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**CENTRAL CUSD #301**

**Burlington, Illinois**

**60109**

**SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROPOSAL**

**May 15, 2025**

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May 15, 2025

Dr. Griff Powell, Interim Superintendent  
Dr. Kyle Schumacher, Interim Superintendent  
Central CUSD #301  
275 South St., P.O. Box 396  
Burlington, IL 60109

Dear Drs. Powell and Schumacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to present Educational Leadership Solutions as the firm to serve your district's Board of Education in the hiring of their next superintendent. Our leadership team, consisting of high caliber, successful school leaders is excited to share with you our data-based process that will ensure the hiring of a top-notch, outstanding superintendent for your district.

Educational Leadership Solutions is a firm that uses research-based practices and data-driven processes, combined with our education-based experiences to match the best candidates with your district. This process, which also incorporates input from your district's stakeholders, will provide the best opportunities for your Board of Education to select the best candidate to lead the Central CUSD #301 for the future.

The following pages of this proposal will provide a flow chart overview of our process, as well as some additional background information about our firm. We have also included the Fee Structure to do the Search. We would be pleased to present the contents of this proposal to your entire Board of Education should that be a part of your selection process. The consultants from our firm to do this Search, if so awarded, would be Dr. Nick Polyak, and myself, Dr. Gary Zabilka. Our biographies are included in this proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this proposal with you. We look forward to the possibility of meeting the Board of Education in a couple weeks. Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Voltz, Ph.D.  
Don White, Ph.D.  
Gary Zabilka, Ed.D.

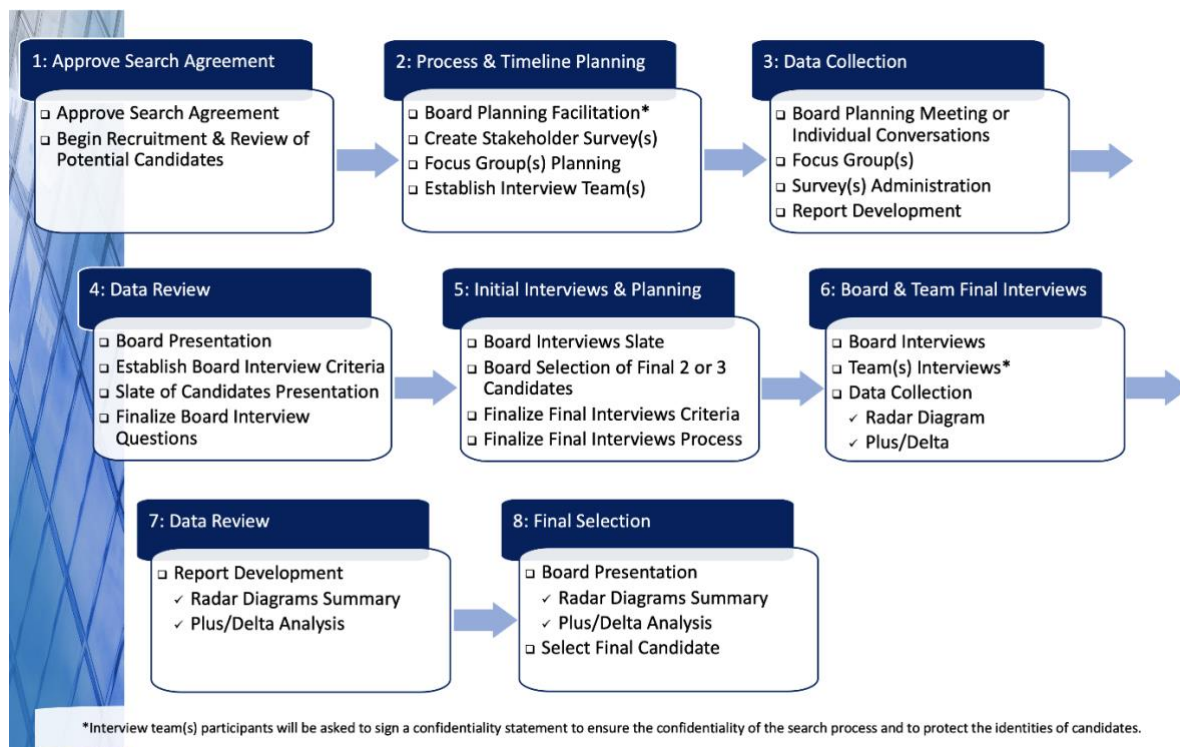


## SEARCH PROCESS OVERVIEW

The process starts with the facilitation of conversations and the collection of data that can be used to determine the selection criteria for screening applicants. It then proceeds to the data-driven initial review of the materials submitted by the applicants. The process finishes with the compilation of individual ratings based on responses to questions that have been aligned to previously identified criteria.

The data collected from each person participating on an interview team is compiled into an easily understood image. The person/people responsible for making the final employment recommendation will also receive a subjective feedback document for each candidate from all interview team participants. In addition, this process can also include a comprehensive, customized salary and benefit analysis for making a contract offer that is fair and responsive to the District's desires. Overall, this process takes approximately 10-12 weeks, unless customized.

Educational Leadership Solutions uses an exclusive process to vet the various candidates who apply for the leadership position. This analysis results in a proposal shared with the school board and together the school board and the Educational Leadership associate discuss the findings and arrive at the best candidates to be interviewed for the position.





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## **SEARCH PROCESS DELIVERABLES**

We believe that the Board of Education should know exactly what they can expect and will receive as a result of working with Educational Leadership Solutions.

Following is a list of deliverables which will provide an overview of our Solutions-based Search process:

- A pre-planning meeting with the Board of Education, where members of our firm will meet with the Board of Education to establish a timeline for the search, establish a communication plan, and layout the entire search process.
- A comprehensive process and timeline document.
- Data Analysis Documents
  - Stakeholder survey(s) analysis.
  - Candidate review criteria based on district input and stakeholder survey(s) and/or focus groups.
  - Interview “criteria of success” measures for conducting successful interviews, developing interview questions, and providing feedback to final decision maker(s).
  - Participants’ interview feedback data analysis (i.e., radar diagrams and plus/delta summaries).
  - If desired, a comprehensive compensation and benefits analysis.



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## PROJECT TEAM

**Dr. Gary Zabilka** is a seasoned educator with 42 years of experience as a teacher, assistant principal, principal and superintendent. He retired from the superintendency of Morton Grove School District 70 (IL) and also served as superintendent of Puffer-Hefty School District 69 in Downers Grove (IL), for a combined total of 13 years as a superintendent. He is currently a Field Service Director for the Illinois Association of School Administrators, responsible for coaching and mentoring new superintendents, as well as providing Professional Development in leadership for district administrators. He also taught educational administration courses for Loyola University, specializing in the areas of leadership and school finance. In 2012, Dr. Zabilka was named an Illinois Distinguished Superintendent. He has led or participated in over 50 executive searches. He holds degrees from Western Illinois University, Northern Illinois University, and a Doctorate from Loyola University. As one of the primary mentors of superintendents in the northern part of the state, Dr. Zabilka recognizes those key qualities and characteristics that make superintendents successful in their respective districts, and has a deep understanding of administrative structures and district organization.

**Dr. Nick Polyak** has worked in public education for the past 22 years. He currently serves as the Superintendent for Leyden Community High School District #212 in suburban Chicago. Nick earned his Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree in Educational Leadership and Supervision from Loyola University Chicago. He holds a Master of Arts Degree from Governors State University. Dr. Polyak's undergraduate work was at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Mathematics and Secondary Education. Nick is a co-moderator of #suptchat, the international Twitter Chat for Superintendents. He co-authored the 2017 Rowman & Littlefield book *The Unlearning Leader: Leading for Tomorrow's Schools Today*, the 2018 Rowman & Littlefield book *Student Voice: From Invisible to Invaluable*, and the 2021 Rowman & Littlefield book *The Unfinished Leader: A School Leadership Framework for Growth & Development*. He also co-leads the IASA Illinois Aspiring Superintendent Academy, the AASA National Aspiring Superintendent Academy, and the AASA Transformational Leadership Consortium.

**Dr. Don White** worked as a public school educator for thirty-three years. His positions included classroom teacher, principal, district office administrator, and superintendent. Prior to entering the field of education, Don served as an Assistant Manager for Walgreen's Drug Stores in Champaign, IL. In addition to serving as a superintendent for nineteen years, Don has been involved in many state and national projects. His work includes serving as a Co-Chair for the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) School for Advanced Leadership. As one of the three lead designers and trainers for the Illinois Leadership and Technology for Change (ITLC) out of Illinois State University, Don provided training for administrators that focused on best practices in school leadership, systems leadership, and data driven decision making. His efforts have resulted in two IASA Exemplary Service to Education Awards and he was recognized by IASA as a 2020 Superintendent of Distinction. Recently retired, Dr. White's focus continues to be providing professional development for all levels of school leadership, serving as a Partner for Educational Leadership Solutions, and working as a consultant with Forecast 5 Analytics.



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## **COSTS OF THE SEARCH**

### **1. General Fee**

The General Fee for this search is all-inclusive for the entire search process itself—it is \$17,900.

### **2. Regular Expenses**

The Regular Expense Fee is the administrative cost of the search and is provided as a “not to exceed” amount. Regular expenses include things such as copying costs, limited materials, travel reimbursements and other outside costs related to your search. For this search, the regular expenses will not exceed \$1,000.

### **3. Compensation and Benefits Analysis**

If desired, EdLS can complete a compensation and benefits analysis that includes regional and peer districts. This analysis will include the most recent data that is available and will provide valuable information for when the Board is prepared to negotiate a contract with the selected candidate. The cost of completing the compensation study is \$1,000.

### **4. Advertising Costs**

Advertising costs are costs related to the advertising of your search on a wider spectrum, particular if the district would like national exposure. These are billed to the district by EdLS if the district agrees to them. These can include any or all of the following:

- Publishing online in the American Association of School Administrators Journal;
- Publishing online in a widely read education periodical—Education Week.
- A national email “blast” to all superintendents in the country.
- Advertising your Search on our firm’s website is included in the general fee.

### **5. Miscellaneous Costs**

Districts sometimes would like a more thorough Criminal background search on their final candidate. EdLS can arrange for this, but the cost for this is incurred by the district.



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## **SATISFACTION STATEMENT**

Educational Leadership Solutions is a firm that is committed to excellence, and it is for that reason that we will continue to work for the district until they are satisfied with the Solution(s) we have recommended.

In the case of an Administrative Search, if the selected candidate does not complete at least two years in the role they have been hired, Educational Leadership Solutions will complete another Search for the district without the cost of the General Fee.

## **DISTRICT REFERENCES**

- Will County School District 92, Lockport, IL
- Richland School District 88A, Crest Hill, IL
- Glenview School District 34, Glenview, IL
- Rockdale School District 84, Rockdale, IL
- Wilmette School District 39, Wilmette, IL
- Kenilworth School District 38, Kenilworth, IL
- Lake Bluff School District 65, Lake Bluff, IL
- Township High School District 211, Schaumburg, IL
- Township High School District 113, Highland Park, IL
- River Trails School District 26, Mount Prospect, IL
- Warren Township HS District 121, Gurnee, IL
- Morton Grove School District 70, Morton Grove, IL
- Paris-Union School District 95, Paris, IL
- Effingham School District 40, Effingham, IL
- Park Ridge School District 64, Park Ridge, IL
- Leyden High School District 212, Franklin Park, IL