

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

260-06252025-861320

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH SERVICES
Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

INTRODUCTION

The Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education (“Board”) is beginning its search for a highly-qualified candidate for Superintendent of Schools to start work on January 1, 2026, or sooner. To aid in its search, the Board is issuing a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) and seeks the services of an executive search firm or qualified individual(s) for a full and comprehensive search and recruitment of a new Superintendent.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2025, Forsyth County, North Carolina, is projected to have a population of approximately 400,000, with a median age of 38.3. The median household income is around \$42,097, and the unemployment rate is 3.5%. The population is diverse, with an estimated White population (around 54.8%) and a growing Hispanic/Latino population (around 14.3%). More information about the demographics of Forsyth County may be found by visiting the following site: <https://www.northcarolina-demographics.com/forsyth-county-demographics>.

The Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools (“WS/FCS”) was formed in 1963 with the merger of the Winston-Salem and Forsyth County districts. It is the fourth-largest system in North Carolina and the 81st-largest in the nation.

The WS/FCS is a high performing, urban school district serving a highly diverse student population of approximately 51,000 students. WS/FCS currently serves students in pre-kindergarten grades through 12th grade with the goal of providing a quality education for each child. The school system has 42 elementary schools, 15 middle schools, and 16 high schools. Eight specialty schools bring the system-wide total to 81. The annual budget for the WS/FCS in 2024-2025 school year was approximately \$600 million.

Districtwide, 31.7% of the students are White; 30.7% are Hispanic; 29.1% are Black or African-American; 5.6% are Multiracial; 2.6% are Asian; and less than 1% are American Indian/Alaskan Native or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. The student population of WS/FCS is diverse in both its socioeconomic and academic needs. The WS/FCS currently has 53 Title I schools, with more than 50% of its students qualifying for free-and-reduced lunch. There are also a variety of learning needs represented amongst its student population. For example, approximately 8,000 students in WS/FCS receive special educational services, approximately 8,700 students who are Multilingual Learners (ML), and approximately 6,000 students who have been identified as Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG). The WS/FCS is also one of the largest employers in Forsyth County with approximately 8,000 employees.

The mission of WS/FCS is to engage all students in high-quality, relevant learning experiences so that they will graduate with interpersonal, academic, and workforce skills to compete globally and contribute to society. The vision of WS/FCS is to be the best place to work and learn through excellence, collaboration, and inclusiveness. While the WS/FCS is in the process of developing a new 5-year Strategic Plan, the Board's current strategic plan identifies a series of goals and initiatives centered around five focus areas: student achievement, equity and access, community engagement, human resource development, and climate and safety. More about the Board's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, and its work in developing a new 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, may be viewed at: <https://www.wsfcs.k12.nc.us/page/district-overview>.

The Board is governed by a nine-member Board of Education; each elected to four-year terms of office. Board members are elected from two districts within Forsyth County. Two members are elected from District 1, four members are elected from District 2, and three are elected at-large. The Board uses policy governance as its method of leading the WS/FCS. The Superintendent is the Board's primary employee, and it is the Superintendent's role to evaluate and monitor all WS/FCS employees, carry out district policies and procedures, administer the day-to-day operations of the district, and advise the Board as its Secretary on all educational matters for the welfare and interest of students. For more information about WS/FCS, please visit www.wsfcs.k12.nc.us.

SCOPE OF WORK

The Board will work with the selected firm or individual(s) to develop a superintendent search process and a timeline for the search activities. At a minimum, the activities will include the following activities:

- development of a vacancy announcement and position qualifications;
- facilitating a candidate identification process that identifies a diverse pool of highly qualified and competent candidates in districts with similar achievement and community size, and reflecting a familiarity with our students' needs;
- assessment and evaluation of candidates;
- engaging with community stakeholders to identify the qualities desired in a superintendent;
- synthesizing community and stakeholder feedback;
- serve as a liaison between candidates and the Board for questions and concerns;
- assisting with the logistics of finalist interviews; and
- advising and assisting the Board throughout the process.

Understanding that that discretion is of the utmost importance to the Board and the candidates, the selected firm or individual(s) must maintain the confidentiality of all information collected, as required by applicable state personnel laws.

PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

To allow the Board to fairly assess the merits of each proposal, responses to this RFP shall include a response to each of the items listed below. The Board reserves the right to reject proposals that do not follow this format.

Cover Sheet. Include a cover sheet or letter expressing an interest in the services that are part of the RFP submission and signed by a person authorized to act on behalf of the company or individual(s) submitting the proposal, and containing the full contact information for the company or individual(s).

Executive Summary. Provide a short summary that demonstrates your understanding of the scope of services required by the Board and why you/your firm is best able to provide that scope of service.

Experience and Qualifications. Provide details on each of the following:

- A. Overview of Company/Individual(s): Provide the business name, address, telephone, and email address; whether the company is local, regional, or has a national presence; if a multi-office firm, which office will provide the services; areas of expertise and types of services performed by the company.
- B. Project Team: Provide the name, title, and contact information for the person(s) who will be authorized to represent the company and/or who will be directly working with the Board on its superintendent search process. Discuss the availability of each team member and the potential for conflicts that might interfere with the services and/or the search timeline.
- C. Experience: For each team member who will be working with the Board, please provide a description of the background experience and education, time with the company, and how their experience suits their role on the project team. Also, please specify the number of superintendent searches in which the firm has participated over the past 3-5 years, noting especially any superintendent searches for other districts in North Carolina.

Proposed Search Plan. Please provide details on the following:

- A. Indicate your approach to addressing each of the search activities listed in the SCOPE OF WORK section of this RFP above.
- B. Describe the methods you will use to communicate and work with a nine-member Board of Education.
- C. Describe the advertising and recruitment methods you/your firm will utilize to ensure a broad, nationwide search.

- D. Describe the methods you/your firm will use to identify prospective qualified candidates and promote their interest in applying.
- E. Your experience in effective community engagement both in terms of collecting information from the public to develop the initial position qualifications and in providing a meaningful way to generate, collect, and evaluate feedback received from various stakeholders, both internal and external.
- F. A proposed search schedule and timeline that the project team will utilize to guide the search process, with the goal of having a new superintendent in place by January 1, 2026, or sooner.
- G. A description of other services and assistance you will provide to the Board in the superintendent search process.

Fee Proposal. Each respondent must include a fee proposal and pricing structure. The fee proposal must cover all the work described in the SCOPE OF WORK and the PROPOSED SEARCH PLAN identified above. The fee proposal should include a breakdown of all required costs, as well as any other ancillary costs such as travel expenses, publishing and advertising fees, postage, and any other expenses. Please delineate between required and optional expenses.

References. Provide evidence or a description of having conducted and coordinated other successful superintendent searches within the past three (3) years. For each, identify the name of the school district, the location, the population of students, and a contact person, with current address and telephone number, for each search project. Please make note of any successful superintendent searches conducted in North Carolina within the past three (3) years, preferably with districts of comparable size to WS/FCS. Respondents must provide no less than three (3) references and/or testimonials, from other individuals who have previously worked with the firm/individual(s).

Additional Information. Respondents should provide any additional information that it believes would assist the Board in evaluating its proposal.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The Board will review all proposals and will select the firm/individual(s) that best meets the Board's needs to perform the superintendent search process as described in this RFP. The Board reserves the right to invite selected respondents to participate in an interview process to present and discuss their proposal, and to respond to questions.

The criteria for evaluating each submission will include the following:

- Experience with similar superintendent searches in districts of comparable size, demographics, goals and initiatives, and academic achievement;

- Evidence of community engagement experiencing, providing examples of working with multiple stakeholders;
- Evidence of strong communication structures in working with the Board;
- Availability for staffing and conducting the search project;
- Overall cost of services; and
- Projected timeline for completion.

Respondents may include a proposed contract with its submission. The selected firm/individual(s) will work with the Board's counsel to finalize a mutually agreeable contract. The selected firm/individual(s)'s contract will be subject to final approval as to form by the Board's counsel, pre-auditing by the Chief Finance Officer, and the approval of a majority vote of the Board.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINE

All submissions should be prepared simply and economically, providing a straightforward, concise description of the firm's ability to meet all requirements of the RFP. The Board reserves the right to waive, modify, or otherwise vary the conditions or requirements herein and may reject any and all submitted proposals in its sole discretion.

All proposals must be received at the following, either by hand-delivery, U.S. postal service, or electronic mail addressed to:

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education
c/o Dionne T. Jenkins, Chief Legal Counsel
P.O. Box 2513
Winston-Salem, NC 27102
Email: DTJenkins@wsfcs.k12.nc.us

The deadline for receipt of proposals is Friday, July 11, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. EST. Late proposals will not be accepted and any proposal received after the deadline shall be returned to the proposing firm/individual unopened.

QUESTIONS

Any questions related to this RFP should be directed to the following:

Dionne T. Jenkins, Chief Legal Counsel
Phone: (336) 727-2509
Email: DTJenkins@wsfcs.k12.nc.us