Board of Education Special Meeting for the purpose of Superintendent Search Work Session
Monday, November 16, 2026 7:00pm *(or immediately following the preceding Regular Session Meeting)*
Central Office Board Room
401 South Pine Street
Valley, NE 68064-0378

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Approval of Agenda**
3. **Superintendent Search Work Session** **2**
4. **Adjournment**

NEBRASKA RURAL COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

Nov. 16, 2026

DC WEST SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH AGENDA

A. **4:00:** Faculty/Staff Committee Meeting**. ROOM—School Library.** Explain search process, role of committees, profile discussion.

B. **5:00:** Community Committee Meeting. **ROOM—School Library.** Explain search process, role of committee, profile discussion.

C. **6:00**: Administrative Committee Meeting. **ROOM—TBA**

D. **7:00:** Board Meeting. **ROOM: Board Room.**

(1) Review of search process; upcoming meetings. **(Handout)**

(2) Confirm search timeline. Discuss any date conflicts. **(Handout)**

(3) Preview tentative Wednesday, Dec. 2, finalist selection/pre-interview meetings**. 4:00, 5:00, and 6:00: Pre-Interview meetings with Committees. 7:00: Finalist Selection/Pre-Interview meeting with Board.**

(4) Discussion of open meeting requirements for finalist selection, interviews, Superintendent selection. **(Handout: Legal Issues Client Guide)**

(5) Discuss interview format/schedule draft. **(Handout)**

(6) Hosting duties checklist draft. **(Handout)**

(7) Profile discussion. Review notes from Faculty/Staff, Administration and Community Committee meetings.

(8) Salary Comparison Chart/Suggestions on Contract Language. (Executive Session may be called). **(Handout)**

NEBRASKA RURAL COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

Douglas County West Checklist for Hosting Interviews: Dec. 5

The DC West Superintendent interviews are tentatively scheduled for **Saturday, Dec. 5.** It is anticipated that there will be four candidates.

Greeting Candidates/Spouses

The greeters will provide the candidate (and spouse) with the important "first impression" of the district. Most districts use student greeters, often from the National Honor Society, Student Council or similar groups. Greeters will show candidates to their homeroom and accompany them to their first interview site. It is recommended that the greeters arrive 15 minutes prior to the interview time as most candidates want to be at the school early.

Who will select the greeters and give them basic instructions? _____

Names of the greeters: _____

Home Rooms

Each candidate should have their own room in which to relax between interviews, leave coats, etc.

Which four rooms will be used as homerooms? _____

Interview Rooms

All the interviews will take place at Douglas County West Schools. **Four** rooms are needed for interviews. Large rooms with tables and chairs (as opposed to desks) are best for interviews. Furniture needs to be arranged so interviewers are in a semi-circle, horseshoe, or inverted V with the candidate facing them. A chair to one side for the candidate's spouse needs to be provided.

Which rooms will be used for the interviews? _____

Board: _____ Faculty/Staff: _____ Community: _____ and Administration: _____.

Who will be in charge of arranging the furniture in the interview rooms? _____

DC WEST COMMUNITY SCHOOLS (Continued)

Food/Drinks

It is recommended that some sort of snacks and bottled water be provided for each candidate and his/her spouse in their home room. In addition, the school typically will provide a light meal (sandwiches, pizza, etc.) in the cafeteria where candidates and the Board, Faculty/Staff, Administration and Community interviewers can eat together. Since only 60 minutes are scheduled for the meal break, food needs to be of the type which can be served and consumed quickly.

Type of meal to be provided: _____

Who prepares/serves the meal: _____

Where served: _____

Additional home room refreshments (i.e., water, soda, cookies, etc.)
_____

Who is responsible for arranging the dinner: _____

Tour of the School/Community

The community tour should focus on community businesses, recreational opportunities, churches, housing, etc. The tour of the school should include selected rooms in both the elementary, middle, and high school areas as well as specialty areas such as labs, offices etc. A few minutes to visit with the district Business Manager should be a part of the school tour.

Where will the Business Manager be located? _____

Typically, the Principals lead the school tours if they are not candidates as this provides time to ask questions (not a formal interview but rather more conversational).

Some districts also use the principals to conduct the community tour; others use community members, often an economic development person, banker, etc.

Names of tour leaders: _____

Who will contact these people and ask them to host? _____

Who will arrange to have school vans available for tours? _____

Who will drive the van(s) on the tours? _____

Other Hosting Duties

An administrative assistant should be designated to manage miscellaneous hosting duties as they arise.

Administrative assistant: _____

NEBRASKA RURAL COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

Nov. 16, 2026, 7:00 P.M.

UPDATED SUMMARY OF THE DOUGLAS COUNTY WEST SEARCH PROCESS

(1) **Initial planning meeting (Oct. 12).** Tasks:

**Review search process.
**Decide on use of advisory committees
**Key questions regarding search process.
**Plan search timeline.
**Profile questions.
**Vacancy announcement; advertising options.
**Comparable schools list.

(2) **Profile meetings with faculty/staff and community advisory committees, as applicable. (Nov. 16).**

**Consultants meet with community and faculty committees and Board to develop district and candidate profiles.
**Confirm search timeline.
**Plan interview format; hosting duties.
**Review client legal guidance for selection process.
**Consider salary/benefit issues, contract suggestions.

3 **Selection of finalists/pre-interview meetings (TBD, tentatively Wednesday Dec. 2)**.

**Board reviews application materials, NRCSA recommendations, and selects finalists.
**Finalize interview day(s) format
**Discuss Board interview/selection procedures.
**Review sample interview questions and interview techniques with Board, faculty, and community committees (if all are to be involved); develop question packets for each group.

4 **Interview Day, special Board meeting(s) (TBD, tentative Saturday, Dec. 5)**

**Interviews. Consultants meet with Board and committees to review interview procedures. Present One Source Background checks to Board.
**Board deliberation and selection following interviews. Committee reports to Board.

Douglas County West Timeline

Monday, Oct. 12	**Firm Selection Meeting**
Monday, Oct. 12	**NRCSA Consultants' Initial Planning Meeting with DC West Board.**
Wednesday, Oct. 14	**NRCSA widely distributes DC West Vacancy Announcement; advertising in free media outlets and in paid media (if desired).**
Weeks of Oct. 14 through Nov. 25	**Recruiting period: Multiple contacts with university professors and other professionals to identify potential candidates; active pursuit of suitable candidates.**
Monday, Nov. 16	**Profile/planning meetings held with Board, Faculty, and Community Committees.**
Wednesday, Nov. 25	**Application deadline**
Wednesday, Dec. 2,	**Finalist selection and pre-interview meetings with Board, Faculty and Community committees.**
Saturday, Dec. 5	**Interviews**
Monday, Dec. 14	**Selection of new Superintendent; contract issued.**

NEBRASKA RURAL COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

TO: Client Boards of Education
FROM: NRCSA Superintendent Search Service

Since the inception of NRCSA's Superintendent Search Service, we have been advising Boards on procedures to follow related to selecting finalists, conducting interviews, and deliberating after the interviews in order to comply with the open meeting requirements and keeping applicants' materials confidential to the extent allowed by the public records laws. Based on recent changes to state law, we reviewed our advice with Nebraska school attorneys who then offered additional recommendations in light of these changes. These have been summarized into the memo below.

LEGAL ISSUES IMPACTING NRCSA SUPERINTENDENT SEARCHES: FINAL

(1) Finalist Selection:

A. We advise client Boards to select at least **four** finalists (i.e., those selected to interview in the NRCSA process) so that the application materials of the non-finalists can remain confidential per Nebraska's public records laws. Finalists' materials are open to the public. A Board may choose fewer than four finalists as long as they recognize that non-finalists' application materials are also open to the public.

B. It has been our interpretation that alternate finalists' materials are confidential until they actually become finalists due to one of the original finalists withdrawing. There is no Nebraska case confirming this position, but we believe Boards have a good argument that alternate finalists' names and materials are confidential until they become actual finalists -- defined as being offered an interview through the NRCSA process. If all four finalists' interview, then the alternates are never considered, meaning they were truly alternates.

C. The selection of finalists must be done in open session, but finalists do not have to be named. Otherwise, the confidentiality of non-finalists' rule would be meaningless. Our consultants typically follow a process that identifies each candidate by letter.

D. Candidates' application materials are presented to the Board in one of two ways. The first way is in a binder with hard copies of the materials. The second is that the materials are sent to the Board members via e-mail. It has been our interpretation that the application materials are confidential until finalists are chosen, consistent with the public records laws. The attorneys concurred that the format of materials (electronic or hard copy) does not affect confidentiality, so long as the board treats them as confidential throughout the process.

E. Consultant recommendations may be presented to the Board in tiers. Tier 1 consists of the candidates that are the most qualified for the position in the consultants' opinions; Tier 2 is somewhat less qualified; Tier 3—less so; Tier 4 (if used)—least qualified. Boards must treat the Tier Chart as confidential so that we have multiple arguments that it is not a public record. We would argue it is a "work product" of NRCSA, and because it identifies candidates and to some extent their application strength prior to finalist selection, we can argue is not a public record because the fact of application is confidential until finalists are selected. If it is distributed to the Board during the meeting, the Tier Chart must be returned to the NRCSA consultants at the end of the meeting, or it may become a public document.

F. Consultants discuss each candidate with the Board verbally in open session. Some consultants use notes, some key words, some have no written materials. Our consultants are always well prepared, but we do try to avoid writing during this stage as much as possible to avoid public records arguments. For the same reason, no written materials other than the Tier Chart are given to the Board. It has been our interpretation that any notes the consultants may have (Candidate Analysis) are confidential as a NRCSA work product and constitute a part of the application of non-finalists. These are presented **verbally only** and thus are not a public document.

G. During Finalist Selection, the Board may **only** go into closed session "to prevent needless injury to the reputation" of a candidate. Previously, we had advised that the Board can go into closed session for only one candidate at a time. However, after consulting with school attorneys, nothing in the open meetings law requires closed session for each candidate. As long as the discussion of multiple candidates is consistent with the agenda item and motion to enter closed session, a single closed session can be held to discuss potentially injurious issues for any of the candidates for finalist selection. However, keep in mind that any candidate may request that all discussion of his/her candidacy, regardless of potential injury to his or her reputation, be held in open session.

H. When the finalists are selected, the Board adopts a motion worded roughly as follows: "*I move to select the following finalists (identified by names) and authorize the search consultants to contact these designated alternates (identified by letter, i.e. Candidates'*

"C" and "F")." Names of the alternates will be made public only if they become a finalist. Once the Board has identified its finalists (and alternates by letter), a consultant will call the candidates and schedule interviews.

I. In July 2024, state law changed and now requires public comment to occur at every Board meeting. During the meeting where the board conducts candidate interviews and post-interview deliberations, identities of the finalists will be public. Prior to the change in the law, we advised Boards not to have public comment at that meeting, for fear that might raise First Amendment and other legal issues. For example, if a community member with good intentions says they believe "a young male" or "a strong female" candidate is best for the community, those comments could be used against the Board later in an allegation of discriminatory hiring practices. For that reason, we now recommend the board place public comment at the end of this meeting. That may upset members of the public with strong feelings about the candidates, but it is most protective of the Board. If the Board chooses to have public comment at the beginning or throughout the meeting, we recommend a shorter public comment time and shorter time per speaker, along with the Board president asking commenters to keep comments only to job-specific qualifications of the candidates.

J. Comment by designated faculty and staff and community interviewers are different and can be allowed during the Board's discussion, since that feedback is part of the process used by the Board and not "public comment."

(2) Interviews/Deliberation/Selection.

A. We advise Boards that the candidate interviews, Board deliberations following interviews, and the selection process must be held in **open session** with the exceptions that the Board is allowed to go to closed session to prevent needless injury to the candidates' reputations, and to discuss negotiations for the new Superintendent's contract. Just like in the finalist selection process, the Board may use a single closed session to prevent injury to the reputations of finalists where it is necessary to prevent needless injury. Separate closed sessions are not required.

B. Candidate interviews with the Faculty/Staff Committee, Administrative Committee, or Community Committee are NOT public meetings and those committees may exclude non-members if they choose or as directed by the Board. However, we usually advise against that. If the Committees allow non-committee members to attend, non-members must observe only, not comment or ask questions.

C. In view of the possible need to recess and reconvene these meetings, especially if candidates are given extended time to consider compensation offers, we recommend that the Board officially post two meeting dates. The attorneys concurred with posting

multiple meetings for the interviews, deliberation, and selection process in advance, because state law now requires publication in a newspaper of general circulation. Meetings are harder to call on short notice due to publication schedules. The reconvening date/time should be posted at the time that the Interview Meeting is posted, using two separate meeting notices, because the meetings will have different dates and times to be published. Boards need to be aware of up-to-date posting requirements due to these recent changes in state law.

D. Once the Board has selected a potential new Superintendent, the Board needs to determine contract terms and authorize the Board President or other designee to negotiate the contract. The open meetings law allows the Board to go into closed session to discuss negotiations for the Superintendent's contract, so that the Board retains its bargaining position and leverage without making it public. This includes the discussion of any aspects of the new Superintendent's contract, not just the offer of salary, because in effect the proposed contract is the "offer" of employment. The Board should fully discuss all contract terms before making an offer. This also allows the Board to receive guidance from NRCSA and legal advice, if needed. Once it has done so, the Board may then authorize the Board President or other member to offer a contract to a candidate, negotiate terms as necessary consistent with the guidance provided by the Board during closed session, grant time for a response, and, if the response is negative, contact an alternate candidate. This process may result in the Board adjourning meeting one and reconvening at the posted time for meeting two at a later date.