



Ripon Area School District  
**SEARCH  
PROPOSAL**

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**SUPERINTENDENT**

Ripon, WI  
December 2024

December 2024

David Scott, President, Board of Education

Dear Mr. Scott and Members of the School Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to present an overview of **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** and the services we can provide for your superintendent search. Our firm prides itself on delivering a quality search process that will result in a great leader for the Ripon Area School District.

- **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT**, founded in 2004, is in its twentieth year. Our diverse firm is comprised of more than 60 men and women who have been leaders in quality school districts throughout the country. We have an unusually high degree of success, which we attribute to the quality of our associates, the excellence of our protocols, and our ability to find the best educational leaders who match the needs of our clients.

We define our success by the longevity of the leaders we place, our repeat services to client districts, and the positive and long-lasting relationships we establish with the boards with whom we work. We will understand your strengths and needs through conversations with the members of the Board, staff, and your entire constituency. Our recruitment and interview process aligned to this understanding will result in well-vetted, highly qualified candidates from which to make your selection of a new superintendent.

Thank you for considering our proposal for your superintendent search. We would enjoy working with you to achieve the mutual goal of finding outstanding leadership for the students at the Ripon Area School District

Sincerely,  
Kevin O'Mara Ed.D, President  
**SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT**

[kevin.omara@schoolexecconnect.com](mailto:kevin.omara@schoolexecconnect.com)  
708.516.0793



# Executive Summary

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## CONSULTANTS

**Dr. Matt Gibson, Senior Associate**

[matthew.gibson@schoolexecconnect.com](mailto:matthew.gibson@schoolexecconnect.com) | 262-894-8947

**Dr. Patricia Antony, Associate**

[patricia.antony@schoolexecconnect.com](mailto:patricia.antony@schoolexecconnect.com) | 262-347-8225

## PROPOSED TIMELINE

- **Phase A:** Opening the Search (January 2025)
- **Phase B:** Creating the New Superintendent Profile (January-February 2025)
- **Phase C:** Developing the Candidate Pool (January 2025-April 2025)
- **Phase D:** Selecting the Candidates (April 2025)

## COSTS

- **Consulting Fee:** \$14,900
- **Expenses not to exceed:** \$2,200

# Management Summary

Our understanding of the search services required and an overview of how **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** will provide these services:

- Mutually planning and tailoring your search process and timelines with the Board
- Working closely with your District staff members who assist the Board
- Preparing and providing written materials needed for the search process
- Assisting the Board in establishing criteria for a New Superintendent Profile including desired qualifications and leadership attributes
- Accepting applications on the **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** website with links to your District's website
- Using our national network to recruit candidates meeting the qualifications established by your Board
- Presenting a slate of qualified and well-vetted candidates to the Board
- Preparing the Board for first and second interviews
- Facilitating Board interviews at the Board's request
- Preparing Interview Committees for interviews
- Assisting the Board with contract negotiation and compensation recommendations
- Communicating diligently with the Board and staff throughout the search
- Assisting with news releases announcing the new Superintendent

Why is  
**SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT**  
so successful?

We are one of the leading private search firms because we give school districts the personalized and individualized services each search deserves. Our firm is diverse, comprised of consultants who are knowledgeable and work closely together. We are large enough to have a robust network, but are small enough to give your District the focus and attention your search needs.

# Company Profile

## SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT'S HISTORY

**SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** is a two-proprietor corporation founded in 2004 in Highland Park, Illinois. The corporation has never operated under another name and has been in continuous operation. Since its inception, **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** has become one of the leading educational search firms in the Midwest with 60+ consultants, more than 500 searches completed throughout the United States, and a 97% placement success rate.

**SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** specializes only in executive searches for school districts, private schools, charter schools, and consortium schools.



## DR. KEVIN O'MARA, PRESIDENT, SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT,

is the retired Superintendent of Argo (IL) Public Schools and currently serves as Professor in the Department of Leadership at Concordia University Chicago. Dr. O'Mara has led more than 50 searches in the United States.

## FINANCIAL

**SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** has had a steady record of profit since its inception in 2004. We have never filed for bankruptcy, been sued, or involved in any litigation with a client, school district, consultant, or candidate, had any search terminated, nor been refused payment.

## SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT'S BACKGROUND AND QUALIFICATIONS

- School Exec Connect has two senior Partners, twelve Partners, seven Senior Associates, and forty-one Associates working out of eight states.
- Partners, Senior Associates, and Associates working for our firm include retired superintendents, sitting superintendents, college professors, human resource directors, special education superintendents, and regional superintendents.
- Since 2004, we have successfully completed more than 500 superintendent searches for educational institutions.
- Our entire team of 60+ consultants works closely together, supporting each search to find qualified candidates from across the country that match each District's needs.
- A hallmark of **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** is our Annual Training Conference, where we train new associates, review our past year, improve our practices, and get to know each other better to assure ongoing support and communication for our work together.
- We stay informed on legislative changes that affect school districts.
- All searches conducted by **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** have been completed on time and within budget.
- Our survey gives substantive information to School Boards about the various stakeholders' thinking. Given a large enough response, we can even report various subgroups' reactions to a variety of topics important to your District.
- We have never been sued or refused any portion of payment by a district; nor have we ever had a search terminated.
- We provide complete written materials to support the needs of the District staff when preparing material
- We provide exceptional training and written materials for Boards and constituents who are involved in candidate interviews.
- The thoroughness of our community engagement gives a Board valuable information throughout the process while leaving the search decisions in the hands of the Board.
- Our record of success is outstanding. More than 97% of our superintendent placements have been in good standing with their Boards after the first contract.

The consultants who will assist you with your search:

# Company Personnel



**Dr. Matt Gibson, Senior Associate** | [matt.gibson@schoolexeconnect.com](mailto:matt.gibson@schoolexeconnect.com) | 262-894-8947  
is the retired superintendent of the School District of Elmbrook in Brookfield, Wisconsin. He also completed successful Wisconsin superintendencies in Stoughton, Fox Point-Bayside, North Lake and Swallow school districts. While superintendent at Elmbrook, Matt won the Baldrige Wisconsin Forward Mastery Achievement Award and the Public Policy Forum Award for Transparency and Ethics. Dr. Gibson is an executive and organizational coach, having advised the Greendale, Mequon-Thiensville, and New Berlin school districts. He most recently completed superintendent searches in the Waukesha and Brown Deer school districts and previously completed metro-area searches in the Fox Point, Germantown x2, Greendale, Mukwonago, and Pewaukee school districts.



**Dr. Patricia Antony, Associate** | [patricia.antony@schoolexeconnect.com](mailto:patricia.antony@schoolexeconnect.com) |  
Patricia Antony has been a school administrator for 26 years in south central Wisconsin, serving as a principal, curriculum director, and superintendent. Her core mission has been early literacy and technology and their respective roles in advancing learning for all students. Her service as a K-12 music educator for 13 years reinforced her commitment to the power of music education in brain development and learning achievement. Dr. Antony Retired as Superintendent of the Mayville Schools in 2016. In her retirement, Dr. Antony has served as Rotary President in Mayville, WI, a University Supervisor for graduate students at Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, WI, a local library Board member, and presently served as a member of the Board of Directors for the Middle East International School in Doha, Qatar.

**Complete resumes of the consultants will be sent upon request.**

# Reference Districts

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## **WAUPUN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT** **Search Year: 2017-18**

1,919 students  
Waupun, WI  
Jennie Patrykus, Board Chair  
[jbpatrykus@waupun.k12.wi.us](mailto:jbpatrykus@waupun.k12.wi.us)

## **MUSKEGO-NORWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Search Year: 2022-23**  
4,649 students  
Muskego, WI  
Terry Boyer, Board President  
[262-844-9776](tel:262-844-9776)  
[terri.boyer@muskegonorway.com](mailto:terri.boyer@muskegonorway.com)

## **BROWN DEER SCHOOL DISTRICT** **Search Year 2019-20 & 2023-24**

1,650 Students  
Brown Deer, WI  
Mr. Todd Beadle, Board President  
414-406-1081  
[tbeadle@browndeerschools.com](mailto:tbeadle@browndeerschools.com)

## **MARSHALL SCHOOL DISTRICT** **Search Year: 2017-18**

1,050 students  
Marshall, WI  
John Lutz, Board President  
608-669-4607  
[jlutz@mashallschools.org](mailto:jlutz@mashallschools.org)

# Proposed Search Plan



## PHASE A: Opening the Search (*January 2025*)

- The search process begins with the signing of the Letter of Agreement.
- An initial Planning Meeting is held with the Board to establish the scope and timeline of services.



## PHASE B: Creating the New Superintendent Profile (*January-February 2025*)

- Board members are interviewed to understand the qualities, skills, and experiences they seek in a new superintendent.
- Focus Groups are held with selected groups approved by the Board.
- A District-wide On-line Survey, tailored for your District, is designed to allow staff and community members to give input to the search process. This is available in multiple languages.



## PHASE C: Developing the Candidate Pool (*January-April 2025*)

- The search process and calendar are posted on your District's website.
- The vacancy is advertised nationally and statewide and posted on the **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** website.
- The Consultants accept applications and recruit candidates who match your District's New Superintendent Profile.
- The Consultants screen and interview selected candidates face-to-face using The New Superintendent Profile.
- Internal candidates follow the same process as external candidates.
- References and Internet checks are conducted on potential candidates.
- Highly qualified candidates (typically five to seven) are presented to the Board and the Board decides whom to interview.



## PHASE D: Selecting the Candidates (*April 2025*)

- The Consultants hold a Board Interviewing Workshop prior to the first interviews.
- The Consultants facilitate Board interviews of the slate of candidates and the Board narrows the field to three semi-finalists.
- Interview Committee(s) comprised of staff, parents and community members interview the semifinalists in a structured process and each member writes individual feedback.
- The Board may have the semi-final candidates give a short Formal Presentation to observe the candidates' presentation skills.
- The Board conducts a second set of interviews using feedback from the Interview Committees in a formal and informal setting.
- The Board negotiates and takes action on the new Superintendent's contract.



# Proposed Search Plan

## Methods to communicate with the School Board

We have found the best method to communicate with a School Board is through a Board Liaison and District Staff Liaison. We use phone, email, scanning and texting. However, we will communicate in the way best for all Board members in your District. Our consultants are available to meet with the Board in person as often as requested. During the search, we provide updates and formal reports as needed and present the Slate of Candidates. We will recommend that the Search Process, Search Timeline, and original Profile Report be displayed on your District's website for all constituents, staff members, Board members and candidates to see.

## Timelines, pre-qualifications, and final recommendation processes

Our suggested timeline is listed with a detailed search description. We find that bringing a slate of five (5) to seven (7) pre-qualified candidates to the Board works the best. We then provide training for the Board to interview and reduce the slate to three (3) finalists in first interviews. We also recommend interview committees to make non-ranked, individual recommendations to the Board before their final candidate interviews. The Consultants will facilitate these interviews.

## Our role in assisting the Board with candidate selection

We will provide the Board with detailed written interview guidelines, including questions for the candidates. We will also provide training for the Board in interviewing techniques. We also provide all written materials for the Interview Committees and may facilitate the interviews.

## Recommendations for community participation

We recommend that the Board involve both citizens and staff meet the final candidates.

## Information needed from Board and staff

In every search, there are specific duties and actions that can be performed only by District Board and staff liaisons. We recommend one designated Board member as the liaison for the overall communication purposes of the search and one staff member assigned to the search for logistical purposes.

Designated staff member(s) will be asked to do the following tasks:

- Send the survey link to community and post on District website
- Provide logistical support for Focus Groups
- Duplicate copy ready materials for the interview committees
- Oversee arrangements for the interview places and equipment needed for them
- Assist in making dinner arrangements for the Board and the finalist candidates. (Optional)
- Duplicate the Committee feedback for each board member after the finalist interviews.
- Assist the Board liaison and Consultants as search issues arise

## Methods to identify and recruit candidates

To identify prospective candidates, we use a variety of methods. The most efficient way is through our Colleague Network. We have 60 consultants in **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** who work very closely together to identify candidates. Our national network has been effective in identifying candidates from out-of-state. We will use regional and state venues to advertise the position and will work with your Board to design your complete advertising approach for the position. Because candidates know and trust our firm, they will check our website and your District's website for information about your position.

# Superintendent Search Work/Task Plan

BOARD

JOINT

CONSULTANT

1

## PLANNING MEETING

- Timeline, process, advertising

7

## FINAL PREPARATIONS

- Prepare committee(s) for interviews
- Salary research

2

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Focus groups
- On-line survey
- New superintendent profile

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## BOARD SECOND INTERVIEWS

- Candidate presentations
- Committee feedback
- Board dinner/final interview
- Final candidate selected

3

## BOARD APPROVAL

- New superintendent profile

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## FINAL DECISION

- Background check
- Contract offer

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## CANDIDATE SEARCH

- Advertise
- Network & recruit prospects
- Interview selected applicants

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## NAME THE SUPERINTENDENT

- Board action
- News release
- Introduction to community

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## BOARD WORKSHOP

- Interview Strategies

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## CLOSE SEARCH

- Inform all candidates of Board's decision
- Assist Board if needed

6

## BOARD FIRST INTERVIEWS

- Five to seven candidates
- Select three to move forward

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## NEW SUPERINTENDENT BEGINS DUTIES

# Consulting Fee

The consulting fee for your search will be \$14,900. It is inclusive, and no hourly fees will be charged in addition. The consulting fee may be reduced and negotiated if the level of search services is reduced.

## EXPENSES:

Regular expenses will not exceed \$2,200. These include, but are not limited to, copying, secretarial support, consultant travel expense, supplies, and interview costs.

## ADVERTISING:

Advertising costs are determined and paid by the District. Options include:

- Print and online advertising in Education Week and the Wisconsin School Leadership Center
- LinkedIn targeted posting/promotion
- Connections to the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and WASA websites
- Posting on the **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** website
- E-mail blasts to selected superintendents and contacts throughout the country

## OTHER EXPENSE INFORMATION:

- **SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** will invoice your District twice. First, after signing the Letter of Agreement and, second, upon the Board's approval of your new Superintendent's contract.
- After the candidate pool has been presented to the Board, the District incurs the costs of the search. This may include mileage, meals, lodging, etc.
- It is recommended that the finalist undergoes a criminal background check before a contract is signed; this option is a \$800 expense.

## OTHER RFP REQUESTED INFORMATION:

- School Exec Connect performed a search in 2023 for the Shorewood School District when the final candidate and the Board could not reach agreement on a contract. The firm and Board performed a second round of interviews which resulted in an outstanding superintendent being placed.

# Our Guarantees

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## GUARANTEE

### #01

In the event that the first slate of candidates does not include a superintendent the Board wishes to hire, the Consultants will continue to bring candidates forward for actual expenses only until the Board has found a superintendent to whom they wish to offer a contract. No additional consulting fees will be charged.

## GUARANTEE

### #02

If the Superintendent leaves for any reason within twenty-four months of the starting date, the Consultants will conduct a new search for no additional Consulting Fee. The Board will pay only the actual expenses of the search as listed above under Expenses.

## GUARANTEE

### #03

**SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT** guarantees that our consultants will not recruit your new Superintendent for the duration of his/her first two contracts.