

# Board & Administrator

## FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

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### How to conduct a superintendent search

One of the biggest roles of a school board is to control the superintendent search process and make the ultimate decision on district leadership. The board may seek assistance with management and logistics from the state school board association, or it may hire a firm to conduct the search process.

When conducting the search for a new school superintendent, consider the following:

- Work as a team and collaborate with fellow board members.
- Establish performance objectives and create a complete updated job description.
- Consider the best and worst qualities of your outgoing superintendent and what qualities your future superintendent must have. Document the consensus of the group and incorporate into the job description.
- Conduct a transparent search. Report to board members and community members regularly during the search.
- Don't hesitate to address a candidate's political ties or "backers" and how they might hinder the board's purposes or work to its advantage.

- Collect input from stakeholders -- community members, parents, district staff, and business partners. From that data, determine the district's strengths (incentives to hiring) and needs (what the candidate can offer).

- Actively recruit. Read and evaluate all applicant files.
- Thoroughly vet candidates.
- Don't cut corners with reference checks.
- Narrow down the search to determine select candidates to interview.
- Prepare for the interview. Collaborate to determine how the interview will be conducted, create an agenda, collect questions, and discuss responses.
- Be prepared to share policies and board operating principles with a candidate. Discuss goals and long-range plans.
- Assist in developing an effective employment contract.

For the best results, implement a strategy for conducting a superintendent search and adhere to it with fidelity. ■

### Hone public speaking skills to improve community relations

As the pressure to reopen schools to in-person learning increases, school board members may feel as though their actions and decisions are in the public eye more than ever before. To maintain a good relationship with the school community and avoid miscommunications, board members should take steps to improve their public speaking skills. However, not every board member is a born expert speaker.

Here are three suggestions to hone your skills before your next public speaking event:

**1. Start small.** Gain confidence by speaking to your peers during executive board meetings. Then, gradually practice speaking to the public during open board meetings.

**2. Watch online videos of skilled presenters.** While you should not mimic another speaker's