



**TSBA**  
TENNESSEE SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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**NATIONAL SUPERINTENDENT  
SEARCH SERVICE**

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[www.tsba.net](http://www.tsba.net)

The National Superintendent Search Service offers maximum flexibility to the Board and assures the Board has total control of the decision-making process. The search consultant performs the legwork associated with the search, allowing the Board to concentrate on the most critical steps in the search--setting the criteria, interviewing the most qualified candidates and selecting the next superintendent.

School districts need highly skilled chief executives with a passion to lead! Finding a superintendent often requires an executive search, which can be a time-consuming challenging, and complex endeavor. TSBA, through its membership in the National Affiliation of Superintendent Searchers (NASS), offers Tennessee school districts the most experienced network of search professionals in the country.

Unlike any other search firm, NASS members have extensive knowledge of effective governance, understand best practices in school district leadership and use proven strategies to develop productive board/superintendent relations.

NASS connects more than 100 consultants in 39 states who serve as superintendent searchers in state school boards associations. These searchers have proven track records of placements that bring sustained and quality leadership to school districts.

NASS provides an opportunity to collaborate nationally on the search process including nationwide job postings, the ability to recruit highly qualified candidates and to share vital background and reference information on candidates in other states.

The search process must be planned step-by-step to meet the needs and expectations of the Board of Education. Generally, the Search Service consists of the following elements:

### **1. GENERAL CONSULTATION**

A TSBA consultant makes an initial trip to the district, at no charge or obligation, to discuss options with the Board and to explain the Search Service in detail. Specific items to be covered at that time include planning a tentative timeline; defining the scope of the search; and discussing qualifications, contractual details, community/staff involvement, media relations and confidentiality.

## **2. ADOPTION OF TIMELINE AND PROCEDURES**

When the Board decides to utilize the National Superintendent Search Service, they must adopt a timeline. Normally, a full search from announcement to employment takes three to five months. The search consultant will propose a tentative timeline. The timeline is planned so the search can be thorough yet progress steadily. Every item on the timeline that is listed under “Board Decision” requires public notice.

The Board should determine the most ideal time for the new superintendent to begin employment, and direct its efforts toward that date. Most important, the Board must be willing to commit time to the interview and selection process. At the onset of the search, the Board should adopt the procedures that will guide it throughout the process. The consultant will present recommended procedures for the Board’s consideration.

Throughout the search process, the consultant will update the Board regularly about the search and meet at scheduled intervals with the Board to assist it with its responsibilities.

## **3. COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

In the timeline, the Board approves a date(s) to conduct community meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to allow the consultant to gather information from the community on what it believes to be the strengths of the system, the challenges a new superintendent will face coming into that system and the qualifications and characteristics the community expects in a new superintendent. After the consultant gathers this information, he/she presents it to the Board for its review.

The search consultant will set meetings with students, teachers, principals, central office staff, parents, teacher assistants, secretaries, business officials, community leaders, city council or county commission, mayor and aldermen, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, maintenance workers and other groups identified by the Board. In addition, the consultant may schedule an evening community forum to accommodate those individuals who cannot attend one of the day meetings. During these meetings, the consultant will ask attendees to complete a survey form regarding the most essential characteristics and qualifications of a superintendent. The survey may be completed at the meeting or online. Participants will have the opportunity to suggest names of persons to be invited to submit credentials for consideration. (The consultant does not conduct community meetings in the Plan 1 search service, but the consultant will advise the Board on how to conduct the meetings if it wishes to do so.

## **4. INTERIM REPORT AND ADOPTION OF CRITERIA**

After the community meetings, TSBA will tabulate the survey results and develop a set of proposed criteria. The final report of the proposed criteria will include comments made at each of the group meetings (the Board may modify the proposed criteria). Once the Board adopts the criteria, TSBA will advertise the position and recruit candidates.

## 5. VACANCY NOTIFICATIONS

TSBA will distribute vacancy notifications to the following agencies:

### For Plans 1 and 2

- All Tennessee Superintendents
- TN Organization of School Superintendents
- TN Commissioner of Education
- Association of Independent and Municipal Schools
- TN Supervisors Association
- TN Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
- TN Principals Association
- TN Association of Secondary School Principals
- Tennessee Colleges/Universities
- Southern Region state school boards associations
- National Affiliation of Superintendent Searchers (NASS) listserv

TSBA also will post the vacancy on its website and all social media sites.

**At the Board's discretion, additional advertising in national publications is available on a per cost basis. These costs shall be paid by the Board.**

TSBA will develop and a brochure, with the Board-adopted criteria, to advertise the position and to outline the search procedures. TSBA will send copies of the brochure to all or some of the aforementioned organizations, to all persons requesting information about the job, to persons recommended for the position, to board members and to the Central Office. The brochure will be available in hard or electronic copy.

Individuals interested in the position should submit the following information through our online application portal:

- A letter of interest
- An up-to-date resume, including accomplishments by position
- A copy of any relevant licenses or certifications
- University transcripts
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of five professional references

To insure that his or her credentials will be reviewed by the Board, an individual must submit the information by a specified deadline. The consultant may recruit other individuals who have not responded to the vacancy notice and request submission of credentials from those individuals even after the established deadline. TSBA will ask candidates who submit credentials to complete the online application.

## **6. CREDENTIALS PROCESSING**

When interested persons inquire, TSBA will direct them to a brochure outlining system specifics and search procedures. TSBA checks all individuals' submissions, and creates candidate files. Any candidate who does not submit all required information is notified of deficiencies and asked to supply the needed details.

## **7. SELECTING CANDIDATES**

The screening process has been developed carefully to assure effectiveness, fairness and confidentiality. A screening committee is selected, consisting of a TSBA search consultant and other qualified educational professionals. Committee selection is a function of the search consultant.

Referring to the Board-adopted criteria, the screening committee will assess how well the candidates' credentials match the Board's expectations.

## **8. FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION OF CANDIDATES**

Individuals accepted by the screening committee will be considered formal candidates for the vacancy. Following the screening committee meeting, the search consultant will return to the district to present the Board with a written report that includes the comments from the community, criteria, interviewing procedures and the candidates' names and supporting materials. The Board reserves the right to interview any or all of the recommended candidates. These materials will be subject to Tennessee's "Open Records Act."

The search consultant will schedule interviews for the candidates in accordance with the actions of the Board.

## **9. INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES**

Consultants do not participate in the interview process. The search consultant will present interviewing and reference-checking techniques to the Board, as well as a list of sample questions to be asked of candidates. Throughout the interviewing period, the search consultant is available to research and respond to questions about salary and fringe benefits, contract details, legal concerns, etc.

The consultant also may upon request conduct post-interview debriefings to determine if candidates are still interested, hear their concerns and refer this information back to the Board before it makes subsequent decisions.

## **10. REFERENCE CHECKING**

After the Board has conducted initial interviews, it may want one or more of the candidates to return for a second interview. If the Board is interested in pursuing a candidate further, it should conduct independent reference checks of current and former employers, colleagues, staff, community residents, etc. Up to this point, screening has primarily involved references solicited by the consultant, not necessarily the references submitted by the candidate. It is the responsibility of the Board to take an active role in this process.

## **11. SELECTING THE CANDIDATE**

One of the most important duties of the Board is the selection of the superintendent. This duty cannot be delegated. The search consultant's role is to advise the Board as to how to proceed with the offer as well as to explain features of an employment contract.

## **12. ANNOUNCING THE SELECTION**

The Board should consider a news conference or at least prepare a press release about the new superintendent once it announces its selection. A public reception for the new superintendent, hosted by the Board, provides the community an opportunity to meet the individual. Once the Board has made its selection, it will send a letter to each candidate interviewed but not selected as superintendent.

## Costs

The cost of a national superintendent search varies according to the level of service desired by the Board.

### PLAN 1 \$6,500

- Advertise and assist the Board regarding the search process.
- Publish descriptive brochure
- Distribute brochure to the following:
  - All Tennessee Superintendents
  - TN Organization of School Superintendents
  - TN Commissioner of Education
  - Association of Independent and Municipal Schools
  - TN Supervisors Association
  - TN Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
  - TN Principals Association
  - TN Association of Secondary School Principals
  - Tennessee Colleges/Universities
  - Southern Region state school boards associations
  - National Affiliation of Superintendent Searchers (NASS) listserv
- Advertise the vacancy via Web site
- Recruit candidates who meet the Board's criteria
- Receive credentials from candidates
- Respond to inquires regarding the vacancy
- Conduct checks of credentials and references
- Schedule interview dates with finalists
- Notify candidates who were not selected as finalists
- Provide interview guides for Boards
- Assist the Board with the development of an employment contract
- Negotiate the Board's contract offer with the candidate

### PLAN 2 \$11,500

- Provide all services listed in Plan 1
- Conduct employee and community meetings
- Conduct individual interviews with each Board member
- Report results of community meetings to the Board
- Recommend criteria to be adopted by the Board

#### ADDITIONAL ADVERTISING

At the Board's discretion, additional advertising in national publications is available on a per cost basis. These costs shall be paid by the Board.

#### SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION \$1,500

The search consultant will assist the Board in conducting the new superintendent's first year performance evaluation, including the development of a performance agreement with measurable objectives. The consultant will guide the Board through the entire evaluation process with the new superintendent during his/her first year of service with the Board. This service is \$2,000 when not included as a part of a superintendent search.

#### GUARANTEE

If a vacancy occurs during the two-year period following the employment of the candidate recommended, the search consultant will advertise, recruit, screen and refer to the Board additional candidates who meet the established criteria. This service will be provided without charge.

## Sample Timetable For Searches

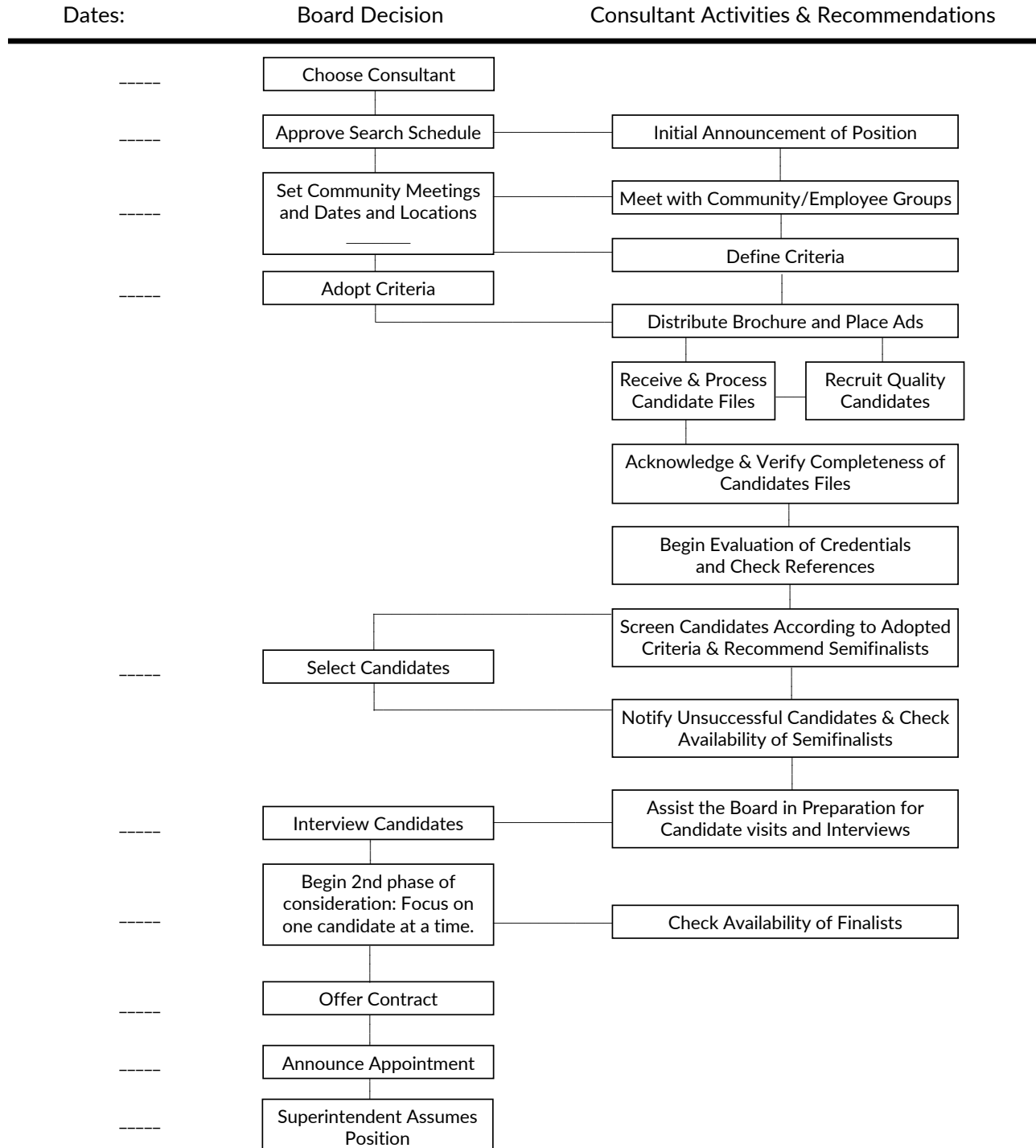
While searches often seem to take on a life of their own, an appropriate timetable, such as the one outlined below, will provide an operational guideline.

Depending on the time of the year, and taking into account vacation and other schedules, a Plan 1 or 2 search will “normally” take from three to five months.

ACTIVITY	WEEK OF SEARCH
Conduct community meetings to assist Board in the development of criteria for new superintendent	1
Present proposed criteria to the Board for adoption	3
Preparation of descriptive materials, brochures and announcements	4
Advertising and solicitation of nominations and recommendations; Processing and screening of candidate’s credentials	5-10
Screening of selected candidates by consultant	11
Investigation and evaluation of short-listed candidates	12
Presentation of candidates to School Board	13
School Board interviews candidates	14-15
School Board focuses on one candidate at a time, conducts in- depth reference check	16-17
School Board appoints Superintendent	18



# Sample Timeline and Critical Decision Sequence



## Sample Community Meeting Schedule

Noon	Mayor, County Commission, City Council, Community and Business Leaders and School Board
2:00 p.m.	Classified Employees
3:00 p.m.	Central Office Staff, Supervisors and Principals
4:00 p.m.	Teachers
6:00 p.m.	Community Forum

## List of Recent Superintendent Searches Conducted By TSBA

SYSTEM	YEAR	CONTACT
Blount County	2022	Robbie Kirkland, Chairman robbie.kirkland@blountk12.org
Rutherford County	2022	Tiffany R. Johnson, Chairman johnsonti@rcschools.net
Clarksville-Montgomery County	2022	Herbert Nelson, Chairman herbert.nelson@cmcss.net
Knox County	2022	Kristi Kristy, Chairman kristi.kristy@knoxschools.org
Humboldt City Schools	2021	Valeria Smith-Wedley, Chairman vswedley@icloud.com
Washington County	2021	Jason Day, Chairman jasondayconstruction@gmail.com
Bedford County	2021	Diane Neeley, Chairman diane.neeley@gmail.com
Murfreesboro City Schools	2020	Butch Campbell, Chairman bcampbe3@bellsouth.net
Bledsoe County	2020	Vincent Boring, Chairman vincentboring@bledsoecountyschools.org
Maury County	2020	Bettye Kinser, Chairman bkinser@mauryk12.org
Arlington Community Schools	2020	Scott Benjamin scott.benjamin@acsk-12.org 901-305-4654
Tullahoma	2020	Pat Welsh, Chairman pat.welsh@tcsedu.net
Jackson-Madison County	2020	James Johnson, Chairman james.johnson@corecivic.com 731-693-3191
Metro-Nashville Public Schools	2020	Anna Shepherd, Chairman anna.shepherd@mnps.org 615-210-3768

## List Of Recent Superintendent Searches Conducted By TSBA, cont.

Dyersburg	2019	Scott Self, Chairman sselfdds@yahoo.com 731-589-8890
Henry County	2019	Jill Coker, Chairman jillcoker@consolidatedbuildings.com 731-336-0736
Tipton County	2018	Marty Burlison, Chairman jmburlison@aol.com 901-581-4379 (C)
Rutherford County	2018	Jeff Jordan, Chairman jordanje@rcschools.net 615-893-5812
Greeneville City	2018	Craig Ogle, Chairman cogle@hcbonline.us 423-636-5013
Millington	2018	C.J. Haley, Chairman chaley@millingtonschools.org 901-494-4631
Johnson City	2017	Tim Belisle, Chairman timbelisle@embarqmail.com 423-302-3453
Robertson County	2017	Connie Hogan, Chairman connie.hogan@rcstn.net 615-419-1831
Trenton Special	2017	Dr. Mark Harper, Chairman markharperdds@gmail.com 731-855-0996
West Carroll Special	2016	Jimmy Halford, Chairman jhalford@gcsupplyco.com 731-662-7193
Milan Special	2016	Sid Crocker, Chairman crockers@milanssd.org 731-431-8855

## List Of Recent Superintendent Searches Conducted By TSBA, cont.

Washington County	2016	Todd Ganger, Board Member Tag0220@yahoo.com 423-426-2017
Hickman County	2016	Jewell Prince, Board Member Beetlemjp63@gmail.com 931-729-5452
Alamo	2016	Lawrence Harden, Board Chairman Lawrence.harden10@gmail.com 731-343-9771
Cleveland	2016	Dawn Robinson, Board Chairman dumbolt@aol.com