



**Special School Board Meeting**  
Wednesday, January 19, 2022 5:00 PM  
Location: South St. Paul Secondary - Media Center Classroom  
700 - 2nd Street North  
South St. Paul, MN 55075

## **Agenda**

**I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER and ROLL CALL**

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**III. SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROCESS**

A. Stakeholder Report (MSBA) 2

B. Interview process and training (MSBA) 8

**IV. ADJOURN**

## **South St. Paul Schools Superintendent Search**

### **Stakeholder Engagement Superintendent Search Survey**

**Overview:** On December 3, 2021, the “South St. Paul Schools Superintendent Search Survey” was made available to the public both online and in hard copy. The survey remained open for respondents until December 19, 2021, and a total of 221 people completed the survey (220 English, 1 Spanish).

**RESULTS:** Survey takers were asked to identify the role that best reflected the basis for their responses. The categories selected by the survey takers are provided below.

- 52.05% of respondents selected “Staff Member”
- 42.08% of respondents selected “Parent/Guardian”
- 4.52% of respondents selected “Community Member”
- 0.45% of respondents selected “Student”
- 0.45% of respondents selected “Business Owner/Agriculture”
- 0.45% of respondents selected “Other”

**Areas of Expertise:** Those who responded to the survey were also asked to identify the top six desirable areas of expertise they believe the new superintendent must possess. The most frequently noted areas of expertise are listed below in order of preference.

- Collaborative Leadership
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Budget and Finance
- School Reform (i.e., Strategic Planning, etc.)
- Curriculum Development/Evaluation
- Cultural Competence

**Specialized Skills:** The top six specialized skills the new superintendent must possess were identified in the survey results as shown below.

- Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner in dealings with the School Board, staff, and community
- Develops and directs an effective leadership team
- Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders
- Is a “people person” with proven abilities in human relations and communications
- Is visible and accessible to the School Board, staff, students, parents, and community
- Understands the effects of poverty on student learning and achievement



**Previous Experience:** Respondents were asked if previous superintendent experience is important. Based on the results, 41.71% of the respondents selected “Yes,” while 58.29% of the respondents selected “No.”

**Personal Characteristics:** Survey takers were also asked to identify the top six personal characteristics they believe the new superintendent must possess. The most frequently noted personal characteristics are listed below in order of preference.

- Honest and ethical
- Effective communicator
- Problem solver
- Transparent
- Personable
- Consistent

**Additional comments:** Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to answer open-ended questions in the survey and on average, 165 of the 221 respondents provided additional commentary. These results were then reviewed by MSBA representatives, with reappearing ideas identified and grouped into themes. These themes are highlighted below for each of the following four questions.

**1. What are some of the good things taking place in South Saint Paul Public Schools today?**

<p><b>South Saint Paul Public Schools has a capable, collaborative staff that goes above and beyond for each student in the district.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The teachers are awesome! They are committed to the students and always have them as a priority.</i></li> <li>• <i>We have a dedicated, responsible, hard-working teaching staff. We are honest and we go the extra mile for our students.</i></li> <li>• <i>Intelligent and compassionate teachers.</i></li> <li>• <i>We have absolutely amazing educators in our district.</i></li> <li>• <i>Committed teachers are working incredibly hard with students’ academic and emotional needs.</i></li> <li>• <i>Dedicated teachers who are here for the right reasons, care about their students and the community of SSP.</i></li> </ul>	<p>75 related responses</p>
<p><b>The South Saint Paul community appreciates the curricular and extracurricular programing afforded to the students at the district.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The IB Diploma Program is outstanding and despite being a small school, has several extracurricular opportunities.</i></li> </ul>	<p>57 related responses</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Many options such as career and college as well as extracurricular activities that include many diverse groups.</i></li> <li>• <i>Good extracurricular opportunities and creative thinking in trying new things to support students.</i></li> <li>• <i>What I Need Wednesday was exactly what these high schoolers needed. (Mentioned 13 times)</i></li> <li>• <i>The IB curriculum is inclusive and well developed. (Mentioned 11 times)</i></li> <li>• <i>I believe academics and curriculum are first rate.</i></li> </ul>	
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## 2. What challenges do you see for our district over the next five years?

<p><b>The South Saint Paul community is concerned about fluctuations in student enrollment and funding for the district.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Declining enrollment and budget challenges.</i></li> <li>• <i>Enrollment and tax base. Need a strong partnership with the city to guide development and create a stronger more consistent tax base.</i></li> <li>• <i>Declining kindergarten enrollments will mean hard decisions on budgets and staffing.</i></li> <li>• <i>Financial and classroom size challenges.</i></li> <li>• <i>Declining enrollment and state's unfair way of funding education.</i></li> </ul>	<p>115 related responses</p>
<p><b>Stakeholders want the district to address staff and student mental health and overall morale. They are concerned about the impact a lack of support is having on the district's ability to recruit and retain quality staff.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>ALL teachers/staff are feeling the effects of COVID, more mental health support is needed for all members of the school district.</i></li> <li>• <i>The social and emotional toll of the pandemic on students.</i></li> <li>• <i>I see the needs of our children with mental challenges requiring significantly more of our staff and the educational system.</i></li> <li>• <i>Keeping a positive culture for all stakeholders.</i></li> <li>• <i>Lack of substitute teachers.</i></li> <li>• <i>There are not enough support staff- behavioral interventionists, counselors, therapists, SPED social workers.</i></li> <li>• <i>Faculty engagement and retention.</i></li> <li>• <i>How to better support staff to assist with self-care and to retain staff.</i></li> </ul>	<p>97 related responses</p>



<p><b>There is concern about student safety, bullying, and negative student behaviors in the district.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Increasing behaviors in students due to trauma/poverty/etc.</i></li> <li>• <i>The biggest challenge I see ahead for the district over the next five years is addressing student behavior and reinstating student expectations.</i></li> <li>• <i>Managing disrespectful and inappropriate social and behavioral issues with students in school and on social media.</i></li> </ul>	<p>62 related responses</p>
<p><b>South Saint Paul stakeholders want to see an increase in diversity, equity, and inclusion education and wants the staff to better reflect the diversity of the student population.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Inclusiveness and cultural sensitivity are becoming big issues.</i></li> <li>• <i>I really believe we need to teach our students empathy and open their horizons to different cultures.</i></li> <li>• <i>Diversity and inclusion. We have typically not had much diversity in SSP and hopefully there will be more in the future. With diversity comes the need for inclusion, which I could see as a problem with "the way things always were."</i></li> <li>• <i>We lack diverse staff representation-it definitely impacts students negatively to not see someone like them and positively impacts student when they DO see someone the same color as them.</i></li> <li>• <i>Understanding and learning how to deal with children from all walks of life, continuing to add teachers of color, and help students of color reach their full potential.</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensuring equal and equitable education and promoting diversity in a healthy environment.</i></li> </ul>	<p>47 related responses</p>

**3. What does the new superintendent need to know about the history of the school district and community to be successful?**

<p><b>The South Saint Paul community wants the new superintendent to understand the demographics and values of the community and work to get to know the people in it.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>That it's important to be a part of the community. This is essential to me. We need someone familiar with the community and who wants to be here.</i></li> </ul>	<p>90 related responses</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>This is a very tight knit community and people have great pride in the schools.</i></li> <li>• <i>This used to be a Sundown Town, and now SSP is a wonderful mix of lower, middle, and upper income people from a variety of religions and ethnicities. But SSP could do even more to face SSP's past and help kids.</i></li> <li>• <i>Get to know your community. Please get out and meet people.</i></li> <li>• <i>Very close knit community, lots of civic pride. The school district sometimes gets stuck in "that's how we've always done things."</i></li> <li>• <i>Have adequate time to shadow, meet staff and get to know each department, be visible, answer questions, etc.</i></li> <li>• <i>The diversity of the community has grown considerably and has given us new opportunities to celebrate and use that diversity in a positive way.</i></li> <li>• <i>That the people of South St Paul are very closely linked to their families and friends. That it possesses a unique kind of kinship.</i></li> <li>• <i>I think it would be great if the new superintendent took some time to get to know the community prior to starting their role.</i></li> <li>• <i>We are a small town in the big city. A lot of the way the community operates is less like a suburb and more like a rural area.</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Stakeholders want the next superintendent to be a strong leader.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>They need a clear vision of where the district should be going.</i></li> <li>• <i>The community appreciates honesty and transparency.</i></li> <li>• <i>The community doesn't take well to change but NEEDS to be pushed into it. Change is healthy and keeps a community growing.</i></li> <li>• <i>Although there used to be pride for the schools that has diminished. The new leader needs to foster new pride.</i></li> <li>• <i>We tend to take on many new endeavors. Some of them we have adequate training for, and some we do not. We keep adding things and not taking anything away.</i></li> </ul>	<p>35 related responses</p>
<p><b>The South Saint Paul community wants the next superintendent to know they support the district.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>This is a proud community that has generally been very supportive of their school.</i></li> <li>• <i>This community will work hard for the school district.</i></li> <li>• <i>The community is willing to support our schools if the superintendent works with them by building relationships within the community.</i></li> <li>• <i>SSP community is strong, and many generations have attended this district. They will be welcoming and supportive.</i></li> </ul>	<p>24 related responses</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The new superintendent needs to know that the South St. Paul community has a history of supporting educational opportunities for students.</i></li> </ul>	
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**4. Additional Comments:**

<p><b>South Saint Paul stakeholders seek someone with vision and strong leadership skills.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Someone that can create a vision and lead our district. Someone that is creative, consistent, and transparent.</i></li> <li>• <i>A superintendent that listens to staff, community and business and trusts the talents and expertise of the staff who serves and communicates with families on a daily basis.</i></li> <li>• <i>I hope the new superintendent can bring this school back to the glory days when kids wanted to be there because they felt safe, secure and that they were learning real life, needed skills.</i></li> <li>• <i>For whomever fills this role in our community, we wish that he/she is a visionary who can lead and challenge our students to be the best versions of themselves.</i></li> <li>• <i>We need a leader who is bold enough to lead us into significant change, but also savvy enough to bring people along.</i></li> <li>• <i>We really love South St. Paul, and while it wasn't in your survey, we want a superintendent who loves it, too.</i></li> </ul>	<p>32 related responses</p>
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# **SCHOOL BOARD INTERVIEW TRAINING AND PREPARATION**

**MSBA EXECUTIVE SEARCH SERVICES**



# MSBA Executive Search Service



## South St. Paul Public Schools seeks an exceptional leader to serve as **Superintendent**

South St. Paul Public Schools is located in the heart of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The District serves nearly 3,000 students and covers six square miles. Points of pride include:

- ◆ Minnesota's first International Baccalaureate (IB) World School offers programs for grades K-5, 6-10, and a Diploma Program for 11-12
- ◆ First BARR School District in the nation (Building Assets, Reducing Risks)
- ◆ Career and College Readiness pathways
- ◆ 1:1 device access initiative
- ◆ More than half of secondary students participate in extra-curricular activities
- ◆ Student Leadership and Affinity Groups
- ◆ Where Everybody Belongs program (WEB) helps students transition from elementary buildings to the secondary building
- ◆ Community Learning Center provides an alternative environment to meet the unique and personal needs of its students
- ◆ Community Education located at Central Square Community Center delivers a range of comprehensive services such as ECFE, preschool, ABE, and youth/adult/senior citizen programs

The school district operates its own food service program in partnership with ISD 199, and contracts its transportation services to an outside vendor.

### By the Numbers

- ◆ Licensed Staff Members: 260
- ◆ Non-licensed Staff Members: 210
- ◆ School Buildings: 6
- ◆ 4 FT Principals and 6 FT Asst Principals
- ◆ 13 Cabinet Members

### Application Deadline

To be considered for this position, an applicant's completed file must be received by the MSBA office by 11:59 p.m. on January 17, 2022.

### About the Community

On the banks of the Mississippi River lies the undiscovered treasure of South Saint Paul. The community prides itself on a rich history of ethnic diversity, a strong work ethic, and an active citizenry. Community engagement with the school district is especially strong, and longstanding partnerships exist with the:

- ◆ City of South St. Paul on many initiatives
- ◆ South St. Paul Educational Foundation to provide scholarships and funds for students to go beyond the normal classroom experience
- ◆ South St. Paul Open Foundation which raises funds to support opportunities for the high school athletics and activity programs
- ◆ South St. Paul Lion's Club which provides thousands of dollars to support district programs and opportunities across SSPPS

### Search Timeline

Announce Vacancy	December 8, 2021
Application Deadline	January 17, 2022
Applicant Screening	Jan. 18 - Feb. 2, 2022
First Round Interviews	February 7 & 8, 2022
Second Round Interviews	February 16, 2022
Approve Contract	February 28, 2022
Superintendent Begins	July 1, 2022

# Leadership Profile

The South St. Paul School Board seeks a community-oriented candidate with proven leadership skills and abilities - someone who works well with others and is an effective communicator. In addition the School Board is committed to finding a candidate who:

- ◆ Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner with the School Board, staff, and community
- ◆ Is a “people person” with proven abilities in human relations and communications
- ◆ Follows the School Board’s chosen educational philosophy which reflects the community’s values
- ◆ Is visible and accessible to the School Board, staff, students, parents, and community
- ◆ Has knowledge of and experience with equity leadership challenges and opportunities
- ◆ Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders
- ◆ Understands the effects of poverty on student learning and achievement
- ◆ Is a visionary, creative thinker
- ◆ Develops and directs an effective leadership team

Previous superintendent experience preferred, but not required.

## Salary and Benefits

The current superintendent’s base salary for the 2021-2022 school year is \$185,677. The final salary will be negotiated commensurate with experience and qualifications. The contract length is negotiable as provided in Minnesota statute.

## District Financial Highlights

- ◆ General Fund Revenue: \$44,421,807
- ◆ General Total Expenditures: \$44,259,115
- ◆ Unreserved Fund Balance: \$5,269,705
- ◆ Total General Fund Balance: \$6,140,424

## School District Mission

**To ignite a passion in every learner to inquire, continuously improve and engage in positively changing our world.**

## Screening Team

The Minnesota School Boards Association Executive Search Service (MSBA) has been selected to assist the School Board in securing and screening applicants. The search team will be led by Barb Dorn, MSBA Director of Leadership Development and Executive Search.

## Deadline and Selection

MSBA’s Executive Search Service uses an online application process. Applicants begin the application process at [mnmsba.myrevelus.com](http://mnmsba.myrevelus.com). To be considered for this position, an applicant’s completed file must be received by MSBA prior to 11:59 p.m. on January 17, 2022.

Contact Barb Dorn at 507-508-5501 ([bdorn@mnmsba.org](mailto:bdorn@mnmsba.org)) with questions. Please mark any correspondence and/or envelopes “South St. Paul Public Schools Superintendent Search.”

Applicants are requested not to contact school board members.

South St. Paul Public Schools is an equal opportunity employer. The MSBA Executive Search Service is an equal opportunity search agency.

**Deadline to apply: January 17, 2022**

## South St. Paul Public Schools – Superintendent Search Timeline

December 1, 2021 <i>(4:30 pm, Work Session)</i>	Planning meeting – Board adopts search timeline, reviews hiring criteria, search procedures, market positioning, and stakeholder involvement
December 6 through December 19, 2021	Stakeholder online survey open
December 8, 2021 <i>(4:00 pm)</i>	MSBA facilitates virtual informational Q&A session
December 8, 2021 to January 17, 2022	MSBA posts opening on websites (MSBA, MASA, EdPost, Revelus), advertises position vacancy, receives applications, and responds to applicants' inquiries
January 17, 2022	Application Deadline
January 19, 2022 <i>(5:00 pm, Special Meeting)</i>	Board meets for interview training, and to discuss stakeholder report, interview questions and procedures
January 18 – February 2, 2022	MSBA conducts screening, preliminary verification of references, pre-interviews of recommended applicants
January 19 – February 2, 2022	Board members review applications
February 2, 2022 <i>(5:00 pm, Special Meeting)</i>	Board meets to determine finalists, interview questions and procedures; MSBA reviews interview training
February 7 and 8, 2022 <i>(4:00 pm and 3:30 pm, Special Meetings)</i>	Board conducts first round of interviews
February 16, 2022 <i>(4:00 pm, Special Meeting)</i>	Board conducts reference checks and holds second round of interviews; Board selects lone finalist and sets negotiations process
February 17, 2022	Board designee begins negotiations of employment contract with lone finalist
February 28, 2022 <i>(6:00 pm, Regular Meeting)</i>	Board meets to approve employment contract
July 1, 2022	New superintendent reports to work

## Relevant Law

All school board meetings related to the superintendent search must be open meetings. Applicants' materials contain data that are classified as private data. The law provides that the names of applicants for employment are private, but the names of finalists are public (M.S. 13.43, Subd. 3.). Once the finalists are named, the school board can only release the following information on applicants for a position: name (only finalists), veteran status, relevant test scores, rank on eligible list, job history, education and training, and work availability. All other information about applicants is private, as are the names and information of all other applicants who are not finalists.

## Don't Ask

Both state and federal law prohibit questions regarding "protected categories." Indirect questions regarding protected categories are also a violation of the law. Some of the protected categories are listed below.

Protected Categories	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Race or color</li><li>• National origin</li><li>• Religion or creed</li><li>• Age</li><li>• Status with regard to public assistance</li><li>• Familial status</li><li>• Marital status</li><li>• Pregnancy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sexual orientation</li><li>• Disability</li><li>• Sex</li><li>• Membership or activity in a local commission</li><li>• Veteran status</li><li>• Genetic information</li></ul>

What is an indirect question that may violate one or more protected categories? Some examples are provided below.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How much longer do you plan to work before you retire? (The answer to this question may reveal information that discriminates with regard to age.)</li><li>• Do you own a home? Have you ever filed for bankruptcy? (The answers to these questions may reveal information that discriminates with regard to public assistance or disability.)</li><li>• How will you make dependent care arrangements? (The answer to this question may reveal information that discriminates with regard to marital and familial status.)</li></ul>
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School boards should be particularly careful during follow-up questions. The school board should be cautious and agree beforehand how follow-up questions will be handled. Going "off script" increases the risk of an inappropriate question being asked. When in doubt, check with an attorney or contact MSBA.

## Interview Questions: Non-Discrimination Laws

Anti-discrimination laws affect all steps of the employee hiring process. Knowledge of the characteristics on which these laws prohibit inquiry is especially critical when conducting interviews. Sloppy interview practices can result in the appearance of discrimination or even actual discrimination.

Interviewers should avoid seeking information that is not job related. The school board should assume that a rejected applicant may believe that all information acquired during an interview will be used in the hiring decision. The school district will have the burden to explain that not all information elicited during the interview process was used – a very difficult burden when the information involves race, sex, religion, age, disability, etc. Information needed for insurance, tax, social security, or similar purposes should be obtained after employment. The following list of protected characteristics may not be complete because of the rapidly changing nature of discrimination laws.

Protected Category	Not Permissible to Ask	Permissible to Ask
Race and color	What race are your parents?	
Alienage, ancestry, national origin, nationality, and citizen status (provided the individual is authorized to work in the U.S.)	In what country were you born?  In what country were your parents born?  Are you a naturalized citizen?	Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?  What languages do you read, speak, or write fluently? (if related to the job requirements)
Marital status	Are you married? Single? Divorced? Engaged?  Are you living with someone?  Would your spouse move with you if you got this position?  What is your maiden name?	
Gender, including parental and pregnancy status	What are your future family plans?  Are you pregnant?  Do you have children? What are their ages?	Are you available to work overtime? (if related to the job requirements)

Protected Category	Not Permissible to Ask	Permissible to Ask
Sexual orientation, including actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, or gender-related identity	Do you have a spouse or partner – which?	What kinds of experiences have you had working with others with different backgrounds than your own?
Religion or creed	What religious holidays do you celebrate?	Are you available to work “X” to “X”?
Age	When do you plan to retire?  How would you feel about working for someone younger than you?	What are your long-term career goals?
Military status	Will you miss work because you are a member of a U.S. Reserve unit, such as, Army Reserve or Marine Corps Reserve, or a member of a National Guard unit?	How does your military training or experience prepare you for this job?*
Unfavorable discharge from military service	Under what circumstances were you discharged from the service?	<p><i>*This question is permissible only if information about military status is provided by the applicant, otherwise it is not permissible to ask any military status-related questions.</i></p>
Arrest record	Have you ever been arrested?  Spent time in jail?	
Use of lawful products during non-working hours	Do you smoke or use tobacco products during non-working hours?  Do you consume alcoholic beverages during non-working hours?	
Genetic information	What were the results of any diagnostic, predictive, or pre-symptomatic genetic testing that you’ve had?	See section on <i>disability</i> below.

Protected Category	Not Permissible to Ask	Permissible to Ask
<p>Credit history/report, unless the Employee Credit Privacy Act permits a satisfactory credit history to be a job requirement, such as, the position's duties include custody of or unsupervised access to cash or marketable assets valued at \$2,500 or more</p>	<p>Unless the Employee Credit Privacy Act permits a satisfactory credit history to be a job requirement for a specific position, do not ask:</p> <p>Do you have a good credit score?</p> <p>Have you been denied a credit card within the last 5 years?</p> <p>Have you ever filed bankruptcy?</p>	

## Disability

Inquiries that are likely to elicit information about a disability, before a bona fide job offer is made, are prohibited. Inquiries about the ability to perform job functions that do not ask about disabilities are permissible.

Protected Category	Not Permissible to Ask	Permissible to Ask
Disability	<p>Have you had any recent illnesses or operations?</p> <p>Do you have AIDS?</p> <p>Do you have asthma?</p> <p>Do you have a disability which would interfere with your ability to perform the job?</p> <p>How many days were you sick last year?</p> <p>Have you ever filed for workers' compensation?</p> <p>Have you ever been injured on the job?</p> <p>How much alcohol do you drink each week?</p> <p>Have you ever been treated for alcohol problems?</p> <p>Have you ever been treated for mental health problems?</p> <p>What prescription drugs are you currently taking?</p>	<p>Can you perform the functions of this job (essential and/or marginal), with or without reasonable accommodation?</p> <p>Please describe/demonstrate how you would perform these functions (essential and/or marginal).</p> <p>Have you ever been disciplined (oral or written reprimand, suspension, or termination) for attendance violations or problems?</p> <p>Do you have the required licenses to perform this job?</p>

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 401

Orig. 1995

Revised: \_\_\_\_\_

Rev. 2017

## 401 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

*[Note: School districts are not required by statute to have a policy addressing these issues. However, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission strongly encourages the adoption of a policy and will look for such a policy during accreditation visits, audits, or investigations.]*

### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal employment opportunity for all applicants for school district employment and school district employees.

### II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. The policy of the school district is to provide equal employment opportunity for all applicants and employees. The school district does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, age, family care leave status, or veteran status. The school district also makes reasonable accommodations for disabled employees.

*[Note: The Minnesota Human Rights Act defines “sexual orientation” to include “having or being perceived as having a self-image or identity not traditionally associated with one’s biological maleness or femaleness.” Minn. Stat. § 363A.03, Subd. 44.]*

B. The school district prohibits the harassment of any individual for any of the categories listed above. For information about the types of conduct that constitute impermissible harassment and the school district’s internal procedures for addressing complaints of harassment, please refer to the school district’s policy on harassment and violence.

C. This policy applies to all areas of employment including hiring, discharge, promotion, compensation, facilities, or privileges of employment.

D. Every school district employee shall be responsible for following this policy.

E. Any person having a question regarding this policy should discuss it with \_\_\_\_\_ (specify, e.g., the Personnel Manager).

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. Ch. 363A (Minnesota Human Rights Act)  
29 U.S.C. § 621 *et seq.* (Age Discrimination in Employment Act)  
29 U.S.C. § 2615 (Family and Medical Leave Act)

38 U.S.C. § 4211 *et seq.* (Employment and Training of Veterans)  
38 U.S.C. § 4301 *et seq.* (Employment and Reemployment Rights of Members of the Uniformed Services)  
42 U.S.C. § 2000e *et seq.* (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act)  
42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.* (Equal Opportunity for Individuals with Disabilities)

***Cross References:*** MSBA/MASA Model Policy 402 (Disability Nondiscrimination)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 405 (Veteran's Preference)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 413 (Harassment and Violence)

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 406

Orig. 1995

Revised: \_\_\_\_\_

Rev. 2014

## **406 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PERSONNEL DATA**

*[Note: The provisions of this policy accurately reflect the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and are not discretionary in nature.]*

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to school district employees as to the data the school district collects and maintains regarding its personnel.

### **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

- A. All data on individuals collected, created, received, maintained or disseminated by the school district, which is classified by statute or federal law as public, shall be accessible to the public pursuant to the procedures established by the school district.
- B. All other data on individuals is private or confidential.

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

- A. “Public” means that the data is available to anyone who requests it.
- B. “Private” means the data is available to the subject of the data and to school district staff who need it to conduct the business of the school district.
- C. “Confidential” means the data is not available to the subject.
- D. “Parking space leasing data” means the following government data on an application for, or lease of, a parking space: residence address, home telephone number, beginning and ending work hours, place of employment, location of parking space, and work telephone number.
- E. “Personnel data” means government data on individuals maintained because they are or were employees of the school district, applicants for employment, or volunteers or independent contractors for the school district, or members of or applicants for an advisory board or commission. Personnel data include data submitted to the school district by an employee as part of an organized self-evaluation effort by the school district to request suggestions from all employees on ways to cut costs, make the school district more efficient, or to improve school district operations. An employee who is identified in a suggestion shall have access to all data in the suggestion except the identity of the employee making the suggestion.

- F. “Finalist” means an individual who is selected to be interviewed by the school board for a position.
- G. “Protected health information” means individually identifiable health information transmitted in electronic form by a school district acting as a health care provider. “Protected health information” excludes health information in education records covered by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and employment records held by a school district in its role as employer.
- H. “Public officials” means business managers; human resource directors; athletic directors whose duties include at least 50 percent of their time spent in administration, personnel, supervision, and evaluation; chief financial officers; directors; and individuals defined as superintendents and principals.

#### **IV. PUBLIC PERSONNEL DATA**

- A. The following information on employees, including volunteers and independent contractors, is public:
  - 1. name;
  - 2. employee identification number, which may not be the employee’s social security number;
  - 3. actual gross salary;
  - 4. salary range;
  - 5. terms and conditions of employment relationship;
  - 6. contract fees;
  - 7. actual gross pension;
  - 8. the value and nature of employer-paid fringe benefits;
  - 9. the basis for and the amount of any added remuneration, including expense reimbursement, in addition to salary;
  - 10. job title;
  - 11. bargaining unit;
  - 12. job description;
  - 13. education and training background;
  - 14. previous work experience;

15. date of first and last employment;
16. the existence and status of any complaints or charges against the employee, regardless of whether the complaint or charge resulted in a disciplinary action;
17. the final disposition of any disciplinary action, as defined in Minn. Stat. § 13.43, Subd. 2(b), together with the specific reasons for the action and data documenting the basis of the action, excluding data that would identify confidential sources who are employees of the school district;
18. the complete terms of any agreement settling any dispute arising out of the employment relationship, including superintendent buyout agreements, except that the agreement must include specific reasons for the agreement if it involves the payment of more than \$10,000 of public money, and such agreement may not have the purpose or effect of limiting access to or disclosure of personnel data or limiting the discussion of information or opinions related to personnel data;
19. work location;
20. work telephone number;
21. badge number;
22. work-related continuing education;
23. honors and awards received; and
24. payroll time sheets or other comparable data that are used only to account for employee's work time for payroll purposes, except to the extent that release of time sheet data would reveal the employee's reasons for the use of sick or other medical leave or other not public data.

B. The following information on applicants for employment is public:

1. veteran status;
2. relevant test scores;
3. rank on eligible list;
4. job history;
5. education and training; and
6. work availability.

- C. Names of applicants are private data except when certified as eligible for appointment to a vacancy or when they become finalists for an employment position.
- D. Applicants for appointment to a public body.
  - 1. Data about applicants for appointment to a public body are private data on individuals except that the following are public:
    - a. name;
    - b. city of residence, except when the appointment has a residency requirement that requires the entire address to be public;
    - c. education and training;
    - d. employment history;
    - e. volunteer work;
    - f. awards and honors;
    - g. prior government service;
    - h. any data required to be provided or that are voluntarily provided in an application for appointment to a multimember agency pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 15.0597; and
    - i. veteran status.
  - 2. Once an individual is appointed to a public body, the following additional items of data are public:
    - a. residential address;
    - b. either a telephone number or electronic mail address where the appointee can be reached, or both at the request of the appointee;
    - c. first and last dates of service on the public body;
    - d. the existence and status of any complaints or charges against an appointee; and
    - e. upon completion of an investigation of a complaint or charge against an appointee, the final investigative report is public, unless access to the data would jeopardize an active investigation.

3. Notwithstanding paragraph 2., any electronic mail address or telephone number provided by a public body for use by an appointee shall be public. An appointee may use an electronic mail address or telephone number provided by the public body as the designated electronic mail address or telephone number at which the appointee can be reached.
- E. Regardless of whether there has been a final disposition as defined in Minn. Stat. § 13.43, Subd. 2(b), upon completion of an investigation of a complaint or charge against a public official, as defined in Minn. Stat. § 13.43, Subd. 2(e), or if a public official resigns or is terminated from employment while the complaint or charge is pending, all data relating to the complaint or charge are public, unless access to the data would jeopardize an active investigation or reveal confidential sources.
- F. Data relating to a complaint or charge against a public official is public only if: (1) the complaint or charge results in disciplinary action or the employee resigns or is terminated from employment while the complaint or charge is pending; or (2) potential legal claims arising out of the conduct that is the subject of the complaint or charge are released as part of a settlement agreement. Data that is classified as private under another law is not made public by this provision.

## **V. PRIVATE PERSONNEL DATA**

- A. All other personnel data are private and will only be shared with school district staff whose work requires such access. Private data will not be otherwise released unless authorized by law or by the employee's informed written consent.
- B. Data pertaining to an employee's dependents are private data on individuals.
- C. Data created, collected or maintained by the school district to administer employee assistance programs are private.
- D. Parking space leasing data are private.
- E. An individual's checking account number is private when submitted to a government entity.
- F. Personnel data may be disseminated to labor organizations to the extent the school district determines it is necessary for the labor organization to conduct its business or when ordered or authorized by the Commissioner of the Bureau of Mediation Services.
- G. The school district may display a photograph of a current or former employee to prospective witnesses as part of the school district's investigation of any complaint or charge against the employee.
- H. The school district may, if the responsible authority or designee reasonably determines that the release of personnel data is necessary to protect an employee from harm to self or to protect another person who may be harmed by the employee,

release data that are relevant to the concerns for safety to:

1. the person who may be harmed and to the attorney representing the person when the data are relevant to obtaining a restraining order;
  2. a pre-petition screening team conducting an investigation of the employee under Minn. Stat. § 253B.07, Subd. 1; or
  3. a court, law enforcement agency, or prosecuting authority.
- I. Private personnel data or confidential investigative data on employees may be disseminated to a law enforcement agency for the purpose of reporting a crime or alleged crime committed by an employee, or for the purpose of assisting law enforcement in the investigation of such a crime or alleged crime.
- J. A complainant has access to a statement provided by the complainant to the school district in connection with a complaint or charge against an employee.
- K. When allegations of sexual or other types of harassment are made against an employee, the employee shall not have access to data that would identify the complainant or other witnesses if the school district determines that the employee's access to that data would:
1. threaten the personal safety of the complainant or a witness; or
  2. subject the complainant or witness to harassment.

If a disciplinary proceeding is initiated against the employee, data on the complainant or witness shall be available to the employee as may be necessary for the employee to prepare for the proceeding.

- L. The school district shall make any report to the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board or the state board of education as required by Minn. Stat. § 122A.20, Subd. 2, and shall, upon written request from the licensing board having jurisdiction over a teacher's license, provide the licensing board with information about the teacher from the school district's files, any termination or disciplinary proceeding, and settlement or compromise, or any investigative file in accordance with Minn. Stat. § 122A.20, Subd. 2.
- M. Private personnel data shall be disclosed to the department of economic security for the purpose of administration of the unemployment insurance program under Minn. Stat. Ch. 268.
- N. When a report of alleged maltreatment of a student in a school is made to the Commissioner of Education, data that are relevant and collected by the school about the person alleged to have committed maltreatment must be provided to the Commissioner on request for purposes of an assessment or investigation of the maltreatment report. Additionally, personnel data may be released for purposes of

informing a parent, legal guardian, or custodian of a child that an incident has occurred that may constitute maltreatment of the child, when the incident occurred, and the nature of the conduct that may constitute maltreatment.

- O. The school district shall release to a requesting school district or charter school private personnel data on a current or former employee related to acts of violence toward or sexual contact with a student, if an investigation conducted by or on behalf of the school district or law enforcement affirmed the allegations in writing prior to release and the investigation resulted in the resignation of the subject of the data; or the employee resigned while a complaint or charge involving the allegations was pending, the allegations involved acts of sexual contact with a student, and the employer informed the employee in writing, before the employee resigned, that if the employee resigns while the complaint or charge is still pending, the employer must release private personnel data about the employee's alleged sexual contact with a student to a school district or charter school requesting the data after the employee applies for employment with that school district or charter school and the data remain classified as provided in Minn. Stat. Ch. 13. Data that are released under this paragraph must not include data on the student.
- P. The identity of an employee making a suggestion as part of an organized self-evaluation effort by the school district to cut costs, make the school district more efficient, or to improve school district operations is private.
- Q. Health information on employees is private unless otherwise provided by law. To the extent that the school district transmits protected health information, the school district will comply with all privacy requirements.
- R. Personal home contact information for employees may be used by the school district and shared with another government entity in the event of an emergency or other disruption to ensure continuity of operation for the school district or government entity.
- S. The personal telephone number, home address, and electronic mail address of a current or former employee of a contractor or subcontractor maintained as a result of a contractual relationship between the school district and a contractor or subcontractor entered on or after August 1, 2012, are private data. These data must be shared with another government entity to perform a function authorized by law. The data also must be disclosed to a government entity or any person for prevailing wage purposes.
- T. When a teacher is discharged immediately because the teacher's license has been revoked due to a conviction for child abuse or sexual abuse or when the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) makes a final determination of child maltreatment involving a teacher, the school principal or other person having administrative control of the school must include in the teacher's employment record the information contained in the record of the disciplinary action or the final maltreatment determination, consistent with the definition of public data under Minn. Stat. § 13.41, Subd. 5, and must provide the

Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board and the licensing division at MDE with the necessary and relevant information to enable the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board and MDE's licensing division to fulfill their statutory and administrative duties related to issuing, renewing, suspending, or revoking a teacher's license. In addition to the background check required under Minn. Stat. § 123B.03, a school board or other school hiring authority must contact the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board and MDE to determine whether the teacher's license has been suspended or revoked, consistent with the discharge and final maltreatment determinations. Unless restricted by federal or state data practices law or by the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, the responsible authority for a school district must disseminate to another school district private personnel data on a current or former teacher (employee or contractor) of the district, including the results of background investigations, if the requesting school district seeks the information because the subject of the data has applied for employment with the requesting school district.

#### **VI. MULTIPLE CLASSIFICATIONS**

If data on individuals are classified as both private and confidential by Minn. Stat. Ch. 13, or any other state or federal law, the data are private.

#### **VII. CHANGE IN CLASSIFICATIONS**

The school district shall change the classification of data in its possession if it is required to do so to comply with other judicial or administrative rules pertaining to the conduct of legal actions or with a specific statute applicable to the data in the possession of the disseminating or receiving agency.

#### **VIII. RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY**

The school district has designated [*name and title, telephone*] as the authority responsible for personnel data. If you have any questions, contact [*him/her*].

#### **IX. EMPLOYEE AUTHORIZATION/RELEASE FORM**

An employee authorization form is included as an addendum to this policy.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 (Minnesota Government Data Practices Act)  
Minn. Stat. § 13.02 (Definitions)  
Minn. Stat. § 13.37 (General Nonpublic Data)  
Minn. Stat. § 13.39 (Civil Investigation Data)  
Minn. Stat. § 13.43 (Personnel Data)  
Minn. Stat. § 13.601, Subd. 3 (Elected and Appointed Officials)  
Minn. Stat. § 122A.20, Subd. 2 (Mandatory Reporting)  
Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, Subds. 13 and 16 (Employment; Contracts; Termination)

Minn. Stat. § 626.556, Subd. 7 (Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors)  
P.L. 104-191 (HIPAA)  
45 C.F.R. Parts 160 and 164 (HIPAA Regulations)

***Cross References:*** MSBA/MASA Model Policy 206 (Public Participation in School Board Meetings/Complaints about Persons at School Board Meetings and Data Privacy Considerations)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)  
MSBA Service Manual, Chapter 13, School Law Bulletin “T” (School Records – Privacy – Access to Data)

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 205

Orig. 1995

Revised: \_\_\_\_\_

Rev. 2017

## **205 OPEN MEETINGS AND CLOSED MEETINGS**

*[Note: The provisions of this policy accurately reflect the Open Meeting Law statute and are not discretionary in nature.]*

### **I. PURPOSE**

- A. The school board embraces the philosophy of openness in the conduct of its business, in the belief that openness produces better programs, more efficiency in administration of programs, and an organization more responsive to public interest and less susceptible to private interest. The school board shall conduct its business under a presumption of openness. At the same time, the school board recognizes and respects the privacy rights of individuals as provided by law. The school board also recognizes that there are certain exceptions to the Minnesota Open Meeting Law as recognized in statute where it has been determined that, in limited circumstances, the public interest is best served by closing a meeting of the school board.
- B. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to assure the rights of the public to be present at school board meetings, while also protecting the individual's rights to privacy under law, and to close meetings when the public interest so requires as recognized by law.

### **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

- A. Except as otherwise expressly provided by statute, all meetings of the school board, including executive sessions, shall be open to the public.
- B. Meetings shall be closed only when expressly authorized by law.

### **III. DEFINITION**

“Meeting” means a gathering of at least a quorum or more members of the school board, or quorum of a committee or subcommittee of school board members, at which members discuss, decide, or receive information as a group on issues relating to the official business of the school board. The term does not include a chance or social gathering or the use of social media by members of a public body so long as the social media use is limited to exchanges with all members of the general public. For purposes of the Open Meeting Law, social media does not include e-mail.

### **IV. PROCEDURES**

- A. Meetings

1. Regular Meetings

A schedule of the regular meetings of the school board shall be kept on file at its primary offices. If the school board decides to hold a regular meeting at a time or place different from the time or place stated in its schedule, it shall give the same notice of the meeting as for a special meeting.

2. Special Meetings

- a. For a special meeting, the school board shall post written notice of the date, time, place, and purpose of the meeting on the principal bulletin board of the school district or on the door of the school board's usual meeting room if there is no principal bulletin board. The school board's actions at the special meeting are limited to those topics included in the notice.
- b. The notice shall also be mailed or otherwise delivered to each person who has filed a written request for notice of special meetings.
- c. This notice shall be posted and mailed or delivered at least three days before the date of the meeting. As an alternative to mailing or otherwise delivering notice to persons who have filed a written request, the school board may publish the notice once, at least three days before the meeting, in the official newspaper of the school district or, if none, in a qualified newspaper of general circulation within the area of the school district.
- d. A person filing a request for notice of special meetings may limit the request to particular subjects, in which case the school board is required to send notice to that person only concerning those particular subjects.
- e. The school board will establish an expiration date on requests for notice of special meetings and require refiling once each year. Not more than 60 days before the expiration date of request for notice, the school board shall send notice of the refiling requirement to each person who filed during the preceding year.

3. Emergency Meetings

- a. An emergency meeting is a special meeting called because of circumstances that, in the judgment of the school board, require immediate consideration.

***[Note: While the statute leaves the question to the board of whether the circumstances require immediate consideration at an emergency meeting, the advisory opinions of the Commissioner of Administration would limit***

*such meetings to responding to natural disasters or health epidemics caused by an event such as an accident or terrorist attack.]*

- b. If matters not directly related to the emergency are discussed or acted upon, the minutes of the meeting shall include a specific description of those matters.
- c. The school board shall make good faith efforts to provide notice of the emergency meeting to each news medium that has filed a written request for notice if the request includes the news medium's telephone number.
- d. Notice of the emergency meeting shall be given by telephone or any other method used to notify the members of the school board.
- e. Notice shall be provided to each news medium which has filed a written request for notice as soon as reasonably practicable after notice has been given to the school board members.
- f. Notice shall include the subject of the meeting.
- g. Posted or published notice of an emergency meeting shall not be required.
- h. The notice requirements for an emergency meeting as set forth in this policy shall supersede any other statutory notice requirement for a special meeting that is an emergency meeting.

4. Recessed or Continued Meetings

If a meeting is a recessed or continued session of a previous meeting, and the time and place of the meeting was established during the previous meeting and recorded in the minutes of that meeting, then no further published or mailed notice is necessary.

5. Closed Meetings

The notice requirements of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law apply to closed meetings.

6. Actual Notice

If a person receives actual notice of a meeting of the school board at least 24 hours before the meeting, all notice requirements are satisfied with respect to that person, regardless of the method of receipt of notice.

7. Health Pandemic or Declared Emergency

In the event of a health pandemic or an emergency declared under Minn. Stat. Ch. 12, a meeting may be conducted by telephone or other electronic means in compliance with Minn. Stat. § 13D.021.

8. Meetings Conducted by Interactive Technology

A meeting may be conducted by interactive technology, Skype, or other similar electronic means in compliance with Minn. Stat. § 13D.02.

B. Votes

The votes of school board members shall be recorded in a journal kept for that purpose, and the journal shall be available to the public during all normal business hours at the administrative offices of the school district.

C. Written Materials

1. In any open meeting, a copy of any printed materials, including electronic communications, relating to the agenda items prepared or distributed by the school board or its employees and distributed to or available to all school board members shall be available in the meeting room for inspection by the public while the school board considers their subject matter.
2. This provision does not apply to materials not classified by law as public, or to materials relating to the agenda items of a closed meeting.

D. Data

1. Meetings may not be closed merely because the data to be discussed are not public data.
2. Data that are not public data may be discussed at an open meeting if the disclosure relates to a matter within the scope of the school board's authority and is reasonably necessary to conduct the business or agenda item before the school board.
3. Data discussed at an open meeting retain the data's original classification; however, a record of the meeting, regardless of form, shall be public.

E. Closed Meetings

1. Labor Negotiations Strategy

- a. The school board may, by a majority vote in a public meeting, decide to hold a closed meeting to consider strategy for labor negotiations, including negotiation strategies or developments or discussion and review of labor negotiation proposals.

- b. The time and place of the closed meeting shall be announced at the public meeting. A written roll of school board members and all other persons present at the closed meeting shall be made available to the public after the closed meeting. The proceedings shall be tape recorded, and the tape recording shall be preserved for two years after the contract discussed at the meeting is signed. The recording shall be made available to the public after all labor contracts are signed by the school board for the current budget period.

2. Sessions Closed by Bureau of Mediation Services

All negotiations, mediation sessions, and hearings between the school board and its employees or their respective representatives are public meetings. These meetings may be closed only by the Commissioner of the Bureau of Mediation Services (BMS). The use of recording devices, stenographic records, or other recording methods is prohibited in mediation meetings closed by the BMS.

3. Preliminary Consideration of Charges

The school board shall close one or more meetings for preliminary consideration of allegations or charges against an individual subject to its authority. If the school board members conclude that discipline of any nature may be warranted as a result of those specific charges or allegations, further meetings or hearings relating to those specific charges or allegations held after that conclusion is reached must be open. A meeting must also be open at the request of the individual who is the subject of the meeting. A closed meeting must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

4. Performance Evaluations

The school board may close a meeting to evaluate the performance of an individual who is subject to its authority. The school board shall identify the individual to be evaluated prior to closing a meeting. At its next open meeting, the school board shall summarize its conclusions regarding the evaluation. A meeting must be open at the request of the individual who is the subject of the meeting. A closed meeting must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

5. Attorney-Client Meeting

A meeting may be closed if permitted by the attorney-client privilege. Attorney-client privilege applies when litigation is imminent or threatened, or when the school board needs advice above the level of general legal

advice, i.e., regarding specific acts and their legal consequences. A meeting may be closed to seek legal advice concerning litigation strategy, but the mere threat that litigation might be a consequence of deciding a matter one way or another does not, by itself, justify closing the meeting. The motion to close the meeting must specifically describe the matter to be discussed at the closed meeting, subject to relevant privacy and confidentiality considerations under state and federal law. The law does not require that such a meeting be recorded.

6. Dismissal Hearing

- a. A hearing on the dismissal of a licensed teacher shall be public or private at the teacher's discretion. A hearing regarding placement of teachers on unrequested leave of absence shall be public.
- b. A hearing on dismissal of a student pursuant to the Pupil Fair Dismissal Act shall be closed unless the pupil, parent or guardian requests an open hearing.
- c. To the extent a teacher or student dismissal hearing is held before the school board and is closed, the closed meeting must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

7. Coaches; Opportunity to Respond

- a. If the school board has declined to renew the coaching contract of a licensed or nonlicensed head varsity coach, it must notify the coach within 14 days of that decision.
- b. If the coach requests the reasons for the nonrenewal, the school board must give the coach the reasons in writing within 10 days of receiving the request.
- c. On the request of the coach, the school board must provide the coach with a reasonable opportunity to respond to the reasons at a school board meeting.
- d. The meeting may be open or closed at the election of the coach unless the meeting is closed as required by Minn. Stat. § 13D.05, Subd. 2, to discuss educational or certain other nonpublic data.
- e. A closed meeting must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

8. Meetings to Discuss Certain Not Public Data

Any portion of a meeting must be closed if the following types of data are discussed:

- a. data that would identify alleged victims or reporters of criminal sexual conduct, domestic abuse, or maltreatment of minors or vulnerable adults;
- b. active investigative data collected or created by a law enforcement agency;
- c. educational data, health data, medical data, welfare data, or mental health data that are not public data; or
- d. an individual's personal medical records.
- e. A closed meeting must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

9. Purchase and Sale of Property

- a. The school board may close a meeting:
  - (1) to determine the asking price for real or personal property to be sold by the school district;
  - (2) to review confidential or nonpublic appraisal data; and
  - (3) to develop or consider offers or counteroffers for the purchase or sale of real or personal property.
- b. Before closing the meeting, the school board must identify on the record the particular real or personal property that is the subject of the closed meeting.
- c. The closed meeting must be tape recorded at the expense of the school district. The tape must be preserved for eight years after the date of the meeting and be made available to the public after all real or personal property discussed at the meeting has been purchased or sold or the school board has abandoned the purchase or sale. The real or personal property that is the subject of the closed meeting must be specifically identified on the tape. A list of school board members and all other persons present at the closed meeting must be made available to the public after the closed meeting.

- d. An agreement reached that is based on an offer considered at a closed meeting is contingent on its approval by the school board at an open meeting. The actual purchase or sale must be approved at an open meeting and the purchase price or sale price is public data.

10. Security Matters

- a. The school board may close a meeting to receive security briefings and reports, to discuss issues related to security systems, to discuss emergency response procedures, and to discuss security deficiencies in or recommendations regarding public services, infrastructure, and facilities, if disclosure of the information discussed would pose a danger to public safety or compromise security procedures or responses.
- b. Financial issues related to security matters must be discussed and all related financial decisions must be made at an open meeting.
- c. Before closing a meeting, the school board must refer to the facilities, systems, procedures, services, or infrastructures to be considered during the closed meeting.
- d. The closed meeting must be tape recorded at the expense of the school district and the recording must be preserved for at least four years.

11. Other Meetings

Other meetings shall be closed as provided by law, except as provided above. A closed meeting must be electronically recorded at the expense of the school district, and the recording must be preserved for at least three years after the date of the meeting. The recording is not available to the public.

F. Procedures for Closing a Meeting

The school board shall provide notice of a closed meeting just as for an open meeting. A school board meeting may be closed only after a majority vote at a public meeting. Before closing a meeting, the school board shall state on the record the specific authority permitting the meeting to be closed and shall describe the subject to be discussed.

***Legal References:*** Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 (Minnesota Government Data Practices Act)  
Minn. Stat. Ch. 13D (Open Meeting Law)  
Minn. Stat. § 121A.47, Subd. 5 (Student Dismissal Hearing)  
Minn. Stat. § 122A.33, Subd. 3 (Coaches; Opportunity to Respond)  
Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, Subd. 14 (Teacher Discharge Hearing)

Minn. Stat. § 179A.14, Subd. 3 (Labor Negotiations)  
 Minn. Rules Part 5510.2810 (Bureau of Mediation Services)  
*Brown v. Cannon Falls Township*, 723 N.W.2d 31 (Minn. App. 2006)  
*Brainerd Daily Dispatch v. Dehen*, 693 N.W.2d 435 (Minn. App. 2005)  
*The Free Press v. County of Blue Earth*, 677 N.W.2d 471 (Minn. App. 2004)  
*Prior Lake American v. Mader*, 642 N.W.2d 729 (Minn. 2002)  
*Star Tribune v. Board of Education, Special School District No. 1*, 507 N.W.2d 869 (Minn. App. 1993)  
*Minnesota Daily v. University of Minnesota*, 432 N.W.2d 189 (Minn. App. 1988)  
*Moberg v. Independent School District No. 281*, 336 N.W.2d 510 (Minn. 1983)  
*Sovereign v. Dunn*, 498 N.W.2d 62 (Minn. App. 1993), *rev. denied.* (Minn. 1993)  
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 19-008 (May 22, 2019)  
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 19-006 (April 9, 2019)  
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 18-019 (December 28, 2018)  
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 17-005 (June 22, 2017)  
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 13-009 (March 19, 2013)  
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 12-004 (March 8, 2012)  
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 11-004 (April 18, 2011)  
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 10-020 (September 23, 2010)  
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 09-020 (September 8, 2009)  
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 08-015 (July 9, 2008)  
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 06-027 (September 28, 2006)  
 Dept. of Admin. Advisory Op. No. 04-004 (February 3, 2004)

***Cross References:*** MSBA/MASA Model Policy 204 (School Board Meeting Minutes)  
 MSBA/MASA Model Policy 206 (Public Participation in School Board Meetings/Complaints about Persons at School Board Meetings and Data Privacy Considerations)  
 MSBA/MASA Model Policy 207 (Public Hearings)  
 MSBA/MASA Model Policy 406 (Public and Private Personnel Data)  
 MSBA/MASA Model Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)  
 MSBA Service Manual, Chapter 13, School Law Bulletin “C” (Minnesota’s Open Meeting Law)

## Common Interview Mistakes

Below are ten common interview mistakes. School board members are wise to review the list prior to the interviews.

- 1. Poor or incomplete selection criteria.** If the school board hasn't carefully considered the skills and qualities needed for the position, the school board's interview questions won't get to the key issues.
- 2. Making a bad impression.** Plan ahead so the school board appears cohesive and organized. Start the interview on time and give the candidates your undivided attention. Avoid talking too much – whether it's in the formal interview or informal chitchat – the candidates should be the ones doing most of the talking. School boards don't want the best candidates to have an unfavorable opinion of the school board or school district.
- 3. Violations of the "Don't Ask" list.** Asking "Don't Ask" questions during an interview – intentionally or unintentionally – could subject the school district to a lawsuit. Remember, the "Don't Ask" questions pertain to every step of the process.
- 4. Vague questions, vague answers.** School board members shouldn't be left to interpret what a candidate said or meant. Interview questions should be open-ended but should not invite vague answers. Rather, when possible, ask the candidate to provide current and/or previous examples (i.e., How did you ...).
- 5. Forgetting the whole picture.** When the school board spends too much time on a particular topic, or the questions keep returning to a single topic, the "whole picture" is lost and important areas don't get covered. School board members also sometimes cling to one important characteristic – such as good communication skills – at the expense of considering other weaknesses. The reverse is also true.
- 6. Failure to probe motivation.** School board members certainly want to focus on a candidate's skills. However, the school board should also learn about the candidate's motivation and passion for the job. If the candidate isn't supportive of the school board's goals, the lack of support will be evident in his or her performance. Finding the right candidate is more than learning if a candidate can do the job; the issue is will he or she do it and do it well?
- 7. Treating the interview like a one-way street.** The school board must make sure the interview is a two-way conversation – the school board asks the candidates questions, yet ensures the candidates have time to ask their own questions.
- 8. Incomplete notes.** Without notes, school board members are unlikely to remember key points of each interview – especially after talking to several candidates. Good notes help ensure equal consideration of all candidates; otherwise, the first and last candidates tend to stand out and gain an unfair advantage.
- 9. Quick decisions.** Individuals without a great deal of interview experience may find it difficult to avoid first impressions and assign characteristics based on their own personal interpretations. However, school board members should take their time and make confident, measured decisions based on the pre-established selection criteria.
- 10. Accepting the wrong fit.** Being without a full-time, permanent superintendent for long is neither easy nor desirable. However, lowering the school board's standards to fill the position quickly is worse. When dealing with a high-profile job in a public institution, the process counts. Take your time.
- 11. Not checking your bias at the door.** See the following page for more information on the role Implicit Bias plays in candidate interviews.

## WHAT IS BIAS?

First, it's important to understand what bias is and why we all have biases.

Bias is often regarded negatively. For the purpose of this discussion, we consider bias in the context of partiality, preconceived notion and predisposition. The reality is that biases naturally come from our brains' use of schemas. A schema can be described as a template of knowledge. We use schemas to process the information that bombards our senses every moment of every day. This is simply a way for us to sort information into categories that make sense to us. We have schemas about objects, processes and other human beings.

For example, our brain uses a schema to assign the category of "chair" to an object based on its flat seat, back and legs, even though the chair might be plain wood or lavishly upholstered. We may have a negative bias about plain wood chairs because we have had the uncomfortable experience of sitting in one for an extended period of time. We have a schema for the process of ordering food at a restaurant. We know what it means when a smiling person hands us a laminated document with descriptions of various dishes and prices. And, by observing assorted traits, we use schemas to naturally assign people into categories such as age, gender, race and role.

There are two types of bias, explicit and implicit. Both types of bias include stereotypes and attitudes.

**STEREOTYPES** are traits that we associate with a category. These associations may arise from direct personal experience or they might be relayed to us through stories, media and culture. "Elderly people are frail" is an example of a stereotype.

**ATTITUDES** are overall evaluative feelings that are positive or negative. If we meet someone who graduated from the same university, we tend to feel more at ease with that person.

## WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

**Implicit biases are those we carry without awareness or conscious direction.** It is the result of our human brains using schemas to organize information into categories. Most of the work our brains do occurs on the unconscious level. Implicit bias does not mean that we hide our prejudices. We are unaware of these biases and they are generally not an indication of our beliefs and values.

This is important for interviewers to understand because without awareness we cannot know if we are acting on hidden biases. Implicit bias is also referred to as hidden or unconscious bias.

## WHAT IS EXPLICIT BIAS?

**In contrast, explicit bias means that we are aware that we have a particular thought or feeling.** It sometimes means we understand the source of that thought or feeling. If you have an explicitly positive attitude toward chocolate, you consciously endorse and celebrate that preference.



# Sample Interview Questions

## Professional Information

1. Why are you interested in this position?
2. What do you consider to be your proudest accomplishment as an educator?
3. How do you systematically improve your knowledge and skills as an administrator?
4. In which professional area of expertise would you most like to improve?

## Biographical and Self-Assessment

5. What administrative strengths will you bring to this school district?
6. If we visited with your staff, what would they say is your most obvious strength?  
Weakness?
7. How does this position fit in with your long-term goals?
8. Do you consider yourself an “out front” leader or a “behind-the-scenes” leader?
9. Why are you seriously interested in becoming our superintendent?
10. What aspects of your education and experience would be especially helpful in this position?
11. How do you respond and personally deal with criticism?
12. What would you like to accomplish in your present position but doubt that you will be able to accomplish? Why?
13. Assume for the moment that you have completed a long successful career in the school district. What would you hope to be the three most significant achievements you will be remembered for?
14. What are your long-term career objectives?
15. What has been the most unpopular decision you have had to make and how did you handle the reaction to this decision?
16. What qualities do you possess that you believe make you an outstanding administrator?

## School Board/Superintendent Relations

17. What is your responsibility if the school board proposes something that you think is educationally unsound?
18. What role do you think the school board should play in the hiring process for various categories of personnel, such as secretaries, teachers, and building administrators?
19. What would you do if you believed one or more school board members were exceeding the proper exercise of their office in the day-to-day operations of the school district?
20. How should a school board member respond to a constituent’s complaint concerning a teacher in an elementary school?
21. What is your definition of an ideal school board/superintendent relationship?
22. How would you help the school board maintain its leadership role in this world of educational change?
23. What would be your reaction if the school board opposes something which you thought was sound? What if the school board proposes something which you think is unsound or inappropriate?
24. How would you expect to be evaluated?
25. How would you work with a chronically “split board?”
26. What kind of understanding would you hope to establish between the school board and yourself in order to administer this school district effectively?

27. How would you keep the school board informed about what is happening in the school district?
28. How would you expect the school board to help you as a superintendent?
29. Describe your vision of the perfect relationship between the school board and the superintendent. What have you done in your past assignments to help achieve that relationship?
30. What types of events or behaviors have caused you to feel at odds with your school board and how have you resolved those situations?
31. Describe how you keep your school board fully informed between meetings.
32. Describe how you would prepare an agenda for the next school board meeting. What is your procedure for determining how items get on the agenda?
33. How would you prepare the school board to make a decision on a politically sensitive or controversial issue?
34. How do you feel the annual evaluation of superintendent performance should be handled? What elements should be included in the evaluation?
35. What is your role in developing school board policy?
36. What role should the superintendent play in orienting new school board members? How should this be accomplished?
37. How would you propose to have your performance evaluated? By whom? On what criteria? How often?
38. Tell us about your past relations with your school board.
39. How do you balance conflicting interests between school board and school district support groups?

### **Personnel, Management, and Administration**

40. Describe your philosophy of effective delegation.
41. What do you consider to be the most important duties of a CEO?
42. How would you set up an accountability system for personnel?
43. How would you motivate the teaching, administrative, and support staff to achieve new levels of excellence in education for children of all abilities?
44. What do you understand to be your responsibility in providing professional educational leadership?
45. How have you shared decision making with staff and citizens?
46. How aggressive would you be in creating change within the school district?
47. How would you build trust and collaboration within the school district?
48. How would you describe your management style? Would your subordinates describe it the same way?
49. What is your understanding of the administrative team concept? How would you implement that concept?
50. How do you delegate responsibility to others?
51. How would you improve the abilities of the professional staff?
52. Is there a difference between management and leadership? If so, what might that be? Can an individual be a manager and a leader?
53. How would you describe your management philosophy? Your managerial strengths and weaknesses?
54. How would you go about evaluating the effectiveness of our current administrative team? If you were to feel some re-alignment were necessary, how would you go about making a change?

55. How do you make decisions? Please relate the process you used in making your last important decision.
56. What process do you use (or would you use) to hire staff? At the school district level? At the building level?
57. How do you handle a conflict between parents and a building principal over school rules?
58. What is your philosophy concerning the recruitment of personnel?
59. What procedures do you find most useful in recruiting administrators and teachers?
60. Describe your experience with negotiations. What role do you prefer to play? How much has your school board been involved?
61. How do you maintain a collaborative relationship with the staff and/or teachers' association?
62. What kind of authority do you give to principals, and how do you hold them accountable?
63. If a teacher expresses concern to you about a principal's written evaluation of his/her performance, what would you do?
64. What is your philosophy concerning human resource development?
65. Tell us about your training in conflict management and consensus building.

### Finance and Building Programs

66. What is your procedure in developing a school district-wide budget?
67. What are some of the techniques you would recommend the school district use to cut the budget if that becomes necessary?
68. How would you suggest this school district handle long-range financial planning?
69. What is your experience in organizing and successfully passing bond issues?
70. Explain how you achieved success in past assignments that required coping with flat or minimally increasing revenues in the face of substantially increasing student enrollments.
71. Explain how you have achieved the appropriate balance between the need to protect the taxpayer's wallet and the need to have an outstanding program for students.
72. How would you develop a budget for the school district?
73. What is the school board's role in the budget process?
74. How would you involve the school board, staff, and the community in the budget process?
75. What is your experience in passing referendums?
76. How would you describe your understanding of school district finance? What do you know of finance issues?
77. Describe the budget-making process you have used.
78. What has been your experience with budget management, budgetary controls, and budget reduction?
79. What financial responsibilities have been assigned to others in your school district?
80. How would you suggest establishing a reasonable balance between budgeting for needed school district improvements and maintaining the fiscal integrity of the school district?
81. What financial difficulties have you encountered? What did you do?
82. How involved are you in the budgeting process and financial planning of your school district or do you leave those decisions to a business manager? (Superintendents from large school districts usually have a business manager.)

### Community Relations

83. Describe ways you would help build public confidence in this school district.
84. How would you be involved in the community?
85. How have you effectively kept the public involved with the school district?

86. As CEO, how would you establish partnerships with the business community to support the school district?
87. What is the role of the superintendent and the school board in developing community support for the schools?
88. How would you involve the business community in the schools?
89. How would you involve the community in the schools?
90. Describe what you believe is an effective public information program.
91. How would you, as superintendent, be involved in the civic affairs of the community?
92. How do you make yourself available to community members/groups who have need of information, questions, concerns?
93. Give some specific examples of ways you have successfully communicated to your shareholders accomplishments and problems.
94. How is the content of regular reports to the community determined?
95. What evidence can you cite which indicates your success in gaining school board and community support for educational programs?
96. How important do you feel it is for the superintendent to be visible throughout the community? How would you decide what activities/organizations are worth the time and effort of active participation?
97. How would you inform the staff of action taken at the last school board meeting?
98. How would you handle parent complaints about teacher performance?
99. What role do you believe you should play in community organizations?
100. How do you maintain visibility in the school district where you work now?
101. Describe your relations with your business community.
102. How have you succeeded in maintaining connection with and support from families who no longer have children in the schools?

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

103. How will you lead to ensure that the diverse and rich backgrounds of all members in our school community will be heard and included?
104. Please provide an example of how you have intentionally sought out diverse perspectives to reach a more just and equitable outcome.
105. Please share your understanding of how diversity, equity, and inclusion are interconnected.
106. How will you work to improve educational experiences and outcomes for our students who have been historically underserved and underrepresented?
107. Please describe your approach to recruiting, hiring, and retaining more educators of color? (Or Please describe your approach to recruiting, hiring, and retaining more Black and Indigenous educators and educators of color?)
108. What does educational equity mean to you?
109. How has your racial identity and culture shaped and informed your world view? How are you actively working to increase and grow your own racial and cultural critical consciousness?
110. How will you develop authentic and enduring partnerships with various district stakeholder groups to support the achievement of all students?
111. Describe how you would handle the inevitable opposition that often accompanies the courageous work of educational equity.
112. School districts are responsible for providing a high quality, equitable education for each and every student. What does an equitable education look like to you and how will you lead with an equity lens?

113. Share examples of systemic and institutional racism in our education system. How will you work toward dismantling those barriers?
114. Provide an example of the strategies you have used to create an inclusive learning environment for all students, regardless of ability, race, or life experiences.
115. How would you advocate for equity and diversity initiatives with both staff and community members that don't see its value?
116. Why do you think it's important to address diversity and equity issues in this position, and what are some ways you might do that?
117. As a member of district administration, what does it mean to you to use an "equity lens" in your decision-making processes?
118. Has the pandemic changed your perceptions of equity issues in public education, and if so, in what ways?

## Negotiations

119. Do you prefer to use traditional or collegial process for bargaining? Why?
120. If we talked to a union representative in your school district, how would he or she describe your relationships?
121. Have you worked with outside consultants in the area of collective bargaining? How do you choose and work with outside consultants?
122. Describe your experience in working with employee unions.

## Curriculum and Instruction

123. How have you been involved in using technology in administration and instructional programs?
124. Describe how you would evaluate the instructional programs of this school district.
125. What have you found to be effective in increasing the achievement of low socio-economic and minority students?
126. How would you determine the educational strengths and weaknesses of the school district?
127. How would you achieve and maintain the proper balance between academics and extracurricular programs?
128. Describe the techniques you have found most successful to maintain and improve the quality of instruction in classrooms with a stable and long-tenured staff.
129. Describe the educational change in your previous school district of which you are most proud.
130. What criteria do you use in evaluating an instructional program?
131. What, if any, new educational programs are available which are likely to improve schooling for pre-kindergarten students? Elementary students? Middle school students? High school students?
132. What have you done to upgrade the educational programs in schools under your supervision? How have you evaluated the results?
133. During your first year as our superintendent, how might you go about determining the strengths and weaknesses of this school district?
134. What educational programs at the federal level do you consider most significant at this time?
135. Describe your most successful efforts to use the influence of the superintendency to increase student achievement at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels.
136. How would you determine whether an excellent school system needs to be improved?
137. How would you conduct an assessment of the school district's current curriculum and its instructional programs?

138. Describe an appropriate role for the school board in curriculum development.
139. Discuss how you would ensure the relevance of a school district's educational program for students in the next century.
140. What do you see as the emerging role of technology as used in education?
141. What curricular innovations have you implemented in your school district?
142. What worthwhile educational trends do you see as having a significant impact on education in the immediate future?
143. What process do you use to bring about curriculum changes in your school district?
144. What are your thoughts on "inclusion" for multi-needs special education students?

### Accountability

145. What do you view as your major responsibilities in helping our school district meet the requirements of the accountability system?
146. What were some of your previous successes in meeting the state standards?
147. What else should be included in a local accountability system beyond those required by the state?
148. Describe your involvement and successes in the establishment or revision of legislation favorable to schools in general and your past school districts in particular.

### Grant Writing and Administration

149. What are some examples that demonstrate your background in grant writing and administration?
150. How should a school district implement a successful grant writing and administration program?
151. Who are some of the key people involved in a successful grant program?
152. What is your basic philosophy regarding the use of grants to fund public education?
153. What grants have you written and how have they impacted student learning?

### Leadership

154. What are the strongest leadership characteristics you bring to the position of superintendent?
155. What would your former subordinates say about your leadership style?
156. Give us a couple of examples of tough leadership situations you've faced in the past and how you handled them.
157. What's your approach for dealing with the different leadership styles among those leaders who work for you?
158. What would your school board/administration say are your strengths/weaknesses?
159. In considering your last one or two positions, describe a few accomplishments which you would attribute to your leadership.

### Dealing with Change

160. How do you intend to deal with the significant number of changes occurring in education today?
161. What are some examples of significant changes you instituted in your past organizations?
162. How do you build the support needed throughout the organization for needed changes?
163. How do you motivate those in the school district who tend to resist needed changes?

## Planning

164. How are the school board's role and the superintendent's role in school district planning different?
165. How should the community be involved in school district planning?
166. How would you lead the school district in developing long-range strategic and short-range operational plans?
167. What type of information about school district operations should the superintendent supply to school board members?
168. How would you determine long-range and short-range goals for the school district? Whom would you involve in the planning process? Have you worked on a strategic plan for your school district?
169. How would you implement short- and long-range school district goals? How would you monitor and evaluate their implementation?
170. When, if ever, do you feel the use of staff or community advisory committees is appropriate? How would you use them?
171. How do you delegate to others? How do you monitor the performance of those who are responsible?

## Technology

172. Give an example of how your school district now uses technology.
173. Explain how your present school district uses technology in the classroom.
174. Describe how you have been involved in implementing technology in your school district.
175. What does the research tell you about the use of technology in the classroom?

## Summary

176. If selected, when would you be able to assume this position?
177. Upon review of the school district's hiring criteria, is there anything about your past work experience that you would like to share with us?
178. Do you have any questions you would like to ask school board members?

## The Candidate's Turn

The school board has its questions answered; now it's the candidate's turn. The school board plans time in the interviews so candidates can ask questions about the school board's expectations and the school district. If the school board-superintendent relationship is akin to a "marriage," then both parties need to understand the other before making a commitment. The superintendent wants the school district to be a good fit for him/her as much as the school board wants the superintendent to be a good fit for the school district.

With a small pool of qualified candidates and a highly competitive environment, school board members should be prepared to explain why their school district is a good place to work, while acknowledging the challenges they face.

School board members should be aware that candidates, especially those who consider themselves finalists, are asking tougher and tougher questions.

### Sample Candidate Questions

- How do you evaluate your superintendent?
- What are the strengths of the school district?
- What are the school board's short- and long-term goals? What is the school district's vision?
- What are the school district's biggest challenges?
- How would you describe the relationship between the administration and teachers?
- What is the school district's financial condition?
- What does the school board see as its role? What about the superintendent's role?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses as a school board?
- Does the school district have any problems of which I should be aware?
- What does your community expect in terms of my involvement in the community?
- How will key administrators be selected?
- What are the most important skills you expect a superintendent to possess?
- How does the school board involve itself in the operation of the school district?

# Sample Reference Check Questions

Remember, the reference check questions asked should relate both to the candidate's work and the school board's established hiring criteria. Some sample questions to ask references are provided below.

## Questions to Ask School Board Members

- How often and under what circumstances did XXX contact you?
- What is XXX's role in building the agenda for the school board meeting?
- What is XXX's role at a school board meeting?
- How does XXX deal with school board members who have different agendas or points of view?
- Has XXX shown the ability to hold employees accountable for results?

## Questions to Ask School District Employees

- Does XXX know your name?
- How do representatives of your employee group discuss work-related issues with XXX?
- Does XXX formally or informally recognize employees for good work?
- Can you identify a situation that has caused XXX to terminate the employment of, or to reprimand, an employee? How was it handled?

## Questions to Ask Citizens

- Describe XXX's level of involvement in the community.
- What is the community's impression of XXX's ability to maintain control of school district costs?
- What is the community's perception of the quality of education in your school district?
- How has XXX developed support from businesses and other stakeholders?
- What is most needed in your school district?

## Tips for Conducting Reference Checks

- *Always* check references.
- Do not ask “Don’t Ask” questions.
- Avoid asking “yes/no” questions.
- Ask about the candidate’s working relationship with other administrators and staff.
- Ask follow-up questions to get specifics. “Can you provide me a specific example?”
- Ask in what areas the candidate could use additional training or experience.
- Ask the critical questions: “Would you rehire the individual? If no, why?”
- Call past employers as well. The current employer may have reasons for wanting the candidate to leave, and this may distort the answers you received.

## Deliberating in Public

The most difficult part of the superintendent search typically involves the final step: debating which finalist best meets the school district’s needs.

The debate is public. Many school board members struggle to balance meeting the spirit of the Open Meeting Law with the logistics of an open, honest discussion about the candidates’ attributes. How can school board members ensure they don’t offend any of the candidates? After all, what will happen if the top candidate declines the position and the school board has alienated its second or third choice?

While these concerns are legitimate, the school board must remember that it is analyzing the candidates because the candidates “voluntarily” sought the position. Candidates for a high-profile public position, such as the superintendency, know they will be judged on criteria set by the school board and/or community and that they will be judged against other candidates. As professionals, they willingly put themselves in that position in order to seek out opportunities in other school districts.

However, school board members should not launch into the process until they are prepared. School board members are reminded to treat the candidates fairly and with respect by emphasizing the candidates’ positive attributes instead of pointing out negative ones. This approach will call attention to a school board’s professionalism. If questions arise, school board members should seek advice from an MSBA search consultant.

If the school board has determined the qualifications it wants and carefully constructs the interview questions, the debate will follow logically. Do not, as individuals, go off on “fact-finding” missions. Do not entertain the demands of one self-interest group while ignoring others. Remember, the school board is trying to find someone to lead the entire school district, and the school board must try to match that individual’s skills with the individuals already employed by the school district.

School boards that plan ahead, abide by the law, and treat people with respect seldom have difficulty in finding new leadership for their school districts. By conducting a quality search, school boards will help usher in new leadership and elevate their stature as quality school boards with a quality educational product.

<b>Do:</b>	<b>Don’t:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus on the positive attributes of candidates during public discussion rather than negative ones.</li><li>• Judge candidates based on the school board’s pre-established criteria.</li><li>• Treat the candidates the way you would want to be treated.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Go on individual fact-finding missions.</li><li>• Let a special interest group shape the process.</li><li>• Alienate any of the finalists.</li><li>• Discuss the candidates in between interviews – save that discussion until you’ve completed the interviews for that round.</li></ul>

## SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT

### ARTICLE I PURPOSE

This Contract is entered into between Independent School District No. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, Minnesota, hereinafter referred to as the School District, and \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter referred to as the Superintendent, a legally qualified and licensed superintendent who agrees to perform the duties of the Superintendent of the School District.

### ARTICLE II APPLICABLE STATUTE

This Contract is entered into between the School District and the Superintendent in conformance with M.S. 123B.143.

### ARTICLE III LICENSE

The Superintendent shall furnish the School Board, throughout the life of this Contract, a valid and appropriate license to act as superintendent in the State of Minnesota as provided by applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

### ARTICLE IV DURATION, EXPIRATION, TERMINATION DURING THE TERM, MUTUAL CONSENT, AND CONTINGENCY

Section 1. Duration: This Contract is for a term of \_\_\_\_\_ years commencing on July 1, 20\_\_\_\_, and ending on June 30, 20\_\_\_\_. It shall remain in full force and effect unless modified by mutual consent of the School Board and the Superintendent or unless terminated as provided in this Contract.

*NOTE 1: Pursuant to M.S. 123B.143, Subd. 1., a School Board may enter into a Contract with a Superintendent for a period of time no longer than three (3) years. The Contract must provide that the School Board, at its discretion, may or may not enter into a subsequent Contract. Such a Contract may not be extended during its term. However, during the last three hundred sixty-five (365) days of such a Contract, a School Board may negotiate and enter into a subsequent Contract to take effect upon the expiration of the existing Contract. Such subsequent Contract must be contingent upon the Superintendent completing the terms of the existing Contract.*

Section 2. Expiration: This Contract shall expire at the end of the term specified in Section 1. above. At the conclusion of its term, neither party shall have any further claim against the other, and the School District's employment of the Superintendent shall cease, unless a subsequent Contract is entered into in accordance with M.S. 123B.143, Subd. 1.

*NOTE 2: See "NOTE 1."*

Section 3. Termination During the Term: The Superintendent's employment may be terminated during the term of this Contract only for cause as defined in M.S. 122A.40, Subd. 9. and Subd. 13., but, except for purposes of describing grounds for discharge, the provisions of M.S. 122A.40 shall not be applicable. If the School Board proposes to terminate the Superintendent during the term of this Contract for cause as described in M.S. 122A.40, Subd. 9. or Subd. 13., it shall notify the Superintendent in writing of the proposed grounds for termination. The Superintendent shall be entitled to a hearing before an arbitrator provided the Superintendent makes such a request in writing to the School Board Chair within

fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the written notice of the proposed termination. In such event, the parties shall jointly petition the Minnesota Bureau of Mediation Services (BMS) for a list of five (5) arbitrators. The arbitrator shall be selected by the parties through the striking process as provided by BMS rules. The arbitrator shall conduct a hearing under arbitration procedure rules and issue a written decision. The decision of the arbitrator shall be final and binding on the parties, subject to judicial review of arbitration decisions as provided by law. The Superintendent may be suspended with pay pending final determination by the arbitrator. If the Superintendent fails to request a hearing as provided in this section within the fifteen (15)-day calendar period, he/she shall be deemed to have acquiesced to the School Board's proposed action, and the proposed action shall become final on such date as determined by the School Board, and the Superintendent shall have no further claim or recourse.

Section 4. Mutual Consent: This Contract may be terminated at any time by mutual consent of the School Board and the Superintendent.

Section 5. Contingency: If this Contract is a subsequent Contract entered into prior to the completion of an existing Contract, this subsequent Contract is contingent upon the Superintendent completing the terms of the existing Contract.

## ARTICLE V DUTIES

The Superintendent shall have charge of the administration of the schools under the direction of the School Board. The Superintendent shall be the chief executive officer of the School District; shall direct and assign teachers and other School District employees under the Superintendent's supervision; shall organize, reorganize, and arrange the administrative and supervisory staff, including instruction and business affairs, as best serves the School District subject to the approval of the School Board; shall select all personnel subject to the approval of the School Board; shall, from time to time, suggest policies, regulations, rules, and procedures deemed necessary for the School District; and, in general, perform all duties incident to the office of the Superintendent and such other duties as may be prescribed by the School Board from time to time. The Superintendent shall abide by the policies, regulations, rules, and procedures established by the School Board and the State of Minnesota. The Superintendent shall have the right to attend all School Board meetings and all School Board and citizen committee meetings, serve as an ex-officio member of the School Board and all School Board committees, and provide administrative recommendations on each item of business considered by each of these groups.

## ARTICLE VI DUTY YEAR AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Section 1. Basic Work Year: The Superintendent's duty year shall be for the entire twelve (12)-month Contract year, and the Superintendent shall perform duties on those legal holidays on which the School Board is authorized to conduct school if the School Board so determines. The Superintendent shall be on duty during any emergency, natural or unnatural, unless otherwise excused in accordance with School Board administrative policy.

Section 2. Vacation: The Superintendent shall earn \_\_\_\_\_ working days of annual paid vacation each Contract year. Unused vacation must be taken within six (6) months after the end of the Contract year in which it is earned. Upon voluntary termination of employment or expiration of the Contract, if not offered a subsequent Contract, the Superintendent shall be entitled to payment for any unused vacation days earned and accrued pursuant to the provisions of this section; however, if the Superintendent is involuntarily terminated, he/she shall not be entitled to unused earned and accrued vacation days.

Section 3. Holidays: The Superintendent shall be entitled to \_\_\_\_\_ paid holidays as designated by the School Board each Contract year.

*NOTE 3: The specific holidays should be listed.*

Section 4. Sick Leave: The Superintendent shall earn paid sick leave at the rate of \_\_\_\_ day(s) each working month, and earned sick leave may accumulate to a maximum of \_\_\_\_ days. Upon voluntary termination of employment or expiration of the Contract, if not offered a subsequent Contract, the Superintendent shall be entitled to payment for any unused sick leave days earned and accrued pursuant to the provisions of this section; however, if the Superintendent is involuntarily terminated, he/she shall not be entitled to unused earned and accrued sick leave days.

Section 5. Workers' Compensation: Pursuant to M.S. Chapter 176, the Superintendent injured on the job in the service of the School District and collecting workers' compensation insurance may draw sick leave and receive full salary from the School District, the salary to be reduced by an amount equal to the insurance payments, and only that fraction of the days not covered by insurance will be deducted from accrued sick leave.

Section 6. Bereavement Leave: The Superintendent shall be granted bereavement leave for a death within the Superintendent's immediate family. The time utilized shall be in an amount to be determined after conferring with the School Board Chair. Days utilized [*will or will not*] be deducted from the Superintendent's sick leave. "Immediate family" is defined as the Superintendent's spouse, child, parent, brother, sister, or other relative who was living in the same household as the Superintendent.

Section 7. Emergency Leave: The Superintendent may be granted paid emergency leave at the discretion of the School Board.

Section 8. Jury Service: The Superintendent who serves on jury duty shall be granted the day or days necessary as stipulated by the court to discharge this responsibility without any salary deduction or loss of basic leave allowance. The compensation received for jury duty service shall be remitted to the School District.

Section 9. Military Leave: Military leave shall be granted pursuant to applicable law.

Section 10. Disability: If the Superintendent is unable to perform his/her regular duties because of personal illness or disability and has exhausted all accumulated sick leave, the School Board shall provide additional paid sick leave at a salary equal to \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the Superintendent's regular salary until the expiration of the waiting period for long-term disability insurance.

Section 11. Medical Leave: Pursuant to M.S. 122A.40, Subd. 12., the Superintendent shall have a right to a leave of absence for health reasons.

Section 12. Insurance Application: A Superintendent on unpaid leave is eligible to continue to participate in group insurance programs if permitted under the insurance policy provisions. The Superintendent shall pay the entire premium for such insurance commencing with the beginning of the leave and shall pay to the School District the monthly premium in advance. In the event the Superintendent is on paid leave from the School District under Section 4. above or supplemented by sick leave pursuant to Section 5. above, the School District will continue insurance contributions as provided in this Contract until sick leave is exhausted. Thereafter, the Superintendent must pay the entire premium for any insurance retained.

## ARTICLE VII INSURANCE

Section 1. Health and Hospitalization and Dental Insurance: The School District shall provide the Superintendent and the Superintendent's dependents with health and hospitalization and dental insurance coverage under the School District's group health and hospitalization and dental insurance plans at the expense of the School District.

[or]

The School District shall provide the Superintendent and the Superintendent's dependents with health and hospitalization insurance coverage under the School District's group health and hospitalization insurance plan. The School District shall contribute the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month toward the premium for such insurance. The balance of the premium shall be paid by the Superintendent through payroll deduction. The School District shall also provide the Superintendent and the Superintendent's dependents with dental insurance coverage under the School District's group dental insurance plan. The School District shall contribute the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month toward the premium for such insurance. The balance of the premium shall be paid by the Superintendent through payroll deduction.

*NOTE 4: In the event this Contract will cause or does cause penalties, fees, or fines to be assessed against the School District, the parties agree to reopen negotiations that result in a revised Contract between the parties that eliminates or reduces penalties, fees, or fines to be assessed against the School District. The amount of any reduction in the School District's contribution toward the Superintendent's healthcare benefits as a result of addressing the "highly compensated employee" component of the ACA will be placed into another School District provided benefit(s) (i.e., a retirement HRA, salary, etc.) as agreed upon between the parties.*

Section 2. Life Insurance: The School District shall provide, at its own expense, term life insurance for the Superintendent under the School District's group term life insurance plan in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_, payable to the Superintendent's named beneficiary(ies).

*NOTE 5: According to the Internal Revenue Service rules, the amount of School District premium contribution that pays for life insurance coverage in excess of \$50,000 is considered taxable income, so the School District should be certain that it is reporting that contribution as such, and the Superintendent needs to know why that amount is being reported.*

Section 3. Long-Term Disability Insurance: The School District shall provide, at its own expense, long-term disability insurance for the Superintendent under the School District's group long-term disability insurance plan.

Section 4. Eligibility: The eligibility of the Superintendent and the Superintendent's dependent(s) and beneficiary(ies) for insurance benefits shall be governed by the terms of the insurance policies purchased by the School District pursuant to this article.

Section 5. Claims Against the School District: The School District's only obligation is to purchase the insurance policies described in this article, and no claim shall be made against the School District as a result of denial of insurance benefits by an insurer if the School District has purchased the policies and paid the premiums described in this article.

## ARTICLE VIII OTHER BENEFITS

Section 1. Tax-Sheltered Annuities: The Superintendent is eligible to participate in a tax-sheltered annuity plan through payroll deduction established pursuant to Section 403(b) of the Internal

Revenue Code of 1986, M.S. 123B.02, Subd. 15., School District policy, and as otherwise provided by law.

Section 2. Vehicle: The School District shall compensate the Superintendent for business use of his/her private vehicle at the rate of \_\_\_\_ cents per mile pursuant to M.S. 471.665, Subd. 1.

[or]

The School District shall provide the Superintendent with a monthly allowance of \$\_\_\_\_ for business use of his/her private vehicle pursuant to M.S. 471.665, Subd. 3.

*NOTE 6: Prohibition Against Combination of Options. One of the two options above should be selected, and the other option deleted. Some School Districts have been utilizing a combination of M.S. 471.665, Subd. 1. and Subd. 3. – i.e., in-district travel and out-of-district travel. However, an opinion by the Minnesota Attorney General indicates that using the combination is improper (see Op. Atty. Gen. 11/20/95).*

*NOTE 7: Prohibition Against Personal Use of School District Vehicle. Two opinions by the Minnesota Attorney General conclude that a School District may not provide a school district-owned vehicle which the Superintendent utilizes for personal use even if the Superintendent pays for such personal use (see Op. Atty. Gen. 161b-12 1/24/89 and Op. Atty. Gen. 395b- 10/24/89).*

*NOTE 8: Statutory Restrictions on Personal Use of District-Owned Vehicles. M.S. 471.666 prohibits personal use of a vehicle owned, leased by, or loaned to a School District, except for incidental use related to School District business. Such a vehicle may not be used for transportation to or from the residence of the School District employee except for narrow, incidental use related to the School District's business. The effect of this restriction is so limiting that a School District's provision of District-owned, leased, or loaned vehicles for any personal use by the Superintendent is impractical (see M.S. 471.666).*

Section 3. Conferences and Meetings: The School District shall pay all legally valid expenses and fees for the Superintendent's attendance at professional conferences and meetings with other educational agencies when such attendance is required, directed, or permitted by the School Board. The Superintendent shall periodically report to the School Board relative to all meetings and conferences attended. The Superintendent shall file itemized expense statements to be processed and approved as provided by School Board policy and law.

## ARTICLE IX SALARY

The Superintendent shall be paid an annual salary of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the 20\_\_-20\_\_ Contract year, \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the 20\_\_ - 20\_\_ Contract year, and \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the 20\_\_ - 20\_\_ Contract year. During the term of this Contract, the annual salary may be modified but shall not be reduced. The annual salary shall be paid in \_\_\_\_ equal installments during the Contract year.

[or]

The Superintendent shall be paid an annual salary of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the 20\_\_ - 20\_\_ Contract year. The parties shall endeavor to agree by April 1 of each subsequent year as to the amount of the salary for the following year. During the term of this Contract, the annual salary may be modified but shall not be reduced. The annual salary shall be paid in \_\_\_\_ equal installments during the Contract year.

*NOTE 9: Options. School Boards should use only one of the paragraphs above. The first paragraph fixes a salary for more than one year, while the second paragraph fixes the salary for one year and*

*requires mutual agreement for the subsequent year(s). Practices vary from School District to School District.*

## ARTICLE X EVALUATE PERFORMANCE

The School Board shall oversee, direct, and evaluate the Superintendent's performance as the School Board sees fit.

*NOTE 10: The School Board and Superintendent should discuss a process for conducting at least an annual evaluation of the Superintendent's performance.*

## ARTICLE XI OTHER PROVISIONS

Section 1. Outside Activities: While the Superintendent shall devote full time and due diligence to the affairs and the activities of the School District, he/she may also serve as a consultant to other school districts or educational agencies, lecture, engage in writing and speaking activities, and engage in other activities if, as solely determined by the School Board, such activities do not impede the Superintendent's ability to perform the duties of the superintendency. However, the Superintendent may not engage in other employment, consultant service, or other activity for which a salary, fee, or honorarium is paid without the prior approval of the School Board.

Section 2. Indemnification and Provision of Counsel: In the event that an action is brought or a claim is made against the Superintendent arising out of or in connection with his/her employment and the Superintendent is acting within the scope of employment or official duties, the School District shall defend and indemnify the Superintendent to the extent provided by law. Indemnification, as provided in this section, shall not apply in the case of malfeasance in office or willful or wanton neglect of duty, and the obligation of the School District in this regard shall be subject to the limitations as provided in M.S. Chapter 466.

Section 3. Dues: The Superintendent is encouraged to belong to and participate in appropriate professional, educational, economic development, community, and civic organizations when such membership will serve the best interests of the School District. Accordingly, the School District will pay the membership dues for such organizations as are required, directed, or permitted by the School Board. The Superintendent shall present appropriate statements for approval as provided by law.

*NOTE 11: Until 2007, School Districts were restricted to paying dues for their superintendents to belong to professional and educational organizations, but the 2007 Minnesota Legislature enacted M.S. 123B.02, Subd. 24., allowing School Districts to pay dues for other organizations if their School Boards deemed such membership to be appropriate.*

Section 4. Medical Examination: The Superintendent shall have a comprehensive medical examination not less than once every \_\_\_\_ years. A summary document from the physician certifying the fitness of the Superintendent to perform the duties of the position shall be provided to the School Board Chair. The cost of said examination not covered by the School District's insurance program shall be paid by the School District.

[Section 5. Other Applicable Provisions: In this section, other terms and conditions of employment as agreed on between the parties should be included. Items such as severance pay, payment for unused sick leave, and extended leaves of absence, if provided to the Superintendent, are examples of what could be included. Since superintendents' contracts vary greatly in the manner in which they address such provisions, no attempt has been made to develop specific model Contract language.

However, if the parties are considering the inclusion of such provisions, both MSBA and MASA may be able to provide sample language upon request.]

*NOTE 12: Since July 31, 1993, severance pay for highly compensated employees has been restricted. A "highly compensated employee" is an employee with estimated annual wages that are greater than sixty percent (60%) of the governor's salary and are equal to, or greater than, eighty percent (80%) of the estimated annual wages of the second highest paid employee of the School District. Severance pay for highly compensated employees is restricted to an amount equivalent to six (6) months of wages. For purposes of this restriction, payments for accumulated vacation and sick leave liquidated to cover the cost of group term insurance may be paid in addition to the six (6) months of severance pay. For exceptions to the six (6)-month restriction, see M.S. 465.722, Subd. 3., which may be found in section "D.5." of "Chapter 3" in the MSBA Service Manual.*

ARTICLE XII  
SEVERABILITY

The provisions of this Contract shall be severable, and if any such provision or the application of any such provision under any circumstances is held invalid, it shall not affect any other provisions of this Contract or the application of any provision thereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have subscribed  
my signature this \_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have subscribed  
our signatures this \_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Board Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Board Clerk

