

**Ferndale Unified School District  
Board of Trustees**

Jerry Hansen JoLynn Jorgensen Stephanie Koch Cory Nunes Ken Richardson

**February 16, 2017**

**Special School Board Meeting**

**Open Session 7:00 P.M.**

Ferndale High School – Mabel Lowry Library  
1231 Main Street, Ferndale, CA 95536

**Agenda**

**1.0 CALL TO ORDER/FLAG SALUTE**

*Notice: Any writing, not exempt from public disclosure under Government Code Sections 6253.5, 6254, 6254.3, 6254.7, 6254.15, 6254.16, or 6254.22, which is distributed to all or a majority of the members of the governing board by any person in connection with a matter subject to discussion or consideration at an open meeting of the Board is available for public inspection at Ferndale High School main office (1231 Main Street, Ferndale, California).*

**2.0 ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

**3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT ON OPEN SESSION ITEMS:**

*Members of the public may only comment on the Special Meeting Agenda item. Individuals will have up to three (3) minutes to address this item and the total time for public comment will be twenty (20) minutes.*

**4.0 INFORMATION/ACTION** *(The Board is asked to receive/discuss; however, the Board may decide to take action at its discretion)*

**4.1** Receive/Discuss Superintendent/Principal Search Parameters – Debra Kingshill, Coordinator of Personnel Services, Humboldt County Office of Education (HCOE)

**5.0 ADJOURNMENT**

*NOTICE: Individuals requiring disability-related accommodations or modifications, including auxiliary aids and services, in order to participate in the board meeting should contact the District Superintendent in writing three (3) days prior to the meeting at the following address: 1231 Main Street, Ferndale, California.*

**TYPICAL SUPERINTENDENT SELECTION PROCESS  
MAJOR STEPS AND SAMPLE TIMELINE PARAMETERS**

ACTIVITY	TIME ALLOCATION
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1. Board accepts retirement/resignation of current supt. or declares vacancy. Sets anticipated reporting date for new supt.  
(This date is usually July 1 unless the Board wishes to establish some sort of transition period from one superintendent to another). In the event the board desires a transition period, dates are usually negotiated with the new superintendent's previous board at the time the contract is offered.

2. Board advisor meets with board to establish a promotion and search plan.

Board mtg.  
(Day 1)

3. With the assistance of advisor, board develops announcement of vacancy. This usually includes the development of a brochure that highlights the position and includes a description of the community and the school district. If the board desires staff and community input into the development of "desired qualifications," approximately two additional weeks will be needed for the board's advisor to gather input. If a current position or job description has not been prepared ahead of time, the board will need to add up to one month (and at least one more board meeting) for an appropriate review and discussion of the matter.

Minimum 2 wks  
and 1 Bd. mtg.  
to a  
Maximum 6 wks  
and 2 Bd. mtgs.  
  
(Includes printing)

4. Post vacancy. A statewide search is generally the most desired approach. It is recommended that the wider the search is in terms of geography, the longer the opening period for filing applications should be. At a minimum, it is recommended that the position be posted in all 58 county offices of education, all school districts in Humboldt County, all state university education placement centers, published on the web in *Ed Join*, and in local papers. The board may wish additional targeted postings, such as a special mailing to all northern California school districts.

Minimum 5 wks  
to a  
Maximum 8 wks  
from first post date  
to closing date

5. Board determines who will participate in written application screening and panel interviews and sets criteria for selection. The board must decide on the extent of staff, parent and community involvement in the selection of a new superintendent. The board's

Done within above  
time period

advisor can provide ideas on how input can be sought and put to greatest use during this process. The discussions of who should be involved and how, and what criteria will be used in the screening process, can all take place during the posting period and should not lead to an extension of the process itself.

6. Conduct written application screening. The review and rating process usually takes a minimum of one half day for every dozen applications if the board decides to use a cross-section of staff, community and board members as reviewers. A professional committee of reviewers, which is an alternative process, can conduct this process more quickly because of their familiarity with personnel selection. Screening is often performed on the Saturday immediately following the closing date for applications. Regardless of which type of committee is used to conduct the review, the timeline here depends more on how quickly the advisor can tabulate the results and then meet with the board so that the board can make the selection of which candidates will be called for first round interviews.

Generally 1-2 wks from closing date until board mtg. at which candidates are selected

7. Conduct first round interviews. Ideally, candidates are given no less than one week's, and preferably two weeks', notice to come for first round interviews. Most districts choose to perform interviews on a single weekend day. As many as 5-7 candidates can be interviewed on one day, either by one or two committees, depending upon the desire of the board. Various scheduling arrangements can be proposed by the board's advisor.

1-2 wks from the day the board selects candidates for interview

8. Conduct second round interviews. This is an optional step that boards will take if further information from the candidates is needed because the first round interview was not effective in "narrowing the field" to, say, two or three top candidates. This is usually not the case, and it is more typical to find that second round interviews are conducted as an integral part of the on-site visit by the board (refer to step 9, below).

If conducted, add 2 weeks to selection process

9. Conduct on-site visitations. This is an important part of the process of selecting a new superintendent and should be scheduled if at all possible. Depending upon calendars and cost considerations, a committee of the board, or perhaps the entire board, should consider visiting the current site of the top one or two candidates for the purpose of conducting interviews with the candidates and their staffs, parents, boards, community members, and other supervisors if any. The board's advisor can make the arrangements for the visitations and can assist in preparing appropriate questions.

Generally within two weeks of first interview date

10. Identify top candidate, establish the parameters (terms) of the contract to be offered, make tentative offer. The board's advisor and/or legal counsel can assist the board in preparing an acceptable offer of employment. The board president, or advisor, usually communicates the offer to the candidate and may be called upon to "negotiate" terms.

Typically within one week of on-site visits

11. Set board meeting date for action to employ the new superintendent. Action is most often taken at a regularly scheduled board meeting but may be scheduled for a special meeting if time is a consideration. The action to employ a superintendent is an "open session item" and should be appropriately posted.

As determined by board calendar

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GENERAL REMARKS: From looking at the process outlined above, it is readily apparent that the superintendent search process will normally take from 3 to 4 months from the time the board first takes action on accepting the resignation/retirement of the current superintendent or declares that a vacancy exists. The process can be shortened if the search is conducted only locally, if fewer people are involved in the review/interview process, or if background investigations do not include on-site visitations by board members. However, it is rare that the process takes any longer than four months; unless, of course, a second opening is needed because the first posting failed to attract the "right" candidate for the position.

Historically speaking, most superintendent vacancies are posted during the months of February through April since the majority of vacant positions are expected to filled on or before July 1, the start of the fiscal year. Initiating a posting early in this traditional time period generally results in an enhanced applicant pool, permits the selection process to be completed well ahead of the end of the school year, and allows for a somewhat smoother transition from one administration to another. Postings at other times of the year tend to not yield as many qualified applicants, although this is less of a concern today than 10 years ago.

Boards of education are advised that the trend is toward fewer qualified applicants in recent years. For example, it is not uncommon for a district to receive less than a dozen qualified applicants for its administrative openings, even if the advertising occurs during the more ideal posting period. This is the case throughout the state because of fewer individuals pursuing administrative credentials and those that already have the credential are tending not to seek superintendent positions because of the perceived complexity and stress associated with the position.

## Superintendent Selection Process—A Review of the Options

### Written Application Screening-Preliminary

Search consultant or other designated person can review all applications to verify that the candidates and the application materials meet minimum qualifications. For example, validating that the application is complete and that appropriate credentials are held by the candidate would be typically included in this process. Preliminary screenings do not evaluate the quality of application nor the candidate's relative qualifications. This is strictly a technical process, but one that is recommended in order to save time during the formal written application screening.

### Written Application Screening-Formal

Part 1. The options as to who shall evaluate the applications.

Option A: Professional Screening Committee. A panel, appointed by the Board upon recommendation of the superintendent and/or search consultant and consisting primarily of current school administrators, could review all applications and recommend the top four to six for interview.

Option B: Board Screening Committee. Two or more members of the Board could be appointed to review all applications and select for interview those candidates they determine are the most qualified.

Option C: Staff and Community Committee. A committee, appointed by the Board from a list of volunteers (or nominees) and consisting of representatives from management, certificated, classified, and community/parent groups (PTSA, Site Council, Chamber of Commerce, one or two feeder school reps, etc.), could review the applications and provide input to the Board. Note: This process is usually done in a group setting with everyone in a large room at one time. However, the ratings are performed on an individual basis with the individual ratings being combined and the net results shared with the Board, who then makes the decision on whom to interview.

Option D: A Combined Screening Panel. Since the written evaluation process can accommodate large numbers of participants, the Board may wish to involve a number of interested parties, including themselves, in this aspect of the selection process. The written ratings process, if done on an individual basis but then tabulated to determine a group perspective, may easily handle up to 18 or twenty raters without being excessively cumbersome.

As a way to assist the Board in evaluating the input received and regardless of whether the Board uses Option A, C or D, the ratings information can be provided to the Board in

such a manner as to reflect how individual raters and/or particular sub-groups of raters assess the candidates.

#### Part 2. The options for the rating process itself.

Essentially, two types of ratings processes are typical for screening superintendent applications. The first uses a structured rating form wherein the Board requests every rater to examine a specific list of criteria. This process is more time consuming for the raters, but does help to insure that a more standard set of criteria is used by all raters.

The second option for rating is to have each rater nominate his/her top five or six candidates. This "holistic" approach to screening then requires the search consultant to tabulate the nominees and then provide a composite list for the Board to consider. This second approach works best with smaller numbers of applicants and with raters who have had previous experience in evaluating applications.

The first option would probably be preferred if there are more than twenty applications received or if a staff/community member review panel is appointed. If the first option is used, the Board would need to identify the specific criteria it wishes all the raters to consider when evaluating the applications.

#### The Interview Process-First Round

As in the written application screening, the Board can choose to conduct all interviews personally or can choose to involve staff/community representatives in some aspect. If the Board wishes to have staff and community involvement in this stage of the selection process, here are the options:

Option A: "Hurdle interview" structure. A staff/community group is appointed by the Board based upon volunteers and/or nominees from specific interest areas. This staff/community group interviews the six to eight individuals invited by the Board and then recommends the top three or four for the Board to interview at a later time.

Option B: "Simultaneous interview" structure. A group is formed as in A above. The group interviews all the candidates invited by the Board. The group assesses the strengths and weaknesses of all the candidates and gives a complete summary to the Board. No ranking or comparative rating is performed by a group. The Board can then interview the same day as the staff/community group since the Board does not have to wait for a ranking report from the group.

Option C: "Feedback interview" structure. A group is formed as above. The group interviews only those candidates the Board has *previously* interviewed. Each of the

candidates are evaluated by the committee and feedback is provided to the Board on a smaller number of candidates.

With whatever option is followed, your search consultant and/or superintendent can facilitate the interview process by working with the interview team(s).

It is advisable not to have too many people questioning the candidate during the interview process at any one time. 15 or more interviewers in one setting would seem VERY large to most applicants.

A sample of questions can be provided for board and community group consideration.

### The Interview Process-Second Round

Second round interviews, usually exclusively with the Board, are often desirable. The top two candidates are often invited back for a second round of questioning. The questions during a second round are generally tailored to the observed strengths and weaknesses of the candidates themselves.

Second round interviews can precede or follow the on-site visitations depending upon what the interview process has uncovered about the candidates' qualifications.

### On-Site Visitation of Top Candidates

Getting first hand information is important and recommended wherever possible. So, a team of two or more Board members might be appointed to visit the "home" district of the top one or two candidates in order to verify what has been revealed during the interview process.

On site visitations can be coordinated through your search consultant or superintendent. A format for conducting an on-site background review can be tailored to the district's needs just before the visit is scheduled to occur.