

MOUNTAIN VIEW WHISMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT



SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROPOSAL

January 2025



Education Leadership Services
Experts in the Field, Partners in the Process



January 10, 2025

President Conley and Members of the Mountain View Whisman School District Board of Education:

It is a privilege to submit this proposal to lead the search for MVWSD's next Superintendent. Education Leadership Services (ELS) was founded by experienced educational leaders committed to helping California school districts successfully navigate the changes they face, as well as to become agents of change in their own leadership development. MVWSD is known for its academic excellence, innovative solutions, and community collaborations. Indeed, robust and rigorous academics, coupled with innovative and experiential learning opportunities and social-emotional support, provide students with the necessary foundation to thrive in college and career. The ELS team shares this comprehensive student-centered approach to ensure every student feels a sense of belonging in school, where their voices are valued. We also know that only with highly effective leadership will your vivid vision for excellence be realized.

Our ELS Team is committed to supporting the Board in identifying the right leader for Mountain View Whisman. In addition, our team will provide the Board the support needed every step of the way to feel confident in managing this critical process. The ELS Team is uniquely positioned to support the Mountain View Whisman School District. Your search team will consist of recently retired superintendents and a sitting Board member. While retired superintendents understand the role of the Board, only someone who has held the office will truly represent your perspective.

The ELS search is marked by three discrete steps - each designed to respond to the needs and culture of MVWSD.

1. Stakeholder and Community Engagement
2. Candidate Recruitment and Evaluation
3. Selection and Transition

The transparency and outreach embedded in the profile and recruitment phases ensure confidence in the process and, ultimately, in the leader selected by the Board.

These steps, further outlined within our proposal, while deliberate and thorough, allow for flexibility to meet the unique needs of the Mountain View Whisman community.

Respectfully,

Education Leadership Services



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INTRODUCTION

[Education Leadership Services](#) (ELS) is pleased to submit this proposal to assist the Mountain View Whisman School District's (hereinafter referred to as District) Board of Education in conducting the search for their next superintendent. We are a newly established consulting group comprised of highly successful educational leaders throughout the state. Our team members include recently retired superintendents, current superintendents, and veteran board members whose experience and expertise in education will lend both breadth and depth to our efforts on your behalf.

The succeeding pages outline the comprehensive and transparent process we follow. While thorough, it is also highly customizable to meet the unique needs of the District.

COMPANY PROFILE

ELS Team Members have extensive experience in recruiting a diverse pool of exceptional educational leaders and will work to find the right one for Mountain View Whisman. Our success is based upon the relationships we forge in supporting boards and serving districts. Our Team Members, with their wide scope of current educational trends and practices, will ensure that the Board is equipped with the resources and knowledge necessary to complete a successful superintendent search. Our goal is to support the District in its efforts to improve the education of students by ensuring strong, capable, and compassionate leadership.

As ELS was formed in 2022, every superintendent placed by the firm remains in their position. Superintendents placed through the searches conducted by ELS members for other firms prior to 2022 have remained in their positions for a minimum of five years.

SEARCH PROCESS DESCRIPTION

The ELS search process consists of three interdependent phases: Engagement, Recruitment, and Selection.

- Three ELS Team Members will be assigned to the search: Pat Atkins, Dr. Ron Carruth, and Dr. George Sziraki
- The Team Members will perform tasks outlined in this proposal; but, the entire [ELS Team](#) will be supporting the assigned team members in recruiting the best possible candidates for the Board to consider.
- The proposed timeline is a draft, intended to demonstrate to the Board the search process. The exact dates for the search timeline will be finalized during the Planning Meeting with the Board.
- ELS will ensure transparency of the process, while maintaining the confidentiality of each applicant.
- ELS will regularly provide updates to the Board and content for your website. Our goal is to minimize the additional responsibilities this process entails from your staff - and, in particular, your administrative assistant.



Our firm has partnered with a number of school districts across California, bringing years of experience in superintendent searches. We are deeply committed to responding to and anticipating the needs of the Board by maintaining constant availability and communication. We ensure that the Board and stakeholders are informed and engaged throughout the process. Our customized approach includes comprehensive stakeholder engagement and a nationwide network of vetted candidates, guaranteeing a tailored search for Mountain View Whisman SD. Additionally, we offer a satisfaction guarantee, underscoring our dedication to meeting and exceeding your expectations. Searches conducted by ELS members before the establishment of the firm in 2022 for other firms have resulted in stable school district leaders across the state and throughout the nation.

Engagement Phase

ELS is prepared to engage in the search process immediately. We begin with a candid meeting with the Board of Education to determine the qualities and skills you would like your next superintendent to possess. This includes strengths, experience levels, and vision. This prioritized list will serve as the basis of our recruitment efforts and a touchstone for prospective candidates.

The engagement process continues with similar input sessions with staff members, current and former students, and community members. This includes, but is not limited to, cabinet members, leadership teams of each bargaining unit, confidential employees, PTA Leadership, DELAC members, and Student Leadership members. General sessions, as well as sessions with specific groups as identified by the Board, round out this phase of the process.

In addition to the general sessions open to all community members, we will invite all stakeholders to complete a survey - embedded within which will be questions about preferred leadership style, skills, education, experience, and values. Results will be presented to the Board with data disaggregated by stakeholder groups and triangulated with the information gathered during input sessions.

Engaging your community plays a critical role in finding both the best qualified candidates and in maintaining trust in the search process, thereby adding a layer of trust in your next superintendent.

Some of the most important deliverables during the engagement phase of the search include the following:

- Planning Meeting with the Board
- Finalizing the proposed timeline for the search process
- Answering any Board Member questions regarding the specifics of the search
- Convening individual meetings with each member of the Board
- Surveying community members electronically and providing a report of findings
- Providing up to four individual ELS Team Member days for interviews, focus groups, and/or town hall meetings to gather in-person input from community members, as determined by the Board.
- Presenting a *Superintendent Leadership Report* to the Board that summarizes the data from the survey, interviews with district and community representatives, and other information made available to ELS.



Recruitment Phase

ELS will present the Board with a diverse group of qualified candidates from which the Board will feel confident in selecting the next school district leader. We use myriad recruiting techniques to maximize our outreach efforts. In addition to advertisements and job postings, we will also actively recruit from within our wide network. During this phase, every ELS Team Member actively participates in recruiting potential candidates. Each Team Member is active in state and national educational organizations, having served on Boards of the *American Association of School Administrators*, *Association of California School Administrators*, *California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators*, *Small School Districts' Association*, *Southern California Superintendents Association*, *Suburban School Superintendents*, and the *Western Association of Schools and Colleges*. Due to our extensive work in statewide educational organizations, we are aware of outstanding superintendents and aspiring superintendents in California.

Screening Candidates

Once the application window closes, we start paper screening, ensuring that each application is complete and each applicant meets the requirements for the position. Once an individual moves to the level of a potential candidate through the application process or through recommendations and recruitment efforts, we begin our vetting process.

Reference checking is one of the most important tasks in the search process. This includes contacting the listed references on the application or provided by the candidate. As most candidates will provide references who will provide only highly favorable comments, we also contact individuals not listed by the applicant to form a fuller picture of each candidate.

Our Team Members conduct confidential reference calls to obtain deep insight on any candidate who would be recommended to the Board for consideration. Given our network of Team Members and many professional relationships, it is likely that we know someone who either knows the candidate directly or knows someone who knows the candidate. These references often provide confidential, hard-to-obtain information about the candidate that is invaluable in determining whether or not to recommend the candidate to the Board.

We continue the vetting process by conducting comprehensive internet searches to review any public information regarding the candidates.

A complete list of applicants will be provided to the Board. A recommended list of candidates matching the qualities desired by the Board and based upon reference checks will be submitted to the Board for their consideration in determining the list of interviewees.

One additional step is recommended towards the end of the selection process, before any public announcement: a comprehensive independent background check by an outside firm. The comprehensive background check can be conducted on the single finalist or on the semi-finalists that the Board brings back for second interviews.



These go beyond simple background checks by searching social security numbers. The due diligence background checks are conducted by a third-party entity and include checking on issues related to criminal and civil court records, financial records, driving records, college degrees and university accreditations. They may also include print and social media reviews.

The Board may choose to conduct a site visit for the sole finalist. The site visit is optional and is completed once a selection is made, but before a contract is signed

The deliverables during the recruitment phase include the following:

- Prepare an announcement of vacancy;
- Develop and refine application to include sections describing essential leadership criteria as identified by the Board;
- Prepare and place advertisements, as approved by the Board;
- Assist District team in developing and posting search information and updates on District website;
- Recruit and contact candidates utilizing regional and national networks;
- Correspond with candidates regarding the search process and timeline;
- Conduct reference checks and internet searches on prospective candidates;
- Identify best-qualified candidates;
- Prepare application materials of the selected slate of candidates for Board consideration;
- Schedule and coordinate interviews.

Selection Phase

Throughout the search, our goal is to support the Board in anticipating the expectations and responsibilities within each phase. We will lift as much of the burden of the process as possible from the Board and staff to allow them to continue to focus on the regular work of the District. We will handle logistics, coordinate schedules, and prepare every aspect of the interviews. Team Members will be available during the interview process to ensure they progress smoothly. Team Members will also be available to facilitate debriefing the interviews.

Following the paper screening and vetting of applicants, Team Members will present a slate of recommended candidates to the Board. However, since Board Members make the final decision, they will be provided with a complete list of applicants for initial interviews.

In preparing for interviews, Team Members will compose questions and frame hypothetical situations from which the Board will determine the initial interview questions. A brief interview workshop will be offered prior to the first round of interviews during which questions will be scripted. Second interviews are generally unscripted and designed to follow-up on topics and questions which emerged during the first interview.

In facilitating the debriefing following interviews, Team Members assist the Board in assessing the abilities of each candidate in relation to the criteria collected during the



engagement phase. Some of the specific deliverables during this phase include the following:

- Presenting a slate of candidates, the number of candidates to be determined by the Board with a recommendation from ELS;
- Conducting an Interview Workshop and providing materials and protocols to ensure informative, effective Board interviews;
- Scheduling initial and final interviews for the Board with selected applicants;
- Facilitating Board discussion to narrow candidate pool after each round of interviews;
- Communicating with candidates not selected for additional interviews;
- Facilitating the development of the finalist's contract for Board approval. A salary range will be identified prior to the recruitment process. Once a finalist is selected, we will work with the candidate and the Board President and the Board's General Counsel to finalize the contract. A copy of a proposed contract would be offered to the finalist who, in turn, would offer their comments and suggestions until a contract is drafted that meets the expectations of both parties.



PROPOSED TIMELINE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>
Week of January 27, 2025	Planning Meeting with Board Representatives
Week of February 3, 2025	Consultants interview Board Members
February 3 - March 14, 2025	Advertising
February 10 - 21, 2025	Consultants meet with Focus Groups
February 10 - March 3, 2025	Online survey window
Week of February 24, 2025	Community meetings 6:30 - 7:30 pm
March 12, 2025	Superintendent Leadership Report to Board
March 14 - 31, 2025	ELS Applicant Screening
April 4, 2025	Presentation of Semi-Finalists
Week of April 14, 2025	Board Interviews
April 21 - 24, 2025	Comprehensive Due Diligence (optional)
Week of April 28, 2025	Site visit (optional)
May 2, 2025	Complete contract
May 14, 2025	Announce new Superintendent
July 1, 2025	Superintendent begins



FEES

In consideration for services, the District will pay to Education Leadership Services a consulting fee for the search in the amount of \$17,000. This fee includes all services identified in the proposal. It also includes advertising in ACSA EdCal. There will be no additional fees. As we are invested in the continued success of the District, our fee includes coaching for the new superintendent during the first year of their superintendency. We are committed to ensuring a smooth transition once a leader has been named.

The fee is due in three installments:

1. 50% will be invoiced upon execution of the contract/agreement
2. 25% will be invoiced upon presentation of the Superintendent Leadership Report
3. 25% will be invoiced upon presentation of the slate of semi-finalists

Optional Additional Services:

- A. If the Board chooses to reimburse candidates for travel for interviews, candidates will submit the expenses directly to the District for reimbursement.
- B. Background checks/Executive Due Diligence Services: ELS will screen and conduct reference checks on candidates. This is included in the consulting fee. An independent, third-party due diligence background check may be conducted on the finalist(s). The cost ranges from \$1100 - \$1950 per candidate.
- C. The Community Survey is offered in English and Spanish. If the district wishes to offer the survey in additional languages, the fee is \$415 per language. Please allow up to two weeks for translation.

THE ELS DIFFERENCE:

Fixed Price

Throughout the search process Team Members will be available to counsel with the Board about the search. Team Members will assist the Board until the Board determines it has found the appropriate candidate for the position.

Client-Satisfaction

If the Superintendent departs from the position during the first year under any circumstances or within two (2) years if a majority of the Board is still in place and departure is due to dissatisfaction and not personal or familial reasons, ELS will recruit new candidates for the Board at no additional cost - barring travel, advertising, and due diligence expenses. If the new Superintendent departs during the third year of the contract (except for death or permanent unanticipated disability) ELS will conduct a new search for \$10,000.00.

In the event that this search does not yield a finalist satisfactory to the Board, ELS is prepared to re-engage in the process and conduct a new search for no additional cost.



Non-Solicitation of Selected Candidate

The Superintendent appointed with ELS' assistance will not be presented to another Board as a candidate if it would result in the Superintendent leaving the District within five (5) years of employment unless the Board provides written authorization to ELS that they may do so.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Pat Atkins - Pat Atkins is an experienced leader in public education. He spent 20 years in the Los Banos Unified School District as a teacher, Principal, Area Administrator for Elementary Education and Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. Leaving Los Banos, Pat led the Pollock Pines Elementary School District for seven years as the Superintendent. Prior to retirement, Pat was the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources for the Merced County Office of Education. Pat currently serves as a trustee for the Pollock Pines Elementary School District in Pollock Pines, California.

Ron Carruth, Ed.D. - Dr. Ron Carruth served as a superintendent for 16 years in the Whittier City and El Dorado Unified High School Districts. Ron served from 2021-2024 as the President of the ACSA State Superintendents' Council, the Executive Director of the California High School Coalition, and an active member of the Southern and Northern California Superintendent groups. Previously, he served as President of California City Superintendents and was on the ACS WASC Commission. Ron is decorated with many awards and recognitions, including the 2023 ACSA State Ferd Kiesel Administrator of the Year, ACSA highest award.

George Sziraki, Ed.D. - Dr. George Sziraki's career in education includes roles as a teacher, coach, principal, assistant superintendent, and 10 years as a superintendent. In addition, he served as the Interim Executive Director for Small School Districts and as an adjunct professor. George is a well connected transformative leader. He was recognized as the ACSA Regional Assistant Superintendent of the Year and Superintendent of the Year and served seven years as a superintendent advisor to CSBA, shaping educational policy in California.



REFERENCES

ELS prides itself on its reputation for effectiveness and integrity.

District Name and Contact Information

Moraga USD, Janelle Chng, Board President,
jchng@moraga.k12.ca.us

Las Lomitas ESD, John Earnhardt, Former Board Member,
john.earnhardt@gmail.com

Bonsall USD, Larissa Anderson, Board President,
larissa.anderson@bonsallusd.com

El Dorado Joint Union HSD, Tim Cary, Board President,
bot@eduhsd.k12.ca.us

Santa Ynez Valley Union HSD, Chris Johnson, Board President,
cjohnson@syvuhsd.org

Moreno Valley USD, Brandy Clark, Board President,
bclark@mvusd.net