

LEADERSHIP TRANSITION GUIDE





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Transition in school district



INTRODUCTION

Transition in school district leadership is inevitable. The good news? From a communications point of view, naming a new superintendent is an opportunity to build goodwill and community partnerships. It can be a fresh start. It can be time to engage students, parents, and educators with new and exciting ideas about student achievement and stakeholder collaboration.

The not-so-good news? A shift in school leadership can be highly sensitive. It can spark unwanted news coverage. Negative stories about a superintendent's departure can impact the district's image and make the search for a new leader much more difficult.

However, by embracing transparency and utilizing tried-and-true strategies, the communications team can position its district and a new superintendent for success.

Over the past few months, we've talked with several school communicators about their own recent changes in district leadership. They have generously shared best practices and lessons learned. We will share their experiences and thoughts on a variety of topics, including:

- The importance of a close relationship between board leadership and the communications team;
- The role of the communications department in the search and selection process;
- Maximizing positive coverage of "the announcement";
- Embracing the new superintendent's style; and
- Sharing the superintendent's vision and plan.

Additionally, these communications professionals share more than a dozen innovative tactics they successfully used to introduce their new leaders to the community and district staff.

leadership is inevitable.

LEADERSHIP CHANGE IS INEVITABLE

Public education is seeing more leadership change than ever.

Of the 78 Council of the Great City Schools' member districts, 60 have experienced the transition of their top leaders in the last three years.

The pandemic and other key factors contributed to these transitions. As district leaders grappled with school closings, abrupt shifts to remote learning or hybrid instruction, and health and safety concerns, new challenges arose on a daily basis. Learning loss compounded a sense of frustration for all stakeholders.

"Some of it was exhaustion, some of it was just the normal churn, some of it was the boards themselves turning over – I think it was a whole combination of things," says Michael Casserly, Strategic Advisor for the Council of the Great City Schools. "But, at the heart of it, it was the pandemic." Some of those dynamics are still at play.



Flanked by Albuquerque Public School board members, Gabriella Durán Blakey speaks shortly after being named APS superintendent. Photo credit: Jon Austria/ Albuquerque Journal

SEARCH AND SELECTION

The leadership transition process begins from the moment the decision for change is made – either when the current superintendent announces he or she is leaving, or the board of trustees makes a decision that change is coming. The communications team and the board of education need to be on the same page. It's important that the communications director has at least a professional and direct relationship with the board chair.

"If not, this is certainly a good time to develop one," says Casserly.

This relationship is not automatic. Most school district communications departments report to the superintendent, not to the board. In fact, over the years communications teams have played a very secondary role with the boards - creating a lack of connection that can lead to their failure to communicate with and receive feedback from the public. This communications gap can also impact the district's image as it tries to secure the best possible applicants for the top job.

"The board might think just because they are elected officials, they have all of the tools they need to communicate with the public," Casserly continues. "But, having communications from the board be as uniform, seamless, and cohesive as it can be is not only important for the community, it's important for attracting top-notch candidates. Because candidates are going to be looking at how the board and school district comport itself, and what kind of signals it is sending to inform the candidates whether or not this is a good school district to pursue."

In laying out their search strategy to the community, board trustees must first be clear with themselves what they, as a board, deem as priorities for the future. That includes articulating the district's direction and broad goals for the next few years. That also means being clear about what challenges the new superintendent is likely to face and how these facts inform the skills and values the next superintendent must have. The most successful searches will communicate this beforehand.

The communications department can then assist the board in sharing this information and eliciting feedback from the public. It's up to communications leads to help trustees set the stage, be inclusive of many voices, and establish a tone of transparency and trust in the community.

"As communicators, our jobs are to look outside. Most of our colleagues look inside the system. We look outside – all the time," says Wendy Johnson, Division Director for Strategic Communications for Wichita Public Schools. "People in our position understand the community and the system differently than a lot of other folks do. That input is really valuable when you're building a prospectus of voices and understanding what the community wants out of their next leader."

Superintendent Search News Release

Working closely with board leadership, the communications team should share with all stakeholders as quickly as possible the scope of what is planned. Let the public know not only the timeline but what processes will be used. And keep them informed. If during the search there are changes in the timeline, let everyone know that, as well.

► Example: Superintendent Search News Releases (PDF)

The Superintendent Search Website

It's critical to immediately establish a platform where news about the superintendent search is posted – and updated often. Although you will want to share significant developments on all of your school district platforms, a superintendent search website offers a quick and easy way for stakeholders to keep up with the process. When appropriate, add other visuals – a graphic showing the timeline or a photo of the community search advisory committee – to keep the process transparent and easily understood. On the website, no detail is too small.

Different Processes

The candidate pool for qualified superintendents can be small, depending on the circumstances. Many job seekers insist on secrecy as they don't want to put their current situation at risk while they explore other opportunities. A new level of secrecy and discretion can, and should, be a part of the process.

Phil Roeder, Director of Communications and Public Affairs for Des Moines Public Schools in Iowa, says the district broke with tradition during its most recent superintendent search.

"Our School Board didn't do the usual ... dog and pony show of interviewing several finalists in public and having receptions and things like that," he says. "More and more school districts are moving towards this approach. Good superintendent candidates may be lost if the hiring process is public."

Despite the current trend of focusing on applicant confidentiality, some boards may share the names of finalists and allow them to be queried by the public. Another board may follow a policy of absolute secrecy until the sole finalist is named. Others could require that all early-round candidates be vetted by a search advisory committee, and only the finalists be interviewed by the entire board. Several boards may have to follow state or local laws about superintendent search transparency.

The Search Advisory Committee

Typically, a search advisory committee will consist of diverse representatives of every district stakeholder group - educators, parents, officials, business leaders, nonprofit representatives, and, in some cases, students. They may decide on a "profile" for the ideal candidate – what leadership qualities the community is looking for in a new leader. Or, as mentioned above, help pre-screen applicants. The school district needs to share who is on the committee and their bios (with photographs of each, if possible), how often they meet, their respective roles, and what they discuss. And, eventually, their recommendations to the board. This information should be posted on the superintendent search website.

It's important to note, however, that they are an advisory committee. The final selection of a new superintendent is a responsibility that belongs to the board – and only to the board.

The Search Firm

The use of search firms to find new superintendents has steadily increased.

"At one point districts tried to do it on their own, but I guess because there's such a limited pool of candidates and because of the potentially tumultuous nature of that job, consultants are now part of the package," says former Albuquerque Public Schools Executive Director of Communications Monica Armenta. "It doesn't seem to matter what district you look at. They all have similar templates for bringing someone in."

Search firms can aggressively recruit qualified candidates whose backgrounds seem to match what the school district is looking for. They also may help the board design and manage a public input plan and keep to a promised timeline.

How closely does the communications team work with the search firm? Depending on the terms of the consultant's contract with the district, the answer could be quite a lot – or not at all.

Frequently, the communications team will support the search firm's work by promoting the public meetings to gather input from parents, employees, and others about what they want in a new superintendent. They may use school district platforms to push a consultant-designed opinion survey for stakeholders. They'll also collaborate on supporting the superintendent search website.

Sometimes, they're tasked with other duties.

George Sells, Director of Communications and Marketing for Saint Louis Public Schools, describes how he and his team were asked to promote the job to prospective candidates. At the search firm's behest, the communications department shot a "pitch" video about the school district and the city of St. Louis.

Then, when the search had been narrowed to the finalists, his communications team recorded on-camera interviews.

"[We shot the videos...] with three questions for each of them. They had to answer in front of a camera and the videos were then posted for the public to see," Sells says.

► Example: News Release Announcing Three Finalists for SLPS (PDF) "SLPS Board Selects Three Finalists In Superintendent Search"

News Releases: Appendix B

On the other hand, the trustees may decide to engage external communications resources to support the search process. That was the case recently in Philadelphia.

"Understanding the extensive communications that would be needed, the school board hired a separate communications firm to support the search process," says Kathryn Block, Marketing Officer at The School District of Philadelphia. "This allowed our Communications Team to provide support where needed while continuing to focus on the vast day-to-day communications needs of our school district."

Keeping the Community Informed

If there are to be public meetings to gather input from the community about what they want in a superintendent, they may be run by the communications team or the search firm or perhaps a combination of both. The gatherings should be relentlessly publicized using all available platforms. You cannot overcommunicate information about this opportunity for the public to weigh in.

Then, the superintendent website should offer more detail before and after the event. That means not only where and when the meeting will be, but who attended, and what they said.

The school board will also need to decide who will speak for trustees before news media. Reporters may attempt to get individual board members to share inside information about candidates. The board will need to be very disciplined about these situations. Here is a situation where the communications director can advise the board chair on establishing a protocol.

"It's important to share what you've learned throughout the process, and publish the feedback of stakeholders," says Johnson. "People need to know that school districts are listening to their communities and, as stakeholder findings from community engagement come to pass, publish them on your website. Present them at your board meeting. Have the conversation so that in every way possible, you allow people to hear what you've heard. And hear what you're going to do with what you've learned."

Many school districts require that superintendent finalists make presentations to the community. But some administrators – even highly gifted ones – are better than others in an extended stint in front of a live microphone. That live performance skill doesn't necessarily correspond to what the board and the school district want or need.

"Sometimes the public can back the board into making a bad choice of a superintendent after candidates make presentations to the community that capture their attention," says Casserly.

Reaching Out to All Stakeholders: Make Translation a Priority

As with any public event for school district stakeholders, but especially during the search for a new superintendent, there should be easy and accessible sign and oral language translation for the audience. There should also be a mechanism in place for non-English speaking participants to convey their questions and comments to the board and forum organizers.

In Austin, Texas, where the student population is 50 percent Latino, all messaging is translated into Spanish. In Minneapolis, when the two final candidates were interviewed by the board, the event was live streamed with simultaneous translation in Spanish, Somali, and Hmong.

Every communicator with whom we spoke for this guide made translation a priority. Most used any and all resources to secure the highest quality possible translation.

The Interim

Timing is everything. Sometimes circumstances – (e.g., the time of year, an imminent election that could change the make-up of the board) – don't allow trustees to immediately begin the search for a new leader. An interim leader will likely be appointed from the district's community

The interim often serves as an administrator to keep the trains running on time, especially if rapid change is impacting stakeholders' trust in the district. Sometimes, however, an interim is named to do difficult things that the board does not want its permanent superintendent doing. Communications can offer support and share information about and for the temporary boss, whatever his or her role may be.

In Des Moines Public Schools, when the superintendent resigned in the middle of the school year, a popular associate superintendent was tapped to be the interim leader. It helped quell some of the anxiety associated with the rapid departure of the previous leader.

"The superintendent is, in a lot of ways, the mayor of a small town," says Roeder. "Well, the second mayor of a town. It was a good transition with our interim, and it afforded the board some time to conduct their search."

The Austin Independent School District had seen the departure of two superintendents and an interim in the space of about three years. Then, a second interim, Matias Segura, was named. Cristina Peña Nguyen, Director of Communications and Marketing for the district, says there was a sense of "unease and anxiety" among stakeholders, especially the internal audience. With the help of the communications team, Segura made weekly reports on his plans for the week ahead. He also shot short, frequent, and impactful videos in which he faced the camera head-on and provided updates on district business. Through his honest communication, especially with the internal audience, he was able to restore stability to the system.

As the selection process ends, it will be important to acknowledge the contributions of the interim superintendent and set the stage for new leadership. [See TACTIC: "Bookends" on page 9.]

In some cases, the interim will also be a candidate for the permanent position. If chosen for the job, the interim's accession can be a very positive story to tell.

Austin ISD's Matias Segura.



Bryan Johnson is introduced at a press conference as the sole superintendent finalist for Atlanta Public Schools.



Des Moines Schools Superintendent lan Roberts.

The communications team should also do a Google search on the winning candidate before the announcement – just as every other stakeholder, news media included, will do when the name is made public. You will then know what they are learning about the superintendent-elect. Make clear to board leadership that you are doing this and will share this information.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT/THE DAY OF THE 'ROLLOUT'

The day your school board announces the name of the new superintendent or lone finalist can be one of the most potentially positive and consequential experiences you will ever have.

Because so many people are involved – either as the district support team or as people interested in the outcome - it's imperative to have a detailed plan for the announcement.

Think of it as a military exercise from morning until the conclusion of the rollout. Working with the board, decide how and when the announcement will be made. Commit to a timetable for the day. Make sure everyone has an assignment and knows clearly his or her responsibilities. There will always be last-minute hitches and unexpected developments. However, advanced and detailed planning will give communications leaders the flexibility to make quick decisions when circumstances change.

If the communications team members – or a subset of the team – are privy to the identity of the new superintendent prior to the big announcement, they may want to prepare some marketing collateral (news releases, videos, graphics, digital photographs, online content, etc.) ahead of time. Even when operating with a high degree of secrecy, do as much advance work as possible before the announcement. In addition to a biography and photograph, some districts pre-shoot a short video in which the new leader says hello and affirms his or her excitement and positivity about the future.

You may want to create a little (positive) drama by keeping the superintendent-elect in an ante room and "under wraps," until the board reveals the name.

Prepare a tightly written news release with the most basic information at the very top, News Releases: Appendix C bold-facing names, a simple resume and a timetable for the new superintendent to sign a contract or assume leadership. You may add additional, more detailed biographical information on a second page or as an attachment.

▶ Example: Board Unanimously Votes to Name Lone Finalist https://www.austinisd.org/press-releases/2023/12/15/board-unanimously-votes-name-matiassegura-superintendent-lone-finalist

Share the news release immediately after the board votes and do it in more than one format. Below are some possible tactics.

TACTIC

Send the release via email but also send a shortened version - with a link to the district website - via text message to news assignment editors and reporters, and to employees and parents (if you have a database for the latter).

TACTIC

Flip the superintendent search website immediately to focus on the announcement.

Post the news on your website landing page, along with a photograph or video if you have one and follow with simultaneous posts on the district's social media platforms. Flip the superintendent search website to one that distinguishes the superintendent-elect as the "winning candidate." Remove photos and information about other finalists. Your new boss is now the star of the show. Also, update the process information to a "how we got here" outline, perhaps even changing the tense of some of the narrative. When possible, post a copy of the new superintendent's contract. It's a matter of public record and the sooner you share it, the more transparent you are being. (You may be required by law to post it elsewhere on the website, possibly on the school board or legal department pages.)

► Example: (Flipped) Superintendent Search Web Page:

https://www.dmschools.org/superintendent-search/

https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/domain/14536

https://www.pps.net/supsearch

https://www.washoeschools.net/SuperintendentSearch

https://www.mpschools.org/about-mps/school-board/supt-search

TACTIC

Hold a news conference immediately after the new superintendent is announced or when a contract is signed.

This is a great time to hold a news conference. If the announcement occurs during a board meeting, you may want to work with the board president to pre-plan a short recess. If this is the only agenda item, or it's a relatively short board meeting, have the news conference immediately after the final gavel falls.

IMPORTANT: The new superintendent or superintendent-elect should be joined by the entire board of education in front of the microphone. Prep both the new leader and trustees by sharing questions they will likely be asked.

- Choose a setting in an area adjacent to, or very near, the room where the announcement is made.
- Alert assignment editors, reporters, and photographers to the plan ahead of time when the news conference will happen and where it will take place. TV stations may elect to lay down cable to do a live shot, and that will need to happen prior to the board meeting.
- If the new superintendent is bilingual, suggest to reporters that he or she receive a question in Spanish or other language.
- Brand the setting with a dramatic backdrop a step and repeat or a retractable banner displaying the district
- For the convenience of reporters and photographers, pre-light the area and have a mult-box that connects several microphones in order to provide clean, high-quality audio for everyone.
- Even if you are emailing bio, photos, and video to the newsroom, have handouts in print and on jump drives for reporters and photographers. You can never OVER-communicate support information and visuals.
- Depending on the circumstances the superintendent-elect's desires, the schedule for the rest of the day - consider the possibility of the briefest of one-on-ones with key reporters. This is another instance where having a plan ahead of time can make the process go much more smoothly. Brief the new superintendent

earlier on who may want to do a short interview – a written list with names and the news outlets they represent is ideal. Decide who goes first and advise each reporter how much time he or she has. Then stay at the new superintendent's side, making introductions before each interview begins.

TACTIC

Bookends

When an interim superintendent has been in place for a while, it's important to close that chapter in order to clear the way for the new boss.

In Minneapolis Public Schools they made a farewell music video tribute.

"I call them bookends – and they really matter," says Donnie Belcher, Executive Director of Communications and Engagement, Minneapolis Public Schools. "It was a thank you, here are the highlights of your year. And we closed that chapter, and we did it in a really intentional way while also opening a new chapter for our current superintendent."

▶ Example: 'Bookend' Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpLQL6zoQO4

INTRODUCING THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS

The communications team plays a vital role in helping to introduce the new superintendent to the community. The time period just after the hiring is a "honeymoon period," and most people are ready to embrace the new leader.

Meet with the new boss to collaborate on a communications strategy. Ask questions and listen. Understand what platforms are preferred. Learn about his or her communication strengths and (possibly self-perceived) areas of vulnerability. This will not be a short-term process and for a while building rapport and trust may prove challenging.



After being named Des Moines' new superintendent, Ian Roberts visited Hoover High School where he received a warm welcome.

Building A Communications Partnership

The first step is to create a working partnership and understand how the new superintendent wants to communicate. It's not your style that matters most, it's the new superintendent's style.

"I've had to remind myself in every transition I've been in: it's not a matter of what you, as the communications director, want," Johnson says. "You have to be prepared to switch gears, let go of things you may love doing that you thought were super cool. You have to put yourself in that individual's shoes, and you have to be able to represent their dreams, goals, and desires."

Several veteran communicators shared the strategy of talking with the communicators from the new boss's previous district. You may gain some important insights. What worked there? What tactics were especially effective? Which ones could be adapted for the new district?

On the other hand, part of building a new partnership is ensuring the new superintendent understands what tools you have to offer, and how they can support new messaging and goals. In Minneapolis, Belcher met with her new boss, listened, and then presented her with an outline of communication assets. Again, this was a two-way street.

"We shared this with her because we wanted her to understand the resources that were available to her," Belcher says. "Also, we wanted to give her the opportunity to ask questions."

► Example: Minneapolis Marketing and Communications Overview (PDF) https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/4/CGCS MPS Communications Overview.pdf

Meet the News Media: Control the Timing and Construct a Timetable

After the splash of the announcement and the first opportunity to see and hear the new superintendent, the news media will want to deepen their understanding of who this person is and what he or she is bringing to the district and the community. Reporters will want to know what is going to change and when. This is where the communications team can lay out a plan and construct a timetable that makes sense for everyone.

Reporters will request one-on-one interviews. Decide what is workable and what is to everyone's - especially the new superintendent's - advantage.

Des Moines' Roeder bought some time.

"When he got on the job, of course, we had a lot of media requests. We ended up putting those off a little bit, and the media was actually understanding. He'd just started on July 1, and we joked 'he barely knows where to park his car at the office.' This allowed him to talk with all of our local news outlets after settling into the position for a month or and as we were nearing the start of a new school year"

In St. Louis, Sells arranged a series of Zoom calls for Dr. Keisha Scarlett, who was not yet in town.

"I sent out advisories to everybody and had them reserve times. I then made a calendar and walked her through a round-robin."

As time goes on, the new superintendent will want to visit the newspaper editorial boards, and perhaps do a round-robin of interviews on a particular subject. It's important to keep those lines of communication open – perhaps through one-on-one breakfast meetings or a holiday lunch for reporters hosted by the superintendent and the board.

Visiting news reporters on their turf or during their meetings is also a way to connect with an even larger audience.

"Maybe it's the [longer] morning news segments, maybe it's the weekend interview shows," says Armenta. "You make those opportunities where there's more time, where the general public can get to meet the superintendent without ever having to leave their house." The ongoing relationship with news media will be a long-term process and trust will be built on a policy of honesty and transparency.

Meeting District Employees

Don't push the new superintendent to set unreasonable goals. Casserly discourages a frequent practice by new superintendents – one, he says, that is often promoted with the best of intentions by the communications director. "I don't think it's necessary to visit every school in the district within the first 100 days," he says. "They are often superficial visits that are largely 'drive-bys.' They are of very little substance, and don't allow meaningful conversations. And don't really benefit anybody very much."

Instead, he advises it's more important for the superintendent to develop direct and personal relationships with district principals, and there are other ways to make those introductions. He also says the superintendent can use that time to ask the communications director and other senior administrators important questions: Who are the most respected people on staff? Who is known for getting things done? And whom do I need to know in this community who will help this district going forward?

Play to Your New Leader's Strengths - and Understand Your Role

Not all superintendents have gregarious, outgoing personalities. That's another point to remember when getting to know your new boss.

Sells of Saint Louis Public Schools recalls his first meeting with the superintendent who hired him.

"The funny story is when I was being interviewed for the position. I had all these great ideas and, not really knowing him well, I ticked off my plans to book him on regular radio interviews and TV appearances, to really get him out there. He let me finish my whole spiel and told me, 'Mr. Sells, I am an introvert. That is why I'm hiring you.'"

Telling The New Superintendent's Story

Playing to your new superintendent's strengths also means sharing his or her story. Every leader has a story – a story that can inspire admiration and/or make that person relatable to the audience.

"We try to integrate storytelling," says Belcher of Minneapolis Public Schools. "And encourage our superintendent to integrate storytelling into her own messaging and remarks."

In Minneapolis, the communications team touted the hiring of Dr. Lisa Sayles-Adams as a return to her roots.

"Our new Superintendent actually started in our district as a teacher 20 or so years ago. And she taught in a school building that is now our district central office," says Belcher. "She also was an administrator and worked in other districts, including St. Paul Public Schools, which is very close and with whom we often partner. It really was a homecoming and we thought it was the thread that we could weave through everything."

▶ Example: Dr. Lisa Sayles-Adams Celebrates a 'Homecoming' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxgsCdu73rs

In Austin ISD, Matias Segura's hiring also had a homecoming theme. Growing up, he attended Austin ISD – and his mother taught there for 45 years. But there was an even more personal part of the story, and one he was willing to share. Segura recounted how he struggled as a student.

"He talked often about how he was not the perfect student. He needed support from teachers, he needed support from his counselors," says Peña Nguyen.

Segura dispelled the idea that a school superintendent must have been the perfect student growing up. "He said 'I almost didn't graduate and if it weren't for my teachers' and my counselors' support, I wouldn't be here today.' I think his authenticity allowed other people to feel comfortable." It also helped him connect with the teachers and counselors of Austin ISD.

In Albuquerque, the new superintendent had a heartwarming story to share. Not only had Dr. Gabriella Durán Blakey attended and graduated from Albuquerque Public Schools, she had worked at the district for 20 years. In those two decades she had worn many hats – as a teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, associate superintendent and, finally, chief operations officer. She knew the organization inside and out and, more recently, had contributed to the APS Emerging Stronger strategic plan.

Example: Dr. Gabriella Durán Blakey Hosts Event Launching New Strategic Plan https://www.aps.edu/news/news-from-2023-2024/hundreds-attend-events-celebrating-rollout-of-newstrategic-plan

"She was well known on that [internal] front, but it was clear we needed to engage the larger community," says APS Executive Director of Communications and Engagement Phill Casaus.

First the team produced an introductory video in which Dr. Blakey shared her vision as she was shown visiting with students and educators.

Example: Dr. Blakey Shares Her Vision https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jvh52gyB1J8

She also wanted both internal and external stakeholders to understand that all APS leaders were committed to success. On the first day of school, Dr. Blakey directed everyone on her team to visit multiple campuses and provide visible support. That included the head of HR, the deputy superintendent of operations, the chief financial officer, and the chief of staff, among others.

"They all provided photos that we put out on social media and the website," says Casaus. "Her wish was to ensure the community knows that it's not just the superintendent, but everybody at ... the main administrative building who are engaged. I think that was really effective."

Then, at the suggestion of the school board, Dr. Blakey gave the first ever "State of the District" speech to the community. On the day of the event, the room was packed. At the conclusion, the new superintendent was rewarded with a standing ovation.

"And some of those people, who I know have not been the biggest supporters of the district, were standing too," says Casaus.





Albuquerque Public Schools Superintendent Gabriella Durán Blakey gives the district's "State of the District" speech to the community.



In Des Moines, the new leader made history as the district's first Black superintendent.

"The fact [that] he was a groundbreaker was very positively accepted," Roeder says of Dr. Ian Roberts. "He has a big personality. His family is from Guyana. He grew up in Brooklyn, and he competed in the 2000 Olympics for Guyana."

The former Olympian is also known for his personal style, sartorial excellence, and his ability to connect with

TACTIC

Roberts' Recap

Dr. Roberts regularly posts a video in which he recaps the most recent board meeting by sharing the most important agenda items. Each "Roberts' Recap" video is no more than three minutes. It is then posted to DMPS's social media accounts, embedded in the e-newsletter, and available on their district's cable station.

► Example: Roberts Recap https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VGNflWaR3g

TACTIC

"Three Questions with Kelly"

In Wichita Public Schools, new superintendent Kelly Bielefeld was an internal hire, but not well-known. So, he invited the audience to ask him questions on camera which he then answered, also on camera. The video series - called "Three Questions with Kelly" - initially focused on the internal audience but grew to include other stakeholders.

Among the questions he received: "How would you describe your leadership style?" "How will you combat truancy and absenteeism in the district?" "Why did you get into education?"

Because of the way his name is spelled, people struggled to pronounce it properly. An elementary school student asked: "How do you pronounce your name?" [Answer: Bielefeld is pronounced BEE-LUH-FELD.]

His video responses were short – no more than 1:30 each – and projected an informal, accessible tone.

Then, after the communications department felt the segment had run its course, they intentionally switched the format to one where Bielefeld was the one asking the questions.

Traveling to different locations, Bielefeld asks: "Why would a parent come to our WPS Magnet School?" Or he queries, "What's unique about the opportunities that you provide students at the Future Ready Center?"

And in talking with a teacher who is part of a new program, "What's the excitement level of your kids?"

"So now he goes out into the field, and asks questions of others, maybe of students, maybe of staff, maybe of community partners," says Johnson.

You can view all of the Three Questions with Kelly segments by visiting the Wichita Public Schools website and clicking on the Superintendent and Staff Leadership page.

▶ Example: Three Questions with Kelly https://www.usd259.org/Page/23350







Wichita Public Schools Superintendent Kelly Bielefeld

INTRODUCING THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT'S IDEAS

Branding the Superintendent's Plan

Many new superintendents walk in with a 60-day, 90-day, or 100-day plan. Or they develop a transition plan after talking with district leaders and staff. In some instances they talk with city and staff leaders or consult with their transition team, if one exists.

The communications team will want to visually redesign the plan with elements of the district's brand – logos, colors, font – and ensure it is distributed to all stakeholder groups.

They may also suggest ways to streamline the language – veering away from academese or jargon – so it's more accessible to parents and students.

"If engagement and participation are the goal, we have to be very realistic. Just because we work in education doesn't mean that we are going to communicate as educators," says Armenta. "Know your audience; respect your audience."

And, in communicating with the internal audience, help ensure the new leader's expectations of teachers and staff in this plan are clear.

Block, Marketing Officer for The School District of Philadelphia, recalls the strategy presented by her new boss.



"[Dr. Tony Watlington] walked in with a clear vision of his 100-day plan and part of our responsibility was to convert that into a document we could then make public," she says. "Our job was about making sure the 100-day plan was presented in a way that was well articulated, that it was easy to understand, and helped set the expectation of what he was going to do in the first 100 days so that he could be held accountable for that."

Dr. Watlington's 100-day plan also included 30-day milestones. The communications team was charged with "accountability updates" - establishing a website that

showed the plan and accountability for each stage. They assisted the superintendent in holding a news conference every 30 days specifically to lay out what had been accomplished and answer questions about next steps. For those 30-day touchpoints, they used all of their communications tools – email, social media, robo-calls - to alert stakeholders to an accountability update.

▶ Example: First 100 Days and Accountability Website for The School District of Philadelphia https://www.philasd.org/100days/

The new superintendent in Minneapolis Public Schools decided she wanted a number of listening sessions as part of her 100-day plan. Dr. Sayles-Adams touted it as her "listening tour" and made it clear that these events would inform her vision and mission for the district by asking three questions: "What excites you about MPS?" "What is one thing that is working well at MPS?" and "If you were superintendent, what would be the first thing you would do?"

Thanks to a deep collaboration between the communications and the research, evaluation, and data teams, the sessions yielded a wealth of information. Not only did the teams track who came - staff, parents, community members –they also recorded the demographics of attendees. They took note of their ethnicity, language, age, and other information – as well as their responses to the three questions. They also posted the immediate

feedback on their 100-day plan website. Dr. Sayles-Adams then incorporated what she learned from these sessions in her district-wide plan.

▶ Example: Minneapolis Public Schools' 100 Day Listening Tour https://www.mpschools.org/about-mps/administration/100-day-plan

and

▶ Example: MPS 'What We Heard' Page https://www.cqcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/4/NEListeningSession.pdf

Saint Louis Public Schools' new leader Dr. Keisha Scarlett hosted a virtual town hall-type meeting at the end of her first 100 days. She updated what she had done and revealed what she wanted to do next. A combination of prerecorded and live content, it was posted on YouTube so people could make comments.

The district "publicized the daylights out of it" says Sells and was rewarded with a town hall attendance of several thousand people.

"We tried to be very deliberate with what we did with Dr. Scarlett. She was doing so much. We had to hit the areas that were important and make sure that we were clear in communicating well in those spots. At the same time, give her room to start a new job and take over the school district."

▶ Example: Dr. Keisha Scarlett's 100 Days Online Social https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSISBfff2sE

TACTIC

The Superintendent's Brand Within the Brand

In Austin ISD, the communications department decided to highlight their new leader's words and ideas by creating a specific brand just for him.

"This was subtle, but I would say it's important," says Peña Nguyen. "You have the Austin ISD brand, but then you have a brand within a brand which is uniquely him. It uses his tagline of Strong Schools, Stronger Austin. That is something that only he can use."



Austin ISD Superintendent's brand when he was interim superintendent.



Austin ISD Superintendent's brand when he became permanent superintendent.

Communication Tools

The new superintendent may want to communicate on one or two platforms or in a variety of ways – simultaneously.

- NEWSLETTER/E-MAIL: E-mail is still a vital and trusted tool. A newsletter from the superintendent can establish a regular point of communication. But emails can get overlooked in an already saturated market. You may no longer be able to count on e-mail alone in sharing an important message.
- ROBO-CALLS: The use of district-wide robo-calls may be defined by policy and practice. Federal law determines what hours they can be made. However, new superintendents may wish to add this tool when conveying an especially important message or alert.
- VIDEOS: Videos, especially short videos, offer an opportunity to instantly connect with the audience.

In Austin ISD, video messages from Superintendent Segura in which he talks directly to the camera and his audience continue to be a big hit. His communications team believes his sincerity is palpable. Posted on social media, engagement numbers have "skyrocketed," says Peña Nguyen. "He's 42 years old. He's a pretty young leader and so having him align to the way his generation communicates through video and social media was really important in our communication strategy."

- ▶ Example: Austin ISD Superintendent's Video Message To Staff In Lieu of E-Mail https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUrXEmcXLcs
- PODCASTS: Podcasts are the fastest growing platform for communication. They offer both flexibility and a way to learn without demanding our full visual attention. One CGCS district used it as a way to introduce their new leader and his new approaches to district priorities.

"To start with, we had been looking into setting up a podcast early last year," says Roeder. "Getting the pieces pulled together (equipment, platforms, etc.) coincided with Dr. Roberts' arrival as well as the start of the 2023-24 school year, which seemed to make for a logical time to launch."

Called the Become Here Project, the podcast's name is a play on the Des Moines Public Schools brand and marketing slogan "Come Here. Become Here."

Topics have included the challenges of chronic absenteeism and the expansion of preschool instruction. The podcast also features timely events and live audiences, such as the DMPS's State of the Schools event and audio excerpts from various commencement speakers.

New episodes are dropped at the first of each month and are hosted by DMPS's Communications Officer Amanda Lewis, who is a former TV news reporter.

▶ Example: 'Become Here' Podcast https://www.dmschools.org/news-and-information/podcast-the-become-here-project/

THE INTERNAL AUDIENCE

a district employee.

Never underestimate the importance of communicating with the internal audiences at all levels of the district: they can make or break a new superintendent.

The most powerful marketing is still word of mouth. Despite strong and consistent messaging and engagement from the school district, most people in the community base their opinions of the school district - and a new superintendent - on their interactions with

"So much of what we do and so much of what people will ultimately feel is influenced by what our employees say," says Block. "Unless we get our internal employees on board and talking positively, we are constantly fighting rumors that are coming from our staff."

"The whole internal communications thing is absolutely critical," says Casserly. "The respect that he or she shows and the value he or she places on the work of the staff is really important."

Many districts put the internal audience first when sharing information, especially if it comes from the superintendent.

It's the "cascade" of information which first flows to employees, then to parents, then to news media and the community at large.



Minneapolis Schools Superintendent Lisa Sayles-Adams meets district employees.

"Anything we share always starts with a message that goes out first to all of our employees," says Sells.

That protocol is one way for a new superintendent to send a clear message that district employees and their contributions are respected.

That is in sharp contrast to a mistake that can be made by rookie superintendents.

"One signal that staff is not respected – superintendents who come in and demand the resignations of all of the top people or who bring in too many people from the outside," says Casserly. "The new leader may want to bring in a small number of people but hiring an army of folks or asking employees to just blanket turn in their resignations is a real tactical mistake on the part of the new superintendent."

Casserly continues: "It sends the message 'my default position is not to trust you and not to think you have done very good work. I am coming in with that assumption."

This puts the communications team in a difficult position and may not be something to which they can easily respond.

What if it Doesn't Work Out

It happens. Trustees announce the name of the person they've selected to lead the district. Biographical information and a photo are shared on the website and with the news media, and all that remains is affixing a signature to the contract. Then, unexpectedly, the superintendent-elect withdraws.

The public will want to know: "what happened?"

Any number of things could have gone wrong. Sometimes the candidate's current district sweetens the pot to entice him or her to stay, or a closer examination by both parties has revealed this is just not the right fit.

Once again, this is where the board chair and the communications director must work in tandem and share – quickly – what comes next. In the best possible scenario, the search will begin again – immediately. Then, it falls to the communications team to explain the plan to the public.

CONCLUSION

Change is difficult. Even a transition that offers a renewed sense of direction and purpose will still bring some level of anxiety. Block reminds us not to "underestimate the impact or potential stress" a new leader and administration

will have on some stakeholders, especially employees.

It falls to communications professionals to bridge the gap and to assist new leadership in building trust. That will take both time and consistency. It will also demand looking at new ways of sharing information and perhaps letting go of other, more comfortable practices.

Johnson sums it up nicely: "I think the most important thing that communicators have to remember during a transition, or any other time, is that our work supports and allows leaders to lead."

Our work has never been more important.



APPENDIX A: Superintendent Search News Releases

APS Board Sets Blueprint for Superintendent Search

APS Board Sets Blueprint for Superintendent

Under preliminary timeline, next APS leader could be selected by



Superintendent search logo

As Albuquerque Public Schools prepares to formally launch a search for its next leader, board members outlined key qualities they're looking for.

They want a knowledgeable educator who puts kids first. A reformer with a track record of improving student outcomes. An individual with dogged determination who respects the workforce. Someone committed to equity and willing to challenge racism $\,$ in all its forms.

Those were among the qualities board members prioritized during a workshop on Oct. 18 as they worked with Dr. Walter Cooper, a facilitator, to come up with a blueprint for the superintendent search. The board has retained McPherson & Jacobson, LLC. to help with the search.

"I feel very confident with the search firm we selected." Board President Yolanda Montoya-Cordova said after the meeting. Among the issues the board tackled were the timeline for the search, public input, advertising venues, and a possible salary range. The person selected will replace Superintendent Scott Elder, who will be leaving APS when his contract expires on June 30, 2024. The board expects to have a new superintendent in place by July 1.

Cooper presented a draft timeline, although he and the board stressed that the listed dates could change, depending on circumstances.

Under the preliminary timeline:

- The position will be posted and advertised nationally in the coming weeks, and the posting will remain open for about seven weeks. Among the places where the opening will be posted are The School Superintendents Association, the Council of the Great City Schools, Education Week TopSchoolJobs, the Association of Latino Administrators & Superintendents, and the National Alliance of Black
- · An online survey of families, staff, and other community members will be conducted in November, with town hall meetings also being held in November to gather input from the community.
- The deadline to submit an application will be Dec. 12.
- Board members will meet in executive session to discuss candidates and conduct interviews shortly after new board members take office in January.
- Finalists would participate in public town halls and be interviewed by the board in executive session later that month

The search process is taking place as voters decide three school board races. Two of the three board members whose terms are expiring opted not to seek reelection. The board discussed ways to include the prevailing candidates in the search process so that they're up to date when they take office on Jan. 1.

As for the advertised salary range for the superintendent position, board members agreed that the low end should be a certain percentage above the next highest paid APS employee's salary, with the top end being about \$320,000. That range is still being

Atlanta Board of Education to Select New Atlanta Public Schools Superintendent



For Immediate Release Amy Parrish (404) 310-6559 Rob Kremer (404) 218-3077

Atlanta Board of Education to Select New Atlanta Public Schools Superintendent Community Panel selected to participate in the new hire search and recommendation process

ATLANTA (March 5, 2024) – The Atlanta Board of Education (ABOE), under its new leadership of Board Chair Frika Mitchell and Roard Vice Chair Jennifer McDonald, is proud to announce it's on track to have a A LIAM IA (Wartch 5, 2029) — the Ananta Board or Education (ABUE), under its new leadership or Board Chaif Erika Mitchell and Board Vice Chair Jennifer McDonald, is proud to announce it's on track to have it permanent Superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools (APS) in place by July 1, 2024. During a specially called meeting on Feb. 26, the board held it's first discussions about the candidates, as well as discussed called meeting on Feb. 26, the board held it's first discussions about the candidates, as well as discussed to the control of the control a proposed panel of community members to provide their insights on each potential candidate

Today, the ABOE is announcing the community panel selected to meet with the Superintendent Today, the ABOE is announcing the community panel selected to meet with the Superintendent candidate finalists. These community members were chosen for their investment in and commitment to the success of the APS community and their understanding of the critical role leadership plays in the future of the system. The panel is a combination of a variety of important community members, including PTA members, parents, teachers, staff, community leaders, alumni, business leaders, clergy and more. This panel will not soldly determine who is ultimately hired but will provide an important role in providing feedback and insight to the board. Each panelist will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement in protection of the diverse list of candidates, agreeing not to share any information with parties outside of the ABOE.

- Alfred Garner
 Arthur Carson
 DaMicha Luster
 Dawn Brocklingto
 DeMar Goodman
- Elizabeth Wickland
- Jennifer Saunders Jon Balch

- Jennin...
 Jon Balch
 Kate Carter
 Kim Dukes
 Kacey Venning
 Kenny Hill
 Marc Hardy
 Margaret McKenzie
 Matt Westmoreland
 Milton Little
 Omar Ali
 Shelly Goodrum
 Sierra Pape
 Susanna Roberts

(Alternates: Alicia Di Criscio, De'Andre McPhail, Iridian Ramos, Kamau Bobb, Nathaniel Smith, Stephanie Flowers, Terriyin Rivers-Cannon)

"The Atlanta Board of Education is excited to share that the search for a new Superintendent is already well underway," said Board Chair Erika Mitchell. "We believe it's imperative to keep the faculty, parents, students, and general public informed throughout this process and look forward to providing regular updates. At this stage, we are pleased with the quality of the candidates, as well as the community members who have joined a special panel to make recommendations on the future direction of APS. We look forward to ensuring that the new Superintendent and the ABOE work together to ensure we continue on the path towards educational excellence."

In advance of the meeting and in full transparency on major decisions, each candidate has been vetted and received extensive background checks by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates before hiring

ABOE establishes and approves the policies that govern APS. The Board consists of nine members, representing six geographical districts and three "at-large" districts. One person is elected per district to represent the schools for a four-year term. ne timeline and milestones for the search process were announced in June 2023 and are available for ference here www.atlantapublicschools.us/domain/14536.

About The Atlanta Board of Education



Columbus City Schools Board of Education Hires Consultants for District Superintendent Search

COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION HIRES CONSULTANTS FOR DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT **SEARCH**



March 8, 2023 -- At its meeting last night, the Columbus City Schools Board of Education approved hiring search firm Ray and Associates and communications firm Fahlgren Mortine to facilitate the search for a new District superintendent.

This search follows the announcement in December 2022 that Superintendent Dr. Talisa Dixon planned to retire at the end of the 2022-2023 school year, after nearly four years serving as superintendent of the largest school district in Ohio.

On December 9, 2022, the Board of Education named Dr. Angela Chapman the Interim Superintendent, effective January 1, 2023. At the same time, the Board announced that a national search would be conducted for a permanent Superintendent.

In January 2023, the Board of Education retained law firm Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP to oversee the search and ensure the integrity of the process. Taft will also collaborate with best-in-class consultants to engage key stakeholders and identify the best

"As a Board, we believe that by starting a community-driven, transparent, and inclusive search process now, we can attract high-quality candidates, ensure we have time for community input and have a new leader in place by the start of the school year in the fall," said Board President Jennifer Adair.

After reviewing proposals and hearing presentations from several qualified search firms, the Columbus City Schools Board of Education selected Ray and Associates, based on their extensive experience recruiting outstanding leaders for large urban

"Ray and Associates brings a strong team with school district leadership experience and a strong knowledge of Ohio and the Columbus area," said Board Vice President Christina Vera.

In addition to working with Ray and Associates, the Board of Education approved an agreement with Columbus-based firm, <u>Fahlgren Mortine</u>, to facilitate communication about the search process.

"By working with these consultants, the Board and district staff can focus on the critical business of educating our students while the experts pave the way for this important work," added Board Member Dr. Tina Pierce.

KCPS Kicking Off Superintendent Search

KCPS KICKING OFF SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH

The Kansas City Public Schools Board of Directors is committed to conducting a robust and transparent search for its next superintendent of schools. The board will hire a national executive recruiting firm, with deep experience in attracting and recruiting public education superintendents.

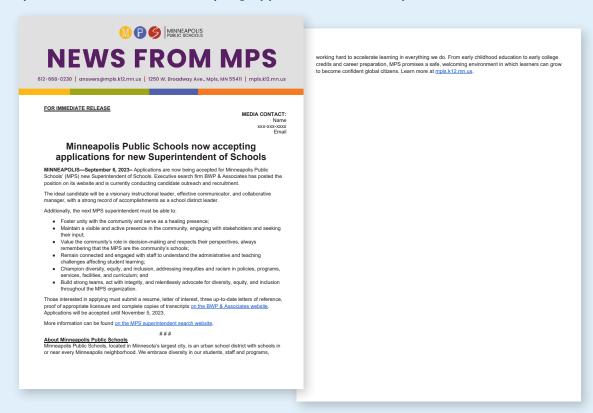
The board appointed an internal superintendent search committee, made up of three board members to manage the process and make recommendations to the full board throughout the search. The process will include opportunities to garner insights from a broad range of stakeholders, most notably students, families and district staff and will be conducted through a variety of mediums. A decision is anticipated in early 2023.

Board Chair Nate Hogan said, "As a board, we remain determined to conduct a thoughtful, thorough and engaging search to produce the best candidates possible. The board pledges to seek a diverse candidate pool that will produce highly qualified candidates to leverage the momentum of our district. As always, our students, families, staff and the Kansas City community deserve a superintendent who can build on a strong foundation of accreditation and accelerate learning in alignment with Blueprint 2030, the district's long-term strategic plan.

A webpage is being developed to serve as a source of all public information, along with updates during board meetings related to the search. The webpage will provide a timeline and updates on each phase of the search process.

Earlier this year, Kansas City Public Schools regained full accreditation from the State Board of Education. Dr. Jennifer Collier is leading the district as the 2022-23

Minneapolis Public Schools Now Accepting Applications for New Superintendent of Schools



APPENDIX B: Superintendent Finalists News Releases

Columbus City Schools Board of Education Names Final Candidates for Superintendent



SLPS Board Selects Three Finalists in Superintendent Search



MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE January 23, 2023

Contact: George Sells

Director of Communications and Marketing Saint Louis Public School 314-332-7035, cell

SLPS Board Selects Three Finalists in Superintendent Search

The search for the Saint Louis Public School District's (SLPS) next superintendent is in its third phase with a selection of three candidates to be brought before the Board and the school community this week.

The final three candidates for superintendent are:

Dr. Jermaine Dawson, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer, Birmingham City Schools

Dr. Keisha Scarlett, Chief Academic Officer and Assistant Superintendent of Academics, Seattle, Public Schools

Dr. Nicole Williams, interim superintendent, Saint Louis Public Schools

According to Board President Matt Davis, each candidate will spend a day in the District. "We are excited to host these three very impressive career educators and introduce them to our community. On their visits, they will have opportunities to visit classrooms and meet and interact with students and staff members individually and in small groups."

Each candidate will record a brief introduction and interview video for the public, moderated by Dr. Karen Hall, National Search Director with Ray & Associates. The interviews will be posted on the District's <u>YouTube</u> channel on Thursday, January 26th.

Ray and Associates reports that 1,715 leaders from across 50 states were contacted by the firm regarding the SLPS opportunity. Forty-nine submitted applications. Those applicants were then screened for experience and a

"The earlier community focus groups and surveys gave us a clear idea of what students, teachers and families wanted in a new Superintendent." Davis said. "We created a solid profile of what kind of leader we were looking for and are thrilled that we received such a tremendous response from educators locally and across the country."

The new Superintendent will begin in July. Presently, SLPS is led by interim superintendent Dr. Nicole Williams, also a candidate. Dr. Williams follows Dr. Kelvin Adams who retired on December 31, 2022.

WCSD Announces Finalists for Superintendent Position

For Immediate Release Contact: Victoria Campbell 775.333.3789 vcampbell@washoeschools.net

WCSD Announces Finalists for Superintendent Position

Community invited to meet candidates at upcoming event

Reno. NV (April 15, 2024) -- After an extensive national search, five individuals have been identified as finalists to be considered to serve as the Superintendent of Schools for the Washoe County School District. The finalist candidates will meet with the Board of Trustees and key constituent groups later this month with a final selection from the board expected in mid-May.

"We have recruited and identified candidates who are qualified, dedicated, and who would be a good fit for the Washoe County School District," said Dr. Walter Cooper of McPherson and Jacobson, LLC, the executive recruitment and development firm selected by the Board of Trustees in January to support the search.

"We have assembled a strong group of candidates for this important position—both locally and from outside the area—and we look forward to introducing them to the community at upcoming public events. Input from the community and district employees will be crucial to the final selection process, and we will welcome feedback from these important stakeholders as we move forward.'

- Christopher S. Bernier, Ed.D.
- Joseph M. Ernst, M.Ed.
- Elizabeth Fagen, Ed.D. Charles R. McNulty, Ph.D.
- Troy R. Parks, Ed.D.

The five finalists will meet with Trustees and engage in interviews during a series of events from April 24-26. The public is invited to meet the finalists at an event at Wooster High School on Thursday, April 25 from 5 to 8:15 p.m. Community

members, families, students, members of the media and WCSD employees and leaders will have an opportunity to ask questions of the candidates at the event. The community room at the event will be linearchemolycom/ and questions can be submitted in advance (deadline: 5 p.m. on April 24) via email at WCSD_Communications@WashoeSchools.net.

Participants in the public event will be encouraged to provide feedback and comments to Trustees as they make a final selection. Details, including language interpretation, parking and a schedule for the public event, will be posted online prior to the event. More information on the search process and the five finalists is available at <u>www.WashoeSchools.net/SuperintendentSearch</u>.

The district is scheduled to announce the successful candidate for the superintendent position on May 14 and welcome the new superintendent at the beginning of July.

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Washoe County School District's promise is to know every student by name, strength and need so they graduate prepared for the future they choose, and we will delive this promise in partnership with our families and community



APPENDIX C: Superintendent Selected News Releases

APS Board Selects Dr. Gabriella Durán Blakey as Next Superintendent

APS Board Selects Dr. Gabriella Durán Blakey as Next Superintendent

News conference will be streamed live shortly on the Board's YouTube Channel

Dr. Gabriella Durán Blakey, a native of Albuquerque who has spent her career working to improve outcomes for students, will be the next superintendent of New Mexico's largest school district.

The Albuquerque Public Schools Board of Education selected Blakey for the position Monday on a unanimous vote. The appointment follows a nationwide search that yielded two do applicants.

"We had many great candidates interested in leading APS, but Dr. Blakey rose to the top," said APS Board President Danielle Gonzales. "Her familiarity with APS, track record of improving Ar 3 doubt President Definite Obtailes. He infamiliarly with Art 3, above the important student outcomes, and the fact that she helped create our Emerging Stronger strategic plan—the road map that is going to help us reach our academic goals—made her the ideal pick. The board is excited to work with her to take AFS to the next level."

Blakey, 48, is currently the district's Chief Operations Officer, overseeing everything from transportation and school meals to APS Police and more than 16 million square feet of

She was one of two finalists being considered for the position.

Blakey – who attended Sandia Base Elementary, Van Buren Middle School, and graduated from Highland High – said she is devoted to Albuquerque students and to the community.

"I'm committed to listening, and I'm committed to delivering results to make sure that we achieve the goals that our community has very publicly outlined for us and for the school board," she said. "I know that it's our responsibility to make sure that we work as a community to better our student outcomes and achieve the goals."

- Created a school transformation model for three schools designated as failing,
- Created a school transformation model for three schools designated as failing, resulting in increased student performance outcomes. Developed a school data scorecard, leading to increases in key performance indicators at every school in her learning zone and resulting in increased student performance on the state assessment of up to 30%. Implemented, trained, and led Instructional Rounds as a model of professional development for 143 principals, resulting in a double-digit increase in student performance on the state assessment.

As superintendent, Blakey will lead the district in its ambitious new strategic plan to improve academic outcomes for 68,000 students. She will also oversee the daily operations of more 140 schools, lead 12,000 employees, and collaborate with students, educators, support staff

parents, families, elected officials, community members, and union partners, to create opportunities for all students.

Blakey, who began her career as a high school social studies and English language learner teacher, will be stepping into the position currently held by Superintendent Scott Elder, who is leaving APS when his contract expires on June 30.

She earned her doctorate of education and Master of Arts in educational leadership from the University of New Mexico and holds a Bachelor of Science in secondary education from New Mexico State University.

Dr. Blakey is an accomplished violinist who plays for the Symphony Orchestra of Albuquerque and is a member of the boards of Explora Children's Science Museum, Unitled Way of Central New Mexico, and the Albuquerque Youth Symphony Program. Her husband, Paul Blakey, is also an educator and a professional musician.

Last week, she and finalist Thomas Ahart took part in a series of community forums where they discussed their plans for APS and answered pre-submitted questions. Nearly 500 people attended those forums, which were also live-streamed on the Board's YouTube channel. The YouTube videos of the forums have more than 3,300 views.

More than 450 people provided written comments on the finalists during the forums, which were shared with board members. Following 90-minute closed-door interviews with each candidate on Wednesday, the board deliberated for more than seven hours, taking into account the public feedback.

The superintendent search process also included feedback from more than 7,000 survey participants, more than 20 outreach sessions, and several interviews with the board. Twenty-four people applied for the position.

More on Dr. Blakey and the superintendent search

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Announces Dr. Crystal Hill as Permanent Superintendent



CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS ANNOUNCES DR. CRYSTAL **HILL AS PERMANENT** SUPERINTENDENT

After an extensive search, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education is pleased to announce Dr. Crystal L. Hill as superintendent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. The decision comes after approval of the employment contract made during a meeting of the Board on May 19.

Hill joined the school district in May 2022 as the chief of staff. Within six months of her hiring, she was appointed as interim superintendent. Most recently, Hill led the district in collaborative efforts with the Board of County Commissioners on the recommended budget for fiscal year 2024. This year's recommendation includes the county's full funding of the district's appropriation increase request of \$38.9M.

Prior to CMS. Hill served as chief academic officer for Cabarrus County Schools, where she led the district in achieving the highest level of academic performance in history. She began her career in education molding young minds and developing future leaders as a first-grade teacher in Guilford County Schools.

Over the years, she also served in various roles including assistant principal, principal and as executive director of elementary education and federal programs in Mooresville-Graded School District; curriculum coordinator in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools; and personnel director in Cabarrus

"Dr. Hill is an experienced school administrator and servant leader with a proven track record of success related to student academic achievement," said Elyse Dashew, chair of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education. "She has been lauded for her role in improving academic data to the highest achievement (94% of all schools meeting or exceeding growth targets) in the history of Cabarrus County."

Hill earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in instructional technology, both from North Carolina A&T State University, She also earned a doctorate in educational leadership from Gardner-Webb University. She currently serves on the Leading on Opportunity Council

Learn more about Superintendent Hill:

- New CMS Superintendent Lays Out Road Map for Improving District Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Names Dr. Crystal Hill as Superintendent
- New CMS Superintendent Crystal Hill Already Has Fans Among
- Community Leaders
 Meet new CMS Superintendent Crystal Hill. She wants to 'keep that magic' every school day

You can also follow Superintendent Hill on her social media channels: Twitter @CharMeckSupt and Instagram @CharMeckSupt.

Columbus City Schools Board of Education Selects Dr. Angela Chapman as Next Superintendent

Columbus City Schools Board of Education Selects Dr. Angela Chapman as Next Superintendent

May 16, 2023 -- The Columbus City Schools Board of Education has selected Dr. Angela nan as the District's next Superintendent. Dr. Chapman has b Superintendent since December 2022, following the announcement that Dr. Talisa Dixon would retire at the end of the school year.

Dr. Chapman was one of three finalists being considered for the position. The two other candidates were Dr. Brian McDonald of Pasadena, California, and Dr. Eric Thomas of Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Board chose Dr. Chapman after an extensive national search that began on March 27, 2023. hput was sought from Columbus City Schools teachers and staff, students and parents, business and community partners, labor unions, and elected officials. Each stakeholder group was asked what characteristics they believe are important in a Superintendent. In addition, numerous meetings were held with these groups, and finalists participated in a moderated discussion that was livestreamed on Thursday, May 11, 2023.

*Columbus City Schools is extremely fortunate to have an individual with the skills, experience and vision of Dr. Chapman to serve as our next superintendent," said Christina Vera, Vice President of the Board of Education and co-leader of the search process. "Dr. Chapman exhibits the character and determination needed to uplift the great work of Columbus City Schools while addressing the challenges of the state's largest school district and ensuring the best academic and nersonal outcomes for our students." personal outcomes for our students.

Dr. Chapman joined Columbus City Schools in June 2019 as the Chief of Transformation and Dr. Chapman joined Columbus City Schools in June 2019 as the Chief of Transformation and Leadership, where she served on the Superintendent's Cabinet in charge of principal leadership and the regional support of school communities. This work included prioritizing school improvement, principal supervision, leadership development, and the administration of grant funds to support effective teaching and learning. She has also provided leadership in implementing a new six-region district model, led implementation of an Sk million Wallace Equity-Centered Principal Plepilen grant to support recruiting, selecting, developing and retaining school leaders, and been instrumental in implementing the district's strategic plan.

Prior to CCS, Dr. Chapman spent five years in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) as an Instructional Superintendent and Interim Chief of Elementary, where she was responsible for leading and managing 78 elementary schools and the Early Childhood Education Division. Prior to her tenure at DCPS, she served as the Director of Curriculum for Massillon City Schools, as a principal in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools and in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights City School District and as an assistant principal in Euclid City Schools. She began her career in education as an elementary school teacher for five years in the Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District.

Dr. Chanman holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Akron and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from Ashland University. She also holds doctorate of education (Ed.D.) in curriculum and instruction from Tennessee State University

Dr. Ian Roberts Next Superintendent of Des Moines Public Schools

DR. IAN ROBERTS NEXT SUPERINTENDENT OF DES MOINES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Des Moines Public School Board voted today to appoint Dr. Ian Roberts as the Des Moines Public Schools' new superintendent, effective July 1, 2023. Dr. Roberts was chosen through a comprehensive national search based on the leadership profile prepared by the Board after receiving input from staff, parents, students, and community members. Dr. Roberts will acceed Interim Superintendent Matt Smith to lead the state's largest school district comprised of 31,000 students across 64 school buildings.

"When considering candidates, the Board was looking for educational experience, academic excellence and a passion for innovation and inspiration, and we found those qualities and more in Dr. Roberts," said Des Moines Public Schools Board Chair Teree Caldwell-Johnson. "Dr. Roberts' focus on creating equitable experiences for students to thrive, paired with his commitment to continuous improvement, creates an exciting opportunity for our students

Dr. Roberts currently serves as Superintendent of Millcreek Township School District located in Dr. Noberts currently servies as Superintendent of Millicreek Township School District located in northwest Pennsylvania. Dr. Roberts is a lifelong educator who has held the roles of Chief Schools Officer, Superintendent of Secondary Schools, Principal, and Senior Vice President of a charter management organization. He has experience leading schools in a number of large and mid-sized cities, including Washington D.C., Baltimore, and St. Louis. He is a proven champion for creating equitable opportunities for all students to thrive and is dedicated to ensuring that focus is a central part of his work in Des Moines. Dr. Roberts has a varied and impressiv background that ranges from being named George Washington University's 2013 Washington D.C. Principal of the Year to competing in the 2000 Olympics as a track & field athlete.

"Leadership is about meeting people where they are and helping them to become even better, and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to lead a strong organization like Des Moines Public Schools using the Board's goals and guardrails to achieve educational and operational excellence," said Dr. Ian Roberts. "I want to thank the Board for this opportunity, and I look forward to listening, learning and leading with input from my school community to increase opportunities for all students using empathy, cultural competency and continuous improvement to chart our path.

Dr. Roberts graduated with a B.S. degree from Coppin State University and received his Ed.D. in Urban Educational Leadership and a master's degree in education from St. John's University. He also has received several education-related certificates, including the Harvard University Improving Schools: The Art of Leadership certificate. He is married and outside of school he enjoys hunting, reading, and spending time with his family and friends.

"I want to thank Interim Superintendent Matt Smith for his strong leadership of Des Moines Public Schools over the last year," said Caldwell-Johnson. "The Board is grateful for his service and supportive of his decision to return to the associate superintendent position where he will partner with Dr. Roberts to continue to make a tremendous impact."

A photo of Dr. Roberts is attached to this email. His bio is below

Superintendent-Appointee

Des Moines Public Schools

Dr. Ian Roberts was named the 15th Superintendent of the Des Moines Public School district, effective July 1, 2023, Roberts, 52, was chosen following an ext on a leadership profile developed with input from the school board, teachers, families and others in the school community.

Dr. Roberts is a career educator with over two decades of experience as a classroom teacher, school administrator and executive leader. An accomplished author and speaker, Dr. Roberts has written numerous books and publications about educational topics including leadership, empathy and cultural responsiveness. He is passionate about instructional excellence, diversity, equity, inclusion and innovation in education.

Dr. Roberts came to Des Moines after serving as Superintendent of the Millcreek Township (PA) School District for three years, where his focus was culturally responsive, quality and equity-based instructional leadership that prepared every student for college or a career. Prior to that, he served as the St. Louis Public Schools (MO) High School Network Superintendent, where he coached, supported, and evaluated middle, high school and alternative school principals. His educational career also includes positions in Baltimore, MD, Washington D.C., South Bronx, NY, and across the country, While in the nation's capital he was named the George Washington. University's 2013 Washington D.C. Principal of the Year.

Dr. Roberts proudly shares that he was born to immigrant parents from Guyana, and spent most Dr. Auderts prounts state the was born to minigrant parents from Suyana, and spent most of his formative years in Brooklyn, NY. He graduated with a B.S. degree from Coppin State University and received his Ed.D. in Urban Educational Leadership and a master's degree in education from St. John's University. He also has received several education-federal education-federal education-federal education-federal education from the proving Schools: The Art of Leadership certificate.

Prior to becoming a special education teacher, principal, district leader, and leadership trainer. lan was a world class and Olympic Athlete, competing in track and field at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, and World Championships in Maebashi, Japan and Seville, Spain.

Dr. Roberts is married, and enjoys hunting, reading, and spending time with family and friends.

Kansas City Public Schools Board Taps Longtime District Teacher and Administrator as **New Superintendent**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE NEWS RELEASE

Kansas City Public Schools Board Taps Longtime District Teacher and Administrator as New Superintendent

Dr. Jennifer Collier started teaching in KCPS 23 years ago

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (March 29, 2023) — The Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS) board of directors formally introduced longtime district educator and administrator Dr. Jennifer Collier as the district's new superintendent today. The announcement is a major milestone as Collier becomes the district's first female superintendent and first Black female superintendent. Collier most recently served as interim superintendent; however, she started her KCPS career teaching music at Northeast High School 23 years ago.

"I've dedicated my life's work to the students, families, teachers and the academic mission of Kansas City Public Schools," Dr. Collier said. "I'm humbled by the support I've received and I ask all of you to join me in rolling up our sleeves and getting to work on behalf of our scholars."

Collier's vision for the district moving forward, includes an emphasis on literacy and mathematics. In these and other areas, the district is already experiencing growth and building momentum.

"Dr. Collier's collaborative leadership philosophy, coupled with her experience in this district, make her the right person to lead KCPS through an era of ambitious academic achievement, setting our students up for success in a modern global workforce," said Tanesha Ford, school board member and chair of the superintendent search committee "Dr. Collier keeps student success the focus of everything we do as a district."

After first serving as a substitute teacher at Mary Harmon Weeks Elementary, Collier was hired to teach choir, music appreciation and beginning keyboard at Northeast High School for the 2000-2001 school year. In 2010, she became the school's assistant principal. Her KCPS career includes time as principal of Border Star Montessori, chief human resource officer, chief of staff, deputy superintendent and most recently, interim

Collier is a lifelong learner, having earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas, Master of Arts in education from Avila University, an educational specialist degree in educational leadership from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and a doctorate in educational leadership from UMKC. Collier is a certified National Institute for School Leaders trainer, has a Professional in Human Resources certification and participated in Harvard University's "School Turnaround Leaders Institute."

Dr. Collier was chosen from a pool of 17 applicants following a robust national superintendent search, which began in fall 2022. The district's school board contracted with JG Consulting during the process, which relied heavily on engagement from parents, staff, students and a range of community stakeholders.

Hope Soriano-McCrary Chief Marketing & Communications Officer Kansas City Public Schools

Dr. Lisa Sayles-Adams Selected as Preferred Candidate for Minneapolis Public Schools Superintendent



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT: XXX-XXX-XXXX email address

Dr. Lisa Sayles-Adams Selected as Preferred Candidate for Minneapolis Public Schools Superintendent

MINNEAPOLIS—December 1, 2023—The Minneapolis Board of Education (School Board) is pleased to announce it has completed its search for the next superintendent. Dr. Lisa Sayles-Adams, Superintendent of Eastern Carver County Schools in Minnesota, has been selected as the School Board's preferred candidate to serve as superintendent. Her starting date will be determined pending contract negotiations

"We are thrilled Dr. Sayles-Adams will lead Minneapolis Public Schools into the future and are excited about her deep educational experience, passion for lifting students up and proimproving student performance at public schools," said Board Chair Sharon El-Amin. "She will provide both a vision and a strategy for continued growth for every student at MPS regardless of their background or zip

Dr. Sayles-Adams has 28 years of experience in education, including as a teacher and principal in ntendent in St. Paul, before r A complete bio can be found here.

Throughout her career, Dr. Sayles-Adams has demonstrated a firm commitment to ensuring that schools are safe and supportive environments for all students, and a belief that all students can lea

"This is a full-circle moment for me," said Sayles-Adams. "I began my career in education working as a teacher in North Minneapolis and that's where I learned that strong schools make a strong community. I am honored and thank the School Board for their vote of confidence in my commitment to serve as the next superintendent of Minneapolis Public Schools. I look forward to partnering with teachers, students, staff and the community to make sure every student gets the high-quality education they deserve."

For more information about the Superintendent Search process, visit:

About Minneapolis Public Schools
Minneapolis Public Schools, located in Minnesota's largest city, is an urban school district with schools in or near every Minneapolis neighborhood. We embrace diversity in our students, staff and programs, working hard to accelerate learning in everything we do. From early childhood education to early college credits and care to become confident global citizens. Learn more at mpls.k12.mn.us.

OPSB Formally Appoints Dr. Avis Williams as the Next Superintendent for NOLA-PS

OPSB Formally Appoints Dr. Avis Williams as the Next Superintendent for NOLA-PS



(New Orleans - April 14, 2022) — The Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) unanimously voted to approve Dr. Avis Williams' contract and formally appoint her as the next superintendent for NOLA Public Schools' (NOLA-PS). Her official first day is Monday, July 11. The board's choice is historic: It marks the first time in the 181

"Dr. Williams is extremely qualified to lead our district. She has more than 20 years of experience as an educator, serving as a teacher, a principal at the elemiddle, and high school levels, and most recently as a superintendent," s

President Olin Parker. "It's an historic and exciting day for our city as we formally appoint the first woman to serve as permanent superintendent in the District's 181 years. It's long overdue and on behalf of the board, we are thrilled to welcome Dr. Avis Williams to our NOLA-PS family."

"The education field is overwhelmingly female, and we know NOLA-PS has had countless women who were capable of leading this district prior to today," **said OPSB member Katie Baudouin**. "It's a proud and exciting time in our history to have a woman leading the District who is a talented educator and beloved leader and mother who understands the needs of our children. I'm certain Dr. Williams is willing and ready to continue to fight for the best interest of our students and ensure they succeed throughout their educational journey with NOLA-PS."

"I am truly honored, humbled, and excited to be part of this historic day for NOLA Public Schools. I look forward to listening and working with schools, teachers, families, the community, and our scholars to ensure academic success that will lead to bright, successful futures," said Dr. Avis Williams. "I appreciate the trust and confidence the board has in me. I will work hard to gain the trust of our families and the community as I work to instill the core values I live by in every facet of the

Dr. Williams' contract is commensurate with compensation packages of recently-hired superintendents both in similarly sized districts nationally and within the region, such as Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Cincinnati, and Mobile. According to data from the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), Dr. Williams will be paid at the 75° percentile of superintendents in districts with 25,000-49,999 students. NOLA-PS has more than 43,000 students. Her contract is for four years at an annual salary of \$300,000

"Dr. Williams comes into the role with more than 20 years as an educator, including five years of experience as a superintendent, and we believe our offer is grounded both in both equity and data," President Parker said.

Per the contract, Dr. Williams will be tasked with 12 comprehensive duties.

vision and strategy for meeting the educational needs of all students served by schools governed by the Board.

•Leading the central office personnel with the primary mission of continual annual

· Maintaining rigorous standards for charter school authorization recommendations that follow Board policy and are aligned with national best practices, as promulgated by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers and demographic trends of the District. The Superintendents shall implement comprehensive measures to hold those charter schools accountable to those

In addition, the contract provides the opportunity for specific performance-based objectives in the areas of facilities, finance, accountability, and truancy.

In her current role as Superintendent of Selma City Schools in Alabama, Dr Williams has successfully increased the district's State Report Card by 8 points, from Williams last successing incleases in the usual research spell can up a points, in 68 to 76, the equivalent of raising it by a full letter grade. She also increased the graduation rate by 6%, reading scores by 6%, math by 8%, and achieved the distinction as the only district in the state to earn the Pathway, Tier I and Tier II Performance Excellence Awards through the Alabama Performance Excellence Program (Baldrige Framework).

Advocacy and community engagement have been hallmarks of Dr. Williams' service as the leader of Selma City Schools. She has written weekly articles in local publications, spoken to dozens of churches, civic groups, and other community publications, spoken to ozzens of cnurches, crive groups, and onter community partners to discuss issues impacting education, as well as addressed state legislators to help improve children's education. Prior to her superintendency in Selma, Dr. Williams served as the Assistant Superintendent of Tuscaloosa City Schools where she helped increase the graduation rate from 89 to 91% and developed a District Instructional Framework, which led to a 25-point increase in early literacy proficiency. In addition, she helped implement a \$170M capital

Dr. Williams started her professional career serving as a sergeant in the United States Army before becoming a teacher and physical education coach in Huntsville, Ala.; an English teacher and assistant principal in Salisbury, N.C.; a principal in Huntsville, an adjunct education college professor in Murfreesboro, Tenn., and the Executive Director of Secondary Curriculum and Instruction in Greensboro, N.C. These roles have afforded Dr. Williams the unique privilege of serving as an elementary, middle, and high school principal, as well as a college professor – giving her a full perspective of what it takes to lead at all levels

An avid writer, Dr. Williams is the author of a children's chapter book and has authored numerous pieces for state and national education publications. Her joy comes from spending time with her daughter, Bree, running, writing, and being a "dog mom" to her standard poodles, CoCo and Butterscotch. Never forgetting her roots, Dr. Williams enjoys giving back to her community while working with families

A proud member of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc. and Links, Inc., Dr. Williams is a member of numerous community organizations. She has created and delivered dozens of professional development and motivational sessions for national conferences, churches, student groups, educators, and leaders across the nation. Her areas of expertise include educating children in poverty, culture transformation, strategic planning, instructional leadership, and providing

Dr. Williams is a member of Cohort 6 of Future Chiefs for Change. Her awards include the Marbury Technology Innovation Award by the Alabama Department of Education in 2011 as a principal and in 2019 as superintendent; the 2020 Alabama Alliance of Black School Educators (ABSE) Superintendent of the Year; the Dr. Ulysess Byas Superintendent of the Year; a 2019 finalist for Alabama State Superintendent of the Year; and one of two 2022 superintendent finalists for the School Superintendents' Association's (AASA) Women in School Leadership Award. The University of Alabama selected her for the 2021 Harold L. Bishop Alumni Award of Leaders, and the National School Public Relations Association identified her as one of the 2022 Superintendents to Watch for her dynamic leadership with strong communication at its core

Ultimately, the board believes Dr. Williams' award-winning, proven instructional leadership and strategic planning will help increase stude improve community support as NOLA-PS' superintendent of schools.

About NOLA Public Schools: NOLA Public Schools is the public school district for Orleans Parish. It includes the district's administration and elected school board known as the Orleans Parish School Board. NOLA Public Schools currently oversees 76 public schools and is led by Superintendent Dr. Henderson Lewis, Jr.

Dr. Wayne N. Walters Selected to Lead Pittsburgh Pubic Schools as Permanent **Superintendent for Next Five Years**

DR. WAYNE N. WALTERS SELECTED TO LEAD PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS PERMANENT SUPERINTENDENT FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS

National search validates Dr. Walters to lead District for his record on high standar unmatched integrity, and dedication to students; new role effective August 1, 2022



PITTSBURGH, July 21, 2022 — The Pittsburgh Board of Public Education selected Dr. Wayne N. Walters to lead Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) as its permanent Superintendent. This follows a national search where Dr. Walters' depth of experience and unmatched still level validated that he was the ideal person to assume the permanent top leadership role for the District. The Board is expected to approve Dr. Walters' appointment for a five-year term at its next Legislative Session meeting on Wednesday, July 27, 2022.

"Dr. Walters brings a career-long dedication to high standards in education along with unmatched integrity," said Board President Sala Udin, noting Dr. Walters' 30-plus year tenure with the District. "People who know him know that he has incredibly high standards for students regarding academia chievement and integrity."

Dr. Walters has served in the District as a Teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, Assistant Superintendent of 6-12 Schools, Assistant Superintendent of Professional Development and Sper Programming, and, most recently, since October 2021, Interim Superintendent of Pittsburgh Publi

"I remain unapologetically student-centered, committed, and passionate about our students, teachers, staff, and families of the Pittsburgh Public Schools," said Dr. Walters. "I know firshand the many challenges our District faces, but I believe competence, confidence, and collaboration go a long way in creating quality, equitable, well-rounded experiences and spaces of learning and joy for our students. I am genuinely excited about the tremendous opportunities ahead.

Dr. Walters assumes the permanent post on Monday, August 1, 2022.

National Search Validated Selection

The Board hired search consultant BWP & Associates (BWP) in March to lead the national search to identify qualified candidates to fill the post of permanent Superintendent for the District.

There were 29 applicants who applied from 13 states and one other country. The insights gamered from community outreach efforts as part of this process were utilized in the recruiting and selection norm commany outerable trions as part or time process were funded in the feorithing and selection process. BWP submitted its final report to the Board in late June, which included five finalists. The nine-member Board made the ultimate hiring decision naming Dr. Walters as the next permanent Superintendent.

Mr. Udin noted that the national search process validated that Dr. Walters is indeed the right individual for this critical leadership position. Throughout the search process, the Board recognized that Dr. Walters was superior in his expectations for academic achievement, staff and student accountability, and the well-being of the entire PPS family.

Dr. Walters' significant experience, coupled with the reputation he has earned among teachers, administrators, students, and parents, made him the stand-out candidate in this national search, according to Mr. Udin. "We open that indee in him to stand our continuous among the second according to Mr. Udin." We expect student achievement, professional performance of staff faculty, and collaboration internally and with community stakeholders to be elevated to a higher level," he said to see the second according to the second accordi

A Reset Strategy

The Board said it is viewing Dr. Walters' appointment as permanent Superintendent as a "reset The board said it is viewing bit. Waters appointment as perinahent objentierlocated as a reset period with an opportunity for recommitment to public education in Pittsburgh. As part of this reset, the community, read expect numerous changes—particularly by enhancing communications with the community, rebuilding confidence in the District, and letting students' vioices be heard. As a result, the Board expects improved morale in the District for students, families, and staff alike.

Moving forward, the Board and Dr. Walters will collaborate in developing goals and a strategic plan for the District. The Board said that having someone so intimately familiar with the District is a distinct advantage in that Dr. Walters knows how to get things done efficiently and effectively. Relationships with school unions and employee organizations—which are now healthy and respectful—only not prove. In addition, Dr. Walters will continue developing key relationships and new partnerships, including those established with the Mayor's office, City Council, surrounding universities, community-based groups, the philanthropic community, and The Pittsburgh Promise to garner support for advancing the District's mission, vision, and strategic goals.

Public Input a Key

Public input was vital in determining the kind of leadership that the District needs and deserves. All told, 1,716 people participated in community feedback activities via an online survey, interviews, focus groups, and community forums, in addition to a public hearing. Administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents/guardians, and community member constituent groups were represented

Insights garnered from the community outreach efforts helped to build the foundation on which BWP developed the Leadership Profile, which was used in the recruiting process. The Leadership Profile identified the traits needed in a leader best to serve PPS students, educators, and the community and was presented by BWP to the Board at a public meeting in May.

"Community engagement was an essential part of this process, and we thank all those who have Community engagement was an essential part of this process, and we maint an indise who have participated in providing valuable input for the mutual benefit of the search process," said Mr. Udin. "We are also grateful for the two foundations that stepped forward—the Richard King Mellon Foundation and The Pittburgh Foundation—do support the national search that validated Dr. Walters as a true leader and the best candidate for our community."

ecific terms of Dr. Walters' contract will be highlighted next week at the Board's Legislative sion meeting at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, July 27.

The first day of school for teachers in the Pittsburgh Public Schools is Tuesday, August 23, 2022. The new school year for students commences on Monday, August 29, 2022. Kindergarten will begin

Dr. Keisha Scarlett Selected as Superintendent of Saint Louis Public Schools



Contact: George Sells
Director of Communications and Marketing
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Dr. Keisha Scarlett Selected as Superintendent of Saint Louis Public Schools

St. Louis, MO. February 1, 2023 - The Board of Education of the City of St. St. LOUIS, MM, PEDfoary 1, 2023 — The pourt of Education of the City of St. Louis has selected <u>Dr. Keisha Scartet</u> as the district's new superintendent of schools effective July 1, 2023. Scarlett comes to Saint Louis from Seattle where she has served Seattle Public Schools (SPS) for 24 years and has been assistant superintendent of academics since 2021.

Scarlett said, "I am honored that the Board of Education has chosen me to lead Saint Louis Public Schools. The children in this great city are full of promise—and I know that with the right support, they can thrive in the classroom today and achieve their goals for the future." She added, "This community is resilient and has made important progress. Together, we will continue moving forward, until all students in Saint Louis are safe, cared for, and prepared with an education to take them wherever they want to go. A Saint Louis Public Schools education will be a "gateway" to unlimited possibility."

"We are thrilled to announce such a talented, genuine and visionary educator will be the next superintendent of Saint Louis Public Schools," said Board of Education President Matt Davis. The Board's goal in conducting a nationwide search was to find a leader who will build on our successes but also be laser focused in addressing our challenges. Dr. Scarlett possesses the perfect mix of skill, knowledge, and experience while also caring deeply for students, families, teachers, and staff."

Following Dr. Kelvin Adams who served for 14 years, Scarlett will officially begin her duties on July 1, 2023. Until that time, Davis says that interim superintendent Dr. Nicole Williams will continue to guide the district forward. "We were extremely fortunet that Dr. Williams stepped up to serve as interim and we are indebted to her for the pivotal role she will play in this transition."

As assistant superintendent in Seattle Public Schools, Scarlett implemented a strategic plan to increase early literacy among African American boys and other students furthest from



educational justice. She also oversaw advanced coursework initiatives to ensure young prograduate prepared for college, career, and community.

As chief of equity, Scarlett co-founded the Academy for Rising Educators (ARE, a tuition-free educator preparation program) and worked in partnership with Seattle Central College and the City of Seattle in serving more than 300 aspiring educators of color. The program has a 90 percent retention rate.

Scarlett has also served Seattle Public Schools as executive director of organizational development, human resources director, principal, and teacher. During her time as principal of South Shore PK School, Scarlett developed an accelerated mathematics pathway for students in grades three through eight.

In 2014, 25 percent of eighth-grade students were two years advanced in math and all of those students met/exceeded standards on the state's Algebra I and Geometry end-of-course exams. That year, Scarlett was selected as Washington State Middle-Level Principal of the Year and recognized for leading South Shore to 80 percent proficiency across multiple grade levels in reading, writing, and math on state exams. In 2020, Scarlett was part of a group that provided then President-elect Biden's transition team with guidance for reopening schools during the

Prior to building a career in education, Scarlett worked for a large aerospace company. She earned her doctorate and principal certification from the University of Washington, her master's in education from Heritage University, and her bachelor's from Clark Atlanta University.

About Saint Louis Public Schools:

Saint Louis Public Schools (ISLPs) was founded in 1838 and, today, is the fourth largest school bistrice in Missouri. In 62 schools, Pre-kindergarren to grade 112, SPS includes just over 19,000 students and 37,00 students and

WRITER AND CONTRIBUTORS

WRITER



This document was written by **Barbara Griffith**, a communications consultant who served as Senior Communications Officer for the Fort Worth Independent School District for 17 years. Before that she spent decades in print and broadcast news. Griffith's education consulting services include crisis communications, developing strategies to boost and sustain enrollment, facilitate smooth superintendent transitions, and lead successful bond election information campaigns.

CONTRIBUTORS

Wendy Johnson, Division Director of Strategic Communications, has been with Wichita Public Schools for almost 24 years and has worked in communications and marketing for 35 years.

George Sells, Director of Communications and Marketing, Saint Louis Public Schools, has 32 years of communications experience. He was formerly a broadcast news reporter – in both television and radio – for 24 years. He also has experience in owning and running a production company.

Phil Roeder, Director of Communications and Public Affairs, Des Moines Public Schools, has 40 years of experience in communications. He has a background in politics having worked for lowa Senator Tom Harkin. He is perhaps the only member of the Council's Public Relations Executives (PRE) group to have been school board president for the district he now serves.

Kathryn Block, former Chief of Communications and current Marketing Officer for The School District of Philadelphia, has served with the district for five and a half years. However, she's been in communications for three decades, previously working in the corporate setting with Fortune 500 companies such as Kraft Foods and the Campbell Soup Company. She completed a two-year Broad Residency.

Monica Armenta served for 15 years as Executive Director of Communications, Albuquerque Public Schools. She is currently the Executive Director of the New Mexico Broadcasters Association. Prior to APS, Monica had a lengthy and respected career in TV news. We learned at our conference last year from another PRE colleague, she was considered the most popular TV anchor in New Mexico.

Donnie Belcher, Executive Director of Communications and Engagement, Minneapolis Public Schools. Ask Donnie how long she's been with MPS and she'll tell you since "9th grade" and that she is a proud product of her school district. She's been with the MPS communications team for two and half years, but before that had lengthy experience working for a non-profit and as a high school English teacher.

Cristina Peña Nguyen, Executive Director of Communications & Community Engagement, Austin Independent School District, has 13 years of communication experience, serving both in the public and the private sector.

Michael Casserly is Strategic Advisor for the Council of the Great City Schools. He previously served as Executive Director of the Council for 29 years. Before assuming this position, Michael served as the organization's Director of Legislation and Research for 15 years.

Phill Casaus is the new executive director of communications for Albuquerque Public Schools. Before joining APS, Phill had a lengthy career in print journalism working for the Albuquerque Journal, the Albuquerque Tribune, the Santa Fe New Mexican, and the Rocky Mountain News. He has also served as executive director of the Albuquerque Education Foundation Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving Albuquerque Public Schools.

This document was produced by the Council's Communications Department consisting of Tonya Harris, Director of Communications; Joanne Coley, Communications Manager; and Kalin Hicks, Communications Specialist.







COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS

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