

# A Proposal for the Selection of a Superintendent

Presented to



Submitted by



In Partnership With



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November 12, 2025

Mr. Tom Buffett, Board President ([tom.buffett@okemosk12.net](mailto:tom.buffett@okemosk12.net))  
Okemos Public Schools  
4406 Okemos Road  
Okemos, MI 48864

Mr. Buffett and Members of the Board of Education:

This Proposal is being submitted in response to the email we received regarding your need for services pertaining to an upcoming Superintendent search. We want to let you know how Ray & Associates can assist you in that process. We have been highly successful in providing Superintendent search services for districts that are similar to yours in terms of size, cultural diversity and geographic location and would welcome the opportunity to do the same for you.

Ray & Associates is a national search firm which has been in business over 50 years conducting searches nationwide for districts small, large, rural, urban and suburban. We provide search services in the educational field with our main focus being on Superintendent and cabinet level searches. With our extensive regional and national associate base and targeted advertising, Ray & Associates is able to engage quality candidates from around the country, as well as within the state. Our professional, objective procedures allow us to attract, process and screen the most successful candidates for a Superintendent position.

We are familiar with Michigan as we are currently assisting Swartz Creek Community Schools and previously assisted Bay City Public Schools, Rochester Community Schools, Kalamazoo Public Schools, Northville Public Schools, Ferndale Public Schools, Grand Rapids Public Schools, Ecorse Public Schools, and Detroit Public Schools Community District, among others. We also conducted the two searches for the Michigan State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Our firm has been in business longer than any other search firm, having conducted searches for districts and state education agencies of all sizes, in various areas with multiple demographics. In addition to our foundational commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion, candidate care and legitimate community engagement, the following practice set us apart:

- Our 2-part candidate screening process, as well as our two-year and five-year guarantees.
- The diversity of our associates provides different perspectives as we recruit, screen and vet candidates thereby allowing us to have recruited and placed more women and minorities than any other firm.

- Our expansive quality client reaches and our extensive district profile building process and subsequent candidate to profile pairing process enables the size and authenticity of the presented candidate pool to be extensive and congruent with the district's educational leadership needs.

Our reputation for success is proven, long-standing, and built upon providing school districts with precisely the type of candidate that satisfies not only the Board but the community and staff as well. If you have any further questions or comments regarding the enclosed information, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 319-393-3115.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathy Schoenfelder".

Kathy Schoenfelder, Coordinator of Leadership Acquisitions

Phone: 319-393-3115

[kathy@rayassoc.com](mailto:kathy@rayassoc.com)

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# History of the Firm

## Who We Are

Ray & Associates, Inc. is a professional organization that *specializes in school executive leadership searches*. We have been in the school executive search business *since 1975*, establishing a strong history and reputation within the industry.

## What We Do

As a national search firm, we are uniquely equipped to assist in the selection of a Superintendent who meets the particular needs and qualifications of your district. Our team will guide your district through a step-by-step process to select your next Superintendent.

While many other search firms do not seek out candidates for a position, we believe outstanding candidates need to be recruited. With our extensive regional and national associate base and targeted advertising, Ray & Associates is able to engage quality candidates from around the country, as well as within the state. Our professional, objective procedures allow us to attract, process and screen the most successful candidates for a Superintendent position.

Ray & Associates is an independent and objective firm that does not accept placement fees from any candidate. Our procedure allows us to impartially assist schools in selecting the best individual for their particular needs. You will also find our system is flexible, which allows us to customize the search to meet the desires of the Board.

## How We Work

*What makes us stand out from the crowd? **Our people.*** Our professional consultants, located across the US, are individuals with diverse backgrounds and long-term experience in the educational executive search field. From backgrounds as school administrators, business executives, school board members, university professors and attorneys, our team brings a wide range of lived experiences and perspectives to the table.

In addition to our Associates, our corporate office in Cedar Rapids, Iowa *maintains a full-time and experienced administrative staff* to assist in the executive search business.



### Our Why

As a company, our purpose is *connecting passionate, innovative and driven leaders within education to spaces where they can use their skills to amplify the voices and ideas of their students, colleagues and communities to create a lasting impact.*

# The Team

The individuals who make up the Ray & Associates team bring *years of experience* and a depth of expertise unmatched in our industry. Our collaborative group of entrepreneurs, advisors and recruiters all have *significant experience in the school executive search field* and *extensive backgrounds in school administration, business, and law*. Our professional staff emphasizes confidentiality, ethical business practices, and professional standards for both the client and the candidates

In addition to our corporate office, we have associates located throughout the country. The corporate office also maintains a full-time administrative staff to assist in the executive search business.

## Key Associates

The following principal/project coordinators will be actively involved in working with the school district. The associates listed below will be assisting in recruitment, screening, and background checks. The firm chooses various associates across the country to be sure that every region will be covered to recruit the best candidates for Okemos Public Schools.



**Ms. Kathy Schoenfelder, Coordinator of Leadership Acquisitions and Corporate Office search contact, Cedar Rapids, Iowa**

Kathy is the Coordinator of Leadership Acquisitions for Ray and Associates. She is involved in searches conducted by the firm and will directly interact with Okemos Public Schools and any committee that may be established on all details of this search. She joined Ray and Associates 9 years ago after working 30+ years in the legal field. *Kathy was a team member on searches for Northville Public Schools, Ferndale Public Schools, Kalamazoo Public Schools, Rochester Community Schools, Bay City Public Schools and Swartz Creek Public Schools.*



**Ms. Molly Schwarzhoff, Vice President of Leadership Acquisitions, Cedar Rapids, Iowa**

Molly is Vice President of Leadership Acquisition of Ray and Associates. She oversees all searches conducted by the firm and will directly interact with Juneau School District on all details of this search. She attended Iowa State University and has been with Ray and Associates for over 12 years.



**Dr. David Faltys, Director of Leadership Acquisition Dallas, Texas,**

David serves our firm as Director of Leadership Acquisition, team member and background investigator and as such performs recruiting and screening of candidates. He is a graduate of Texas A&M University where he earned his doctorate degree. He is a former classroom teacher, coach, high school principal and assistant superintendent and superintendent in Navasota ISD. David retired as the Superintendent of Carroll ISD in December 2020 having served since January of 2006. Considered one of the premier districts in the state of Texas, Carroll ISD is a suburban public school district that serves 8,300 students and more than 1,000 employees. David is the second most tenured Superintendent in CISD history. In 2010, he was named Region XI Superintendent of the Year. He was nominated for this honor by the seven members of the Board of Education. He spent 33 years in public education, the last 18 years of which he served as a Superintendent.

# The Ray Way: Our Process

Ray & Associates' goal is to make the selection process professional, efficient, and successful to ensure your complete satisfaction with our services. Below you will find an overview followed by a walk-through of our process.

Read on to learn more details about each step in our process.



## Stage One: Discovery – Board Input and Preparation

During the first stage, our goal is to learn more about your specifications and unique district culture in an effort to target needs with precision.

The firm will meet with each Board member individually to obtain input for the profile development. We will also meet with the entire Board to determine details like setting the timeline for the search, finalize procedures and services desired by the Board, establish the Board contact person(s), discuss the application process, set the advertising, and determine the salary, among other details.

### Action Items during Stage 1:

- Customize the search process to meet the needs and expectations of the district.
- Conduct individual Board member interviews to assess the Board's priorities, goals, and objectives to aid in the development of the criteria and qualifications for the Superintendent position.
- Work with the Board to establish a timeline that lists each step in the search process as well as selection of advertising venues.
- Discuss with the Board the requirements and salary range for the Superintendent position.
- Work with the District staff and those selected by the Board in the development of an accurate informational brochure and online application form.
- If desired, create the district's information brochure.

[Bay City Public Schools, MI approved flyer](#) (district prepared)

[Northville Public Schools, MI approved flyer](#) (district prepared)

# OKEMOS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH *SUGGESTED* PROCESS AND TIMELINE

*Items highlighted in yellow indicate an in-person meeting with the consultant(s)*

### DATE

Stage 1 Board Input & Preparation	<u>12/01/2025</u>	Consultant planning meeting with the Board and discussion regarding individual Board member interviews. (Time: <u>TBD</u> ) (virtual)
	<u>12/02/2025</u>	Begin preparing information for the district promotional flyer and online application form with the district liaison representative(s).
	<u>12/02/2025</u>	Notify all associates and other professional contacts of vacancy.
	<u>12/02/2025</u>	Contact constituents and stakeholders for input meetings on <u>1/6-7/2026</u> .
Stage 2 Profile Development & Process	<u>12/03/2025</u>	Online survey link, for input on developing the profile, available on district website from <u>12/03/2025</u> to <u>1/11/2026</u> .
	<u>12/22/25-1/02/26</u>	Holiday break
	<u>1/6-7/2026</u>	Meetings with constituent and stakeholder group representatives. (in person, virtual or both)
	<u>1/11/2026</u>	8 a.m. deadline for survey/input from constituents, stakeholders and Board members, including online survey.
	<u>1/12/2026</u>	Promotional flyer draft due.
	<u>1/12/2026</u>	Board to finalize Superintendent profile for the promotional flyer. (Time: <u>TBD</u> ) (virtual)
Stage 3 Recruiting	<u>1/13/2026</u>	E-mail promotional flyer and online application instructions to interested candidates.
	<u>3/15/2026</u>	Deadline for all application materials. (*See note below.)
Stage 4 Candidate Recruiting & Presentation	<u>3/26-4/03/2026</u>	Spring break
	<u>4/06/2026</u>	Consultant develops and finalizes interview questions and procedures with the Board. Top candidates are presented to the Board and consultant assists the Board in selecting finalists for the interviews. If desired by the Board, consultant will meet with constituents and staff interview group(s) to discuss their roles. (Time: <u>TBD</u> ) (In person)
	<u>Wk 4/13/2026</u>	Interview candidates (1 <sup>st</sup> round) (in person or virtual?).
	<u>Wk 4/13/2026</u>	Meeting with consultant following the last interview. (Time: <u>TBD</u> ) (virtual)
Stage 5 Selection of Finalist & Future Planning	<u>Wk 4/20/2026</u>	Interview finalist candidates (2 <sup>nd</sup> round). (In person) Stakeholder involvement?
	<u>Wk 4/20/2026</u>	Final meeting with consultant following the last interview. (Time: <u>TBD</u> ) (option to conduct virtually)
	<u>TBD</u>	Consultant will discuss contract terms with the finalist.
	<u>TBD</u>	Offer the contract.
	<u>TBD</u>	Press release of new Superintendent.
	<u>TBD</u>	Board Self-Assessment Survey Results presented to the Board.

*\*All applications will be reviewed. Materials received after the closing date may be given full consideration depending upon the number of applications received and other factors. (Actual dates to be determined in the first meeting with the Board.)*

## Stage Two: Profile Development

Once we have collected information from the Board during the Discovery stage, the Profile Development process will begin.

### How We Engage



#### Individual and Group Interviews

We are eager to interview each Board member individually as well as visit with designated stakeholder groups as identified by the Board. From Administrators to Support Staff, the designated group bring unique perspectives to help us develop a comprehensive profile for leadership.



#### Open Community Forums

In addition to interviews, we host community forums and invite all community members, staff and parents to participate. With forums in both the morning and evening, we maximize attendance of constituents. These forums help us solicit input via the survey process and create dialogue by asking a series of questions related to the desired characteristics of the new Superintendent.

The purpose of these meetings will be to educate stakeholders about the process as well as to gather and organize information that will contribute to the development of an accurate profile for the position.



#### 31 Desirable Characteristics Survey

In addition to scheduled meetings and forums, we offer an online profile survey option, our exclusive 31 Desirable Characteristics Survey. This survey has space for written comments and recommendations. The survey is available in various languages to be placed on the District website.

### Results of our dialogue

The results of the stakeholder input is summarized in a report **shared with the Board and community** regarding our **findings and recommendations.**

We will present a tabulated and analyzed graphic report in which Board members' and stakeholders' survey responses are reviewed looking for those characteristics chosen most in common by the various groups and indicate those recommended or those thought to be worthy of consideration.

Our dialogue with constituents and interviews with individual Board members, coupled with survey results and comments, provide our firm with an accurate profile that is employed in the recruiting and careful screening of applicants. The characteristics most commonly selected will be used later in promotional materials.

**"In a somewhat constricted timetable, Ray & Associates lead a process to gather information from all stakeholder groups on the characteristics that should be prioritized in the search, managed the application and interview process, and organized a busy day of in-person forums and zoom meetings for stakeholder groups."**

**- Ms. Victoria Powers  
Bexley City Schools Board VP**

Ray and Associates, Inc. firmly believes in parent, students, staff and community participation, especially in the development of an accurate profile for the position. Our firm takes developing the profile very seriously as the profile is the focal point of our recruitment efforts. We are eager to interview each Board member individually and visit with stakeholder groups who attend scheduled meetings. We will meet with any employees and other stakeholders as identified by the Board. Our firm also offers the opportunity for the community, staff and parents to participate in morning and evening

forums that are organized to solicit input via the survey process and create dialogue by asking a series of questions related to the desired characteristics of the new Superintendent. **We recommend virtual stakeholder sessions as well. We want to make sure everyone has an opportunity to participate whether in person or virtual.** The purpose of these meetings will be to educate them about the process as well as to gather and organize information that will contribute to the development of an accurate profile for the position.

**In addition, our firm offers an online profile survey option with space for written comments/recommendations which is available in English and Spanish at no charge. There is an additional fee should the survey be requested in other languages.** We will provide you with a link for placement on the district website and for the district to distribute to district stakeholders. Our office will maintain, collect and analyze all information received and include this in the report to the Board.

Our process consists of Q and A sessions and the administration of our own 31 Desirable Characteristics Survey. This culminates in an open meeting report to the Board of our findings and recommendations. We will present a tabulated and analyzed graphic report in which Board members' and stakeholders' survey responses are reviewed looking for those characteristics chosen most in common by the various groups and indicate those recommended or those thought to be worthy of consideration. On some occasions, two of the items may be combined when they are closely related in context. Those items that seem to be important to some groups but not to others may be used in the recruitment of candidates and as questions during the interview process by the Board. At the encouragement of the consultants, many survey respondents will provide additional comments to the Board which are presented as a part of this report. Our dialogue with constituents and interviews with individual Board members, coupled with survey results, provide our firm with an accurate profile that is employed in the recruiting and careful screening of applicants. The characteristics most commonly selected will be used later in promotional materials.

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# Examples of Community Engagement



USA School District REVISED 31 Qualities Survey 7-29-21

## QUALITIES DESIRED IN THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT

\* 1. Which group do you represent? (Please select only one) 0

- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Administrator
- ☐ Support Staff
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Non-Parent Community Member

## INDIVIDUAL CONSTITUENT GROUP QUESTIONS

DATE: → → → → ¶

TIME: → → → ¶

LOCATION: .. ¶

- ¶  
1. → What do you consider as the significant strengths of the school district? ¶  
¶
- ¶  
2. → What do you feel are the positives of the community/communities? ¶  
¶  
¶
- ¶  
3. → What are qualities/management styles you would like to see in the new Superintendent? ¶  
¶  
¶
- ¶  
4. → What are the critical issues the new Superintendent will face in this position? ¶  
¶

Our firm provides all clients the option to involve the community in the search process; from building the profile to the interview. Please see below for a sample schedule for community input sessions.

### **SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH - COMMUNITY INPUT SESSIONS**

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>TIME</b>	<b>GROUP</b>
7:15 to 8:15 AM	Board of Education Employees
8:45 to 9:45 AM	Businesses, Gov't Officials & Community Organizations
10:15 to 11:15 AM	Parents, Community Members & Mentors
11:45 AM to 12:45 PM	Government Officials, Former Board of Education Members & Higher Education Partners
<b>Lunch Break</b>	Students
1:30 to 2:30 PM	School Administrators & Education Associations
2:45 to 3:45 PM	Community Organizations & Faith Leaders/Members
4:00 to 5:00 PM	Board of Education Employees
<b>Dinner Break</b>	
6:00 to 7:00 PM	Open Meeting
7:30 to 8:30 PM	Open Meeting

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# Sample of Survey Results Provided to Board

Qualities Desired in a New District Administrator	Teachers (75)		Administrators (12 Eng. + 1 Sp.) = 13		Support Staff (33)		Parents (235 Eng. + 2 Sp.) = 237		Students (15)		Non-Parent Community Members (25)		Board of Education (8)		Abbreviated Definition of Quality and Characteristics
	Raw	Rank	Raw	Rank	Raw	Rank	Raw	Rank	Raw	Rank	Raw	Rank	Raw	Rank	
1	47	3	8	3	23	2	109	7	11	2	11	6	1	21	1. Willing to listen to input, and is a decision maker
2	35	9	6	7	14	10	121	5	7	8	18	1	7	1	2. Has leadership skills to respond to opportunities/challenges of diverse student body and community
3	4	30	0	27	2	30	24	31	4	15	2	29	0	29	3. Able to work with legislators and lead organization through legislative process
4	9	28	0	27	1	31	25	30	2	24	4	27	1	21	4. Ed.D. or Ph.D.
5	41	4	8	3	22	3	123	4	11	2	15	3	6	2	5. Strong moral compass rooted in justice and equality
6	36	7	8	3	15	8	133	3	8	5	12	5	3	9	6. Strong communicator in speaking, listening and writing
7	19	17	5	11	9	16	57	21	4	15	7	18	3	9	7. Commitment to visibility and actively engaged in a broad range of community groups
8	38	6	3	19	16	5	145	1	3	17	9	8	2	14	8. Has experience recruiting and maintaining exceptional staff for the district and schools
9	12	24	5	11	10	15	51	24	3	17	8	12	2	14	9. Ability to build consensus and commitment among individuals & groups
10	26	12	0	27	8	17	26	29	1	27	6	21	0	29	10. Has experience working effectively with employee representative groups/unions
11	17	19	6	7	15	8	73	15	6	10	6	21	4	7	11. Ability to delegate and oversee work of staff and maintain accountability
12	22	15	5	11	11	13	77	13	3	17	8	12	2	14	12. Experience with effective management that will benefit the long-term financial health of district
13	23	14	5	11	16	5	62	19	6	10	8	12	2	14	13. Possesses excellent interpersonal skills and can present a positive image of district
14	3	31	0	27	5	26	30	28	3	17	1	31	0	29	14. Non-traditional or "hybrid" with background in business and/or education
15	36	7	10	1	13	11	103	8	12	1	7	18	4	7	15. Strongly committed to "student centered" philosophy in all decisions
16	14	22	7	6	6	23	70	17	1	27	6	21	1	21	16. Ability to develop both short and long range goals
17	14	22	4	18	5	26	61	20	2	24	9	8	1	21	17. Ability to develop and communicate a vision of quality education
18	16	21	2	21	7	20	57	21	1	27	7	18	2	14	18. Experience in selection and implementation of educational priorities
19	22	15	2	21	4	29	80	12	7	8	6	21	1	21	19. Commitment to both academic and extracurricular programs

Qualities Desired in a New Superintendent	Teachers	Administrators	Support Staff	Parents	Students	Non-Parent Community Members	Board of Education	Total	Combined Ranking	Consultant Recommendation	Abbreviated Definition of Quality and Characteristics
	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Raw	Rank		
1	3	3	2	7	2	6	21	44	6	Consider	1. Willing to listen to input, but is a decision maker
2	9	7	10	5	8	1	1	41	4	Recommend	2. Has leadership skills to respond to opportunities/challenges of diverse student body and community
3	30	27	30	31	15	29	29	191	31		3. Able to work with legislators and lead organization through legislative process
4	28	27	31	30	24	27	21	188	29		4. Ed.D. or Ph.D.
5	4	3	3	4	2	3	2	21	1	Recommend	5. Strong moral compass rooted in justice and equality
6	7	3	8	3	5	5	9	40	3	Recommend	6. Strong communicator in speaking, listening and writing
7	17	11	16	21	15	18	9	107	17		7. Commitment to visibility and actively engaged in a broad range of community groups
8	6	19	5	1	17	8	14	70	11	Consider	8. Has experience recruiting and maintaining exceptional staff for the district and schools
9	24	11	15	24	17	12	14	117	18		9. Ability to build consensus and commitment among individuals & groups
10	12	27	17	29	27	21	29	162	27		10. Has experience working effectively with employee representative groups/unions
11	19	7	8	15	10	21	7	87	13	Recommend	11. Ability to delegate and oversee work of staff and maintain accountability
12	15	11	13	13	17	12	14	95	14	Consider	12. Experience with effective management that will benefit the long-term financial health of district
13	14	11	5	19	10	12	14	85	12		13. Possesses excellent interpersonal skills and can present a positive image of district
14	31	27	26	28	17	31	29	189	30		14. Non-traditional or "hybrid" with background in business and/or education
15	7	1	11	8	1	18	7	53	7	Recommend	15. Strongly committed to "student centered" philosophy in all decisions
16	22	6	23	17	27	21	21	137	21		16. Ability to develop both short and long range goals
17	22	18	26	20	24	8	21	139	22		17. Ability to develop and communicate a vision of quality education
18	21	21	20	21	27	18	14	142	24		18. Experience in selection and implementation of educational priorities
19	15	21	29	12	8	21	21	127	19		19. Commitment to both academic and extracurricular programs

## Stage Three: Recruitment

Using the newly created Profile as our guide, Ray & Associates will begin searching our extensive network of professionals to find the perfect match.

### Recruitment

**We believe the best candidates need to be recruited. Ray & Associates will conduct all aspects of the recruitment process on a statewide, regional and national basis as follows:**

- Contact individuals in our firm's database of nearly 3,000 school administrators whose interests match District criteria.
- Utilize our network to solicit nominations from groups including:
  - Our Associate Team from across the nation
  - Ray & Associates' National Advisory Committee
  - Contacts from various Professional education organizations
  - Other Professional Consultants in the private and public sectors

This network paired with our database and 28,000 unique monthly visits to our website allows us to recruit applications from qualified individuals.

### Advertising

**We're here to share your message by utilizing the robust Ray & Associates website paired with productive educational advertising venues and social media channels**

- Advertise nationally in the following external platforms as selected by the Board:
  - The School Superintendent's Association (AASA)
  - Education Week Newspaper and Website
  - National Association of School Superintendents (NASS)
  - State Administrators and State Association of School Boards Publications
  - The School Administrator Publication, Executives Only Website
  - Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS)
  - National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE)
  - American Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA)
- Advertise nationally in the following internal platforms:
  - Ray & Associates Website
  - Ray & Associates Candidate Database
  - Ray & Associates Social Media Channels
    - Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
  - Associate Networks and Word of Mouth

### Screening

**Once viable candidates have been identified, Ray & Associates contacts provided references as well those not listed on the applications. Our background research team then conducts extensive investigations of top candidates through our comprehensive system.**

These investigations go well beyond listed references and their current position to include contacts with state associations and national leadership organizations. A complete check of a candidate's work history is also completed utilizing online search engines as well as social media. We not only vet candidates extensively in their professional career, but it is also important for us to be familiar with their personal life as that can have an impact in their profession. The candidates who meet the qualifications selected by the Board become top candidates.

Our professional objective is to aggressively recruit and advertise for the best candidate who meets the qualifications and characteristics of a Superintendent as set forth by the Board. Our recruitment process is very comprehensive, highlighted by the following steps:

- Largest recruiting network in the country.
- Inform the firm's associates of the position and seek recommendations.

- Advertise in local, regional, national and diverse venues known for high readership by school leaders which venues are approved by the Board such as: EdWeek, AASA, NABSE and ALAS.
- Consult our extensive database for precise matches between district and candidate profiles.
- **Aggressively recruit successful school leaders who are not currently seeking a new position to invite them to consider the position with Okemos Public Schools.**
- Contact other organizations at state, regional and national levels regarding the position.
- Proactively seek out potential candidates at state and national conventions.

At Ray and Associates, we are deeply committed to ensuring that the recruitment process is equitable, accessible, and inclusive, particularly for candidates from communities that have been historically marginalized. We recognize that recruiting diverse leaders isn't just about expanding the applicant pool but also about actively addressing systemic barriers and implicit biases that can limit opportunities for underrepresented candidates.

To ensure an equitable and accessible process, we take several deliberate steps:

- **Outreach to Diverse Communities:** We proactively engage with networks, professional organizations, and affinity groups that serve historically marginalized communities, ensuring our outreach goes beyond traditional channels. This helps us attract diverse talent, particularly candidates from BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and other underrepresented groups, ensuring they are well-represented in the applicant pool.
- **Removing Barriers to Entry:** We critically examine job descriptions and qualifications to ensure they are inclusive and do not create unnecessary barriers for capable candidates. For example, instead of emphasizing traditional metrics like years of experience, we focus on skills, lived experiences, and the potential for impact, creating more opportunities for candidates from diverse backgrounds.
- **Equity in the Screening Process:** We use structured, equitable evaluation criteria to assess candidates based on their competencies, experiences, and values rather than relying on subjective impressions. By using a standardized framework, we minimize the potential for unconscious bias to affect how candidates are reviewed.
- **Transparency and Accessibility:** We ensure the recruitment process is accessible by offering multiple ways for candidates to apply, providing accommodation when needed, and maintaining transparent communication throughout the process. Our goal is to create a recruitment experience where all candidates feel welcomed and supported.

By implementing these strategies, we aim to build an applicant pool that is not only diverse but also reflective of the communities our schools serve. We believe that addressing implicit bias and ensuring equitable access are critical to finding leaders who can drive positive, inclusive change within the Michigan landscape.

## Stage Four: Candidate Screening and Presentation

### Candidate Review

As part of the candidate presentation to the Board, Ray and Associates will bring before the Board 8-12 top candidates for the Board's consideration. Our team will review the application information for these 8-12 candidates, making sure they meet the desired qualities selected by the Board (i.e. teaching experience, etc.) Additionally, these candidates will be screened by our team which consists of the following:

- Checking the internet, social media, etc. to see what, if any, articles are found.
- Asking if they are still interested in the position.
- If nothing negative is found on the internet, the candidate is contacted and asked a series of questions including "Have you applied for any other position?", "What is the status of your contract?", "Have you ever been released, fired or resigned from a position?". The candidates are also asked some district specific questions.
- We then contact references and non-references asking them a series of questions.

The 8-12 candidates are also asked to complete a one-way video through the Spark Hire program. If the candidates are deemed viable their application packet and video will be presented to the Board for review. Our team will discuss information found during the screening and assistance will be given to the Board to assist in making the decision about who to advance for 1st round interviews.

Upon the completion of candidate review, Board members will be asked to individually complete a matrix which allows them to assess each top candidate against the others. The Ray and Associates representative will then provide the Board with a summary of the individual Board responses. This summary assists the Board members in reaching consensus on which candidates are worthy of an interview. Following these steps ensures that all Board members have an equal opportunity to be involved in the selection process.

### Consensus Building

Upon the completion of the candidate review, Board members will be asked to individually complete a matrix which allows them to assess each top candidate against one another. The R&A representative will then provide the Board with a summary of the individual Board responses. This summary assists the Board members in reaching consensus on which candidates advance to the interview stage.

### The Interviews

Ray & Associates will coordinate all logistics of the interview process with candidates, as well as assist the Board in establishing the interview format, developing interview questions, moderating finalist forums, and evaluating post-interview.

## Stage Five: Candidate Selection

### First Round Interviews

If desired by the Board, first round interviews with 6-8 candidates can be virtual (in-person is also an option) to maximize cost savings for the district. Following all interviews, the same matrix from the candidate presentation will be conducted to narrow the candidate pool down to typically two to three finalists.

### Final Interviews

Final interviews are conducted on-site at the district, in-person with the finalists. Should the Board elect to do so, finalists can meet with small constituent groups as identified by the Board (i.e. administrators, teacher, support staff, and the community at large) with our firm moderating the sessions. A survey link/QR code for participants to provide feedback will be provided, with said feedback being given to the Board to aid in their decision-making process.

**Ray & Associates will conduct criminal, civil litigation, sex offender registry, social security, motor vehicle record checks and verification of educational degrees on one of the top candidates through an outside service at no additional cost. Should the board request reports on the other two (2) finalists, those can be ordered for an additional fee, which will be billed to the district.**

Once a final candidate is selected, we work with you to lay the foundation for a winning offer. Our team will work with the district legal staff in negotiating the contract with the successful candidate at no additional cost to the district.

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## Stage Six: Future Planning

# Empower leaders to deliver greater impact.

Choose solutions to support successful placements.

Finding the best candidate is critical, but it is only the first step. Leaders are most effective and inspired when they receive real-time support, meaningful tools, and actionable feedback in collaboration with a trusted partner.

Set your candidate up for success by investing in solutions designed for both experienced and new leaders alike. These customizable options from our partner CESO address the opportunities and challenges unique to K-12 executive roles to deliver true impact for the larger community.

Learn More Here! <https://theceso.com/services/>

### Strategic Planning

Drive true impact and increase community involvement, trust, and confidence in your district with guidance for strategic plan development and implementation based on your vision, goals, and values.

### Thought & Strategy Partnership

Leverage a coach to help focus on the important, not just the urgent. Tackle complex issues and achieve your goals as you alternate between thought and strategy work with a trusted partner.

### Operational Assessments

Gain a comprehensive understanding of your current operations and get a prioritized action plan for improvements. Available for transportation, communications, human resources, nutrition, technology, facilities, and finance.

### District Office Studies

Increase organizational partnership and deliver better results with an in-depth study to better identify if your district office's roles and structures are aligned to support your strategic plan and overall operations.

### Strategic Communications

Build stakeholder support for the work you do for students and strengthen your community's awareness and understanding of your district through comprehensive, proactive communications strategies.

### Executive Onboarding

Receive a fully customized onboarding experience to support daily tasks, board and community relations management, public speaking, team management, budgeting, time management, and more.



## Search Cost: The Complete Process

The cost of our Proposal is for a complete search and is not broken down by services or hours spent. The Board will be guided and assisted by Ray & Associates at every step in the search process, from the initial phase of determining the desired qualities for the position, through the actual hiring of the new Superintendent. Our process is flexible. If the Board desires a different approach or would prefer certain options other than those provided in our Proposal, we can adjust our process to meet your specific requirements.

### Cost Breakdown

The base fee for the performance of the Superintendent search by the consultants as provided in this Proposal will be twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000.00). If the Board selects only certain elements offered in this package, or requests services not included in this package, our fees and reimbursed expenses will be adjusted accordingly.

The Superintendent search fee shall be paid in three (3) installments; 1/2 of total fee is due upon signing of the contract; 1/4 of fee is due at the time of the stakeholder meetings; and the final 1/4 of fee is due when candidates are presented to the Board.

Ray & Associates will conduct criminal, civil litigation, sex offender registry, social security, motor vehicle record checks and verification of educational degrees on one of the top candidates through an outside service at no additional cost. Should the board request reports on the other two (2) finalists, those can be ordered for an additional fee, the fee which will be billed to the district. There is no charge by Ray & Associates for the services to assist the Board in negotiating a contract with the new Superintendent and the development of the contract terms.

### Competitor-Based Pricing Statement:

We are committed to providing our services at fair and competitive rates. As part of this commitment, we offer competitor-based pricing and will match the price of a verified competitive bid, provided that the proposed services are equivalent in scope, level of support, timelines, and processes.

To ensure an accurate comparison, the competing bid must be submitted for review and must clearly outline the services offered. Price matching will apply only when the competitive Proposal reflects a comparable level of quality, deliverables, and service expectations.

**Consultant Reimbursed Expenses:** Search expenses, including travel, lodging, meals, shipping, and other related items will be kept to a minimum and are to be reimbursed by the district. Said expenses will be invoiced as they occur and will include a detailed account listing.

**Candidate Expenses:** Many districts reimburse candidates for interview expenses, such as travel, lodging and meals for the candidate and spouse. In this case, candidates will submit all receipts and expense documentation to a designated individual at the district. Said expenses will be paid by the district as they occur.

**Cost Saving Expense Options:** Ray & Associates. is aware of budget concerns and offers several cost saving options including:

- Conduct meetings with our consultants virtually to minimize Associate travel expenses
- Review and utilize meeting materials electronically via email, shared drive, etc.
- Conduct First Round Candidate Interviews virtually to reduce candidate travel expenses

## ESTIMATED COST SHEET – OKEMOS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Ray & Associates will spend as much time as needed conducting a successful search for Okemos Public Schools. Please Note: Our flat fee is inclusive of all services. The only hourly rates that would apply would be for requests above and beyond this Proposal; these rates run from \$100/hour for Administrative work and \$200/hour for Associate work.

### Base Fee:

Ray & Associates Contracted Base Fee ..... \$20,000.00

### Travel:

Airfare (if needed) ..... 1,500.00  
Ground Transportation (mileage billed at IRS rate per mile) ..... 700.00  
Hotels ..... 500.00  
Meals ..... 300.00  
\*Travel Subtotal ..... \$3,000.00

\*Expenses will be less if some of the meetings are conducted virtually to eliminate associate travel.

### Board Approved Advertising:

Advertising expenses are stated separately as they are dependent upon each District and their unique needs. Our Associates make recommendations, and the Board has the final authority on frequency and dollars spent. The average spent on advertising by a district is \$2,750.

Advertising Expenses ..... \$2,750.00

**\*\*ESTIMATED TOTAL SEARCH COST** ..... \$25,750.00

\*\*Does not include estimated candidate expenses for interviews.

### Candidate Expenses:

The actual number of candidates interviewed is at the discretion of the Board. The estimated cost to interview a candidate is approximately \$2,000. This estimate is dependent on the candidate's geographic location and the Board's reimbursement policy. Candidate travel expense reimbursement is the responsibility of the district.

All expenses are estimates, based on past experiences.

### Competitor-Based Pricing Statement:

We are committed to providing our services at fair and competitive rates. As part of this commitment, we offer competitor-based pricing and will match the price of a verified competitive bid, provided that the proposed services are equivalent in scope, level of support, timelines, and processes.

To ensure an accurate comparison, the competing bid must be submitted for review and must clearly outline the services offered. Price matching will apply only when the competitive Proposal reflects a comparable level of quality, deliverables, and service expectations.

## References

We have chosen several clients from our recent search list to speak to our level of service.

SCHOOL DISTRICT	LOCATION	CONTACT PERSON	TITLE OF CONTACT	PHONE NUMBERS/ E-MAIL
Bay City Public Schools	Bay City, MI	Joslyn Jamrog	Board Vice President	Cell: 989-714-8523 <a href="mailto:jamrogj@bcschools.net">jamrogj@bcschools.net</a>
Rochester Community Schools	Rochester Hills, MI	Michelle Bueltel	Board President	Cell: 248-568-5131 <a href="mailto:mbueltel@rochester.k12.mi.us">mbueltel@rochester.k12.mi.us</a>
Fargo Public Schools	Fargo, ND	Katie Christensen Mineer	Board President	Cell: 701-388-7369 <a href="mailto:christk3@fargo.k12.nd.us">christk3@fargo.k12.nd.us</a>

## Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Ray & Associates will provide our clients with the highest quality services to assist them in hiring leaders who will meet district specific needs and positively impact the education of all students.

Ray & Associates is committed to identifying the best candidates that ensures each student will have the resources and support needed for their educational journey each and every day. We understand that students, staff, families and the community are the foundation and as our goal, we commit to finding the best candidates that will do the following:

- Provide quality instruction for each student.
- Include all students, families, staff, and community members.
- Transform systems that contribute to inequities.
- Develop relationships that are intentional and reciprocal.
- Collaborate with families, students, staff, and community.
- Communicate in an honest, open, and courageous manner.

Join us as we **WORK together. ASK questions. LISTEN fully. ACT meaningfully!**

## Satisfaction Guaranteed

Ray and Associates, Inc. or Okemos Public Schools may terminate this contract at any time for any reason by giving at least fourteen (14) days' notice in writing. If the contract is terminated by Okemos Public Schools as provided herein, Ray and Associates, Inc. shall be paid a mutually agreed upon payment as negotiated between Ray and Associates, Inc. and Okemos Public Schools for the work completed as of the date of notification of termination. Ray and Associates, Inc. shall incur no additional fees and expenses payable by Okemos Public Schools after notice of termination without written authorization from Okemos Public Schools.

If the Superintendent departs from the position during the first year under any circumstances or within two (2) years if a majority of the Board is still in place and departure is due to dissatisfaction and not health related matters, personal or familial reasons, Ray and Associates, Inc. will recruit new candidates for the Board at no additional cost barring travel, advertising, and due diligence expenses.

In addition to this, we do not recruit candidates we have placed for a minimum of 5 years.

## Confidentiality

The nature of our work and our ability to carry out our responsibility to you is directly related and dependent upon our present and past experience in providing similar services to others. Ray & Associates will preserve the confidential nature of any information which becomes available to us resulting from the services rendered to the Board.

At Ray & Associates, it's our job to take the pressure off of your team. The details and the process are our specialty, and you'll see this in every step of the search. Our priority is to guide your focus toward the big picture, allowing you to focus on learning more about the potential leader for your District, asking critical questions, and shaping the future for your students.

Should you have any questions about this Proposal, please do not hesitate to contact us at [kathy@rayassoc.com](mailto:kathy@rayassoc.com) or via phone at 319-393-3115.

**Thank you for your time as you make this decision to shape the future of your district. We are extremely pleased to be considered as your partner in the process to identify and engage your next visionary leader.**