



LEADERSHIP CHANGE and

Coaching for Effectiveness

The WASB can help you select and support the right school leader for your district



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The search for a new superintendent can be a daunting task. The WASB Search Services team recognizes the tremendous responsibility of a superintendent search while, at the same time, acknowledging that it provides an excellent opportunity to bring a fresh, valuable leader to your school district.

I The Search

For more than 22 years, the WASB Search Services has assisted school boards in finding new superintendents. School board members representing districts of all sizes, along with CESA units, have found success using the skills and experiences of the WASB consultants to augment their efforts in what is a time-consuming and detail-oriented process that usually spans a three-to-five month period.

The WASB Search Services team works with a school board from the early planning stages of a search to the award of an offer and the negotiation of an employee contract. This includes providing board members with a resource guide outlining helpful details associated with a search, posting vacancy notices, soliciting prospective applicants, collecting application materials, and meeting with the board to assist with the selection of persons to interview.

Along the way, the consultants work to engage as many people as the board feels necessary. A prominent aspect of this engagement takes place via focus groups whereby the consultant will meet with staff, community members, special interest groups, the board, and others to gauge a district's issues and culture and to create a profile of the person being sought to

become the new superintendent.

Data from focus groups are used to create application materials, write interview questions, and to align candidate's skills with an agreed-upon profile. The search consultant will make all contacts with the applicants and arrange and schedule interviews. The WASB conducts criminal, financial, and educational background checks to ensure applicants are suited to assume a position of importance and trust.

Ultimately, the WASB Search Services team will assist the board with its selection of a new superintendent and arrange a visit to the person's current school district prior to finalization of a contract. The previously mentioned resource guide contains helpful financial comparables to assist the board in the development of a contract that is fair to all parties.

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■ Scope of the Search

A natural question is: “Does the WASB Search Service contain a national focus?” Yes, all superintendent searches have a national focus by the very nature of the world around us.

The WASB Search Service consultants are members of the National Affiliation of Superintendent Searchers (NASS) organization. The NASS consultants are not-for-profit search consultants aligned with their state school board associations. The NASS organization covers 35 states

with over 63 consultants working on superintendent searches at any one time. This helps to ensure the broadest notice of a vacancy and strongest possible field of candidates.

School board associations are interested in building long-term relationships designed to enhance and improve school districts. The WASB Search Services team prides itself on building and maintaining a strong relationship with the districts served. Board members will interact with the WASB personnel throughout the school year through attendance at workshops and con-

ventions. This solidifies the relationship and keeps a board in regular contact with the organization that assisted with the search.

The WASB Search Service consultant has a team of professionals available and on call to address a school district’s needs during a superintendent search. They take great pride in their search core values — ethics, integrity, leadership, and teamwork. Some additional resources also available from the WASB include: legal expertise, board policy development, school board governance experts, and assistance in contract development and/or review.



Learn More at Convention

The WASB Coaching Services Program will be previewed at the State Education Convention on January 24 at the Frontier Airlines Center in Milwaukee. In this session, district teams of school superintendents new to their districts and school board presidents will be invited to participate in the session that will focus on effective communication strategies. Don't miss this opportunity to strengthen your district leadership.

program improve the performance of the superintendent? Could a formal coaching program also increase the superintendent's job satisfaction?

The WASB believes a coaching program can make a difference and will be rolling out a new

coaching service with a series of coaching opportunities for superintendents. The first session is scheduled for the January 2013 State Education Convention.

This session, however, will feature a unique twist to coaching. District teams of school superintendents new to their districts and school board presidents will be invited to participate in a session that will focus on effective communication strategies. This session will include the completion of a district communications audit. WASB superintendent search consultants have discovered that the primary trait or attribute that school boards desire in their superintendents is the ability to communicate internally, within the organization, and externally, within the community. This session will explore how the superintendent and school board president can best enhance the effectiveness of the district's communications.

All organizations, whether it is the Green Bay Packers or a school district, strive for continuous improvement and high performance. Coaching is a strategy school boards and superintendents may wish to consider in the achievement of those goals. ■

Birchbauer, Carlson, and Richards are consultants with the WASB with more than 100 years of experience between them in public education.

■ Announcing a New Coaching Program from WASB

Due to requests by school boards and new administrators, the WASB now offers a transition coaching program. The concept of coaching is not new in school districts at the top leadership positions, but it has been underused.

With the selection of the superintendent being the first step in leadership change, the next step is the integration of the superintendent into the local school environment in a seamless fashion.

■ Coaching and High Performance

Each fall, many of us look forward to the upcoming professional football season — especially this year when the Green Bay Packers are one of the favored teams to reach the Super Bowl. One of the factors in their returning to the Super Bowl will be how quickly the team's younger players can make an impact in the game.

Beyond the excitement and pageantry of the game, if one thinks about it, football is about organizations of individuals coming together around a common purpose. Some football organizations are successful and others are failures. So why are the Packers as an organization so good? In a very competitive league, why has this team been a consistent winner?

Basically, it has to do with the quality of the players the Packers field each game day. It seems that each year some unknown player steps up and becomes a major contributor to the success of the team. Why and how does this happen?

In addition to a savvy and intelligent front office, much of the success is attributable to the Packer

coaching staff. Head coach Mike McCarthy is responsible for the overall decision making of the team while on the field.

However, assisting him are many coaches whose primary goal is to implement the game plan by improving the performance of each player. Each coach is responsible for a very small number of players within the organization. The assistance they provide players is continuous and in real time whether it is on the practice field or during the actual game.

■ Coaching in the School Setting?

A question one can ask is: "Could effective coaching have a role in the school setting?" Would a formal coaching program increase the likelihood of high performance whether in the classroom or in the school or district office? Competent coaches would make a difference in the performance of district staff. Currently, some districts have "coaching" by mentors or administrators, but it is not as extensive and focused as it could or should be.

Let's talk about the "quarterback" of the school district, the superintendent. His or her performance is critical to the success of the organization. Their duties and responsibilities are as expansive and complex as any executive position in the private sector. Could a formal coaching