, meals etc.

## OUR GUARANTEES

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.
2. If the superintendent resigns or is dismissed 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.
3. **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** guarantees that our consultants will not recruit your new superintendent for the duration of his/her first two contracts.